

Famous Infidels Who Found Christ

A Narrative of Their Experiences, Together With Portions of Their Published Works
Vindicating the Truth of Christianity

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PREFACE

THE author wishes to acknowledge the providence of God in a succession of apparently related incidents which put into his hands unsought much of the material used in this book, and prepared the way for its publication at this time.

Some years ago, when living near Boston, Mass., in reading a book that was given him, he became interested in an account of two eminent deists in England, Lord Lyttleton and Dr. Gilbert West, who believed that the Bible was an imposture and undertook to overthrow it. They, with other unbelievers, were accustomed to meet and discuss literary and religious subjects in those days when infidelity was much in vogue in England, France, and other countries. In the course of these conferences they became convinced that all efforts to overthrow the Christian religion would avail nothing so long as people generally believed in the resurrection of Christ and the conversion of the apostle Paul, and it was agreed that West, who was a prominent lawyer, should publish an attack upon the alleged resurrection of Jesus Christ, while Lyttleton was to write a book showing that the New Testament account of Paul's conversion was a myth.

The Day of Miracles Not Past

The very brief mention of the matter there given, said that some time later West inquired of Lyttleton whether or not he had yet written that book; and that Lyttleton replied that he had, but that in examining the evidence in order to refute it, he had himself become satisfied of Paul's conversion and the truthfulness of Christianity. He then asked West if he had written his book about the resurrection, and strange as it might seem, West said that he had, but that in examining the testimony and weighing all the evidence according to the recognized rules of judicial procedure, he also had, become convinced that Jesus Christ did really rise from the dead, and so had changed his plan and written his book in support of the resurrection and in defense of Christianity.

Guided to Lyttleton's Book

The story seemed rather incredible, and the writer decided when in Boston sometime to visit the city library and see what could be learned about these men, and if they really did have such an experience, and had written such books; for if true, their experience seemed to be remarkable. But soon afterward, while rummaging over some material in an old bookstore looking for something, he incidentally picked up a little dusty volume and found it contained an account of these men, together with Lyttleton's pamphlet, and a few pages of West's book. It confirmed what had been read before, and from this originated the idea of combining in one small volume for popular reading, the best features of these books, with sketches of other famous infidels who found Christ. This was made possible later by finding in the Yale University library a full copy of the original edition of West's work.

It is the sincere hope of the author that this book may give a new and fuller vision of the way, the truth, and the life, to all who read it. AUTHOR.

1. The Palace at Stowe

NEAR the sleepy little town of Buckingham, England, and approached by a majestic avenue of elms three miles in length, stands the palace of Lord Cobham (Sir Richard Temple), the uncle of Gilbert West, Esq., patron of art and literature in the time of which we write.

"Sic transit gloria mundi" (So passes away earthly glory). These are the words which naturally occur to one's mind while wandering through those beautiful gardens dominated by the statue of their designer. Lord Cobham, or the galleries of this stately palace, once the favorite resort of the most distinguished poets and literati of a bygone century. "Here," says a writer in the Pall Mall Gazette, "with lavish hospitality brave Cobham entertained the witty Chesterfield, the harmonious Pope, the plaintive Hammond, the eloquent Lyttleton, the ingenious Pitt, and the acute West."

The Century of Eclipse

The eighteenth century has been described as a period of religious eclipse in modern civilization. The abolition of Christianity was at this time one of the principal themes of discussion in both England and

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France. How such a state of things could have arisen in a land of free Bibles and professing Protestantism, is almost past comprehension. The zeal of Puritanism had waned, the spirit of the Reformation had subsided, and the church seemed as one dead inasmuch that many thought it was dead. Morality, 'however much exalted in the pulpit, was trampled underfoot in the streets.

Causes of the Apostasy

There were apparent, however, two manifest causes of this prevailing spiritual and moral decline, which affected England, Europe, and America at that time. First the Renaissance, which was a revival of the classical culture of Greece and Rome, brought with it into Europe a fascination for pagan ideals of art, literature, and philosophy, which was morally corrupt, anti Christian in spirit, and imparted weakness rather than strength to the cause of religion. Second, the medieval church, by its notorious intolerance of all progressive thought, its protracted persecutions, crusades, inquisitions, autos da fe, and massacres, especially those waged against the Protestants of the Netherlands and the Huguenots of France, had created a bitter prejudice in the minds of men against all forms of Christianity, and brought a reaction favorable to the growth of infidelity and atheism. Education was limited, and among those who read at all, the sentiments of such writers as Bolingbroke and Voltaire were much in vogue.

Infidelity Epidemic

The literature of the age lies drenched with infidelity. It profanes the dictionary and the encyclopedia, smuts the poetry taints the works of philosophy and science, and has left its acrid stain across the page of history. An evil genius of unbelief insinuated itself everywhere, in the vulgarity of the tavern, the entertainment of the lecture, and the levity of the banquet. It lured the patriot, disturbed the solemnity of the conclave, and presided at the assemblages of the revolutionists. "It brooded with Volney amid the ancient ruins of the East, and shed a false light over Gibbon's magnificent pageant of a past world from the moonlight solitude of the moldering Colosseum."

The Origin of West's Book

Lord Cobham shared the spirit of the age in which he lived, and from his palace at Stowe, as from the royal court of Potsdam and the picture galleries of Versailles, there went forth a seductive influence to deceive. The magnificent surroundings, literary atmosphere, round of social entertainment, and the frequent and distinguished guests, all made it easy for men like Pitt, Lyttleton, and West to listen here, as they have indicated to the blandishments of infidelity. West, who was now in the prime of life, a recognized scholar, educated at Eaton and Oxford, high in social standing, and in business with Lord Townsend, then Secretary of State, with whom he attended the king to Hanover is described as a person of penetrating mind, who readily understood men-and saw into things. It appears to have been the hope of Cobham and other unbelievers that West, already a leading spirit in infidel circles, should write a book against Christianity, which would cause the ears of the church to tingle.

Under such circumstances early in 1747 he came to Stowe, where the great library of the palace afforded unusual opportunity for research and writing, to formulate his arguments against the resurrection of Christ. In this connection there came under his observation an infidel book upon the subject, entitled, "The Trial of the Witness," in which the author sought to make it appear that the New Testament writers in their accounts of the resurrection contradict each other, and appear incredible. This was just what West wanted to prove, but in reading the book he became dissatisfied with the arguments presented. They seemed unfair and misleading, full of transparent inconsistencies, and open to much criticism. In his disappointment over the book, he began to question the soundness of the infidel position and to feel that he must examine these witnesses and weigh their testimony for himself. He says of this experience:

"Having perceived the light breaking in upon me still more and more, the farther I advanced [that is in reading the New Testament accounts] I was induced to go into a consideration of the evidences of this great and important article," and an exact and rigorous examination of the proofs. I have thought proper to subjoin."

The result was his celebrated work of 445 pages, "Observations on the History and Evidence of

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the Resurrection of Jesus Christ,” in which the testimony of the gospel writers on this subject, attested by many infallible proofs, is subjected to that searching and rigorous inquiry which lawyers are skilled in using when cross-examining witnesses. Yet these witnesses stood the test without breaking down in a single particular. We are told by West’s biographers, that when his book was published, it was bought by some who did not know his change of opinion, in expectation of finding some new objections against Christianity; and as infidels are not wanting in malignity, they revenged their disappointment on reading the book by calling him a “Methodist,” a name at that time used in derision.

After his conversion to Christianity, West continued at his pleasant home in Wickham to devote himself much to study and writing upon literary and religious subjects, and at the time of his death was engaged in writing a work upon the evidences of Christianity. He was accustomed it is said, to read morning prayers with his family, and on Sundays assembled his servants in the parlor and read to them from sermons and prayers. Most prominent among his poetical works is his translation of Pindar. (For this and his poems, see Johnson’s “Poets of Great Britain,” Volume 103.) He was one of the most influential friends of Lyttleton and Pitt, who often visited him at Wickham, and he is said to have been one of the few poets to whom the grave might be without its terrors.”

But the conversion of West was not the only outcome of the conversations at the palace of Lord Cobham, for while West was writing upon the subject of the resurrection of Christ, his friend, Lord Lyttleton, was preparing a pamphlet in which he set out to show that the account of Paul’s conversion was a myth. His careful study of the subject led him to change his views, however, even as West had done, and to write a treatise in support of Christianity rather than infidelity.

In an account of the matter it is said that West afterward inquired of Lyttleton whether he had written that book; and Lyttleton replied that he had, but that in carefully examining the evidence upon which Christians based their belief in Paul’s conversion, in order that he might refute it, he had himself become convinced, and had decided to write in support of Christianity. “Have you finished your work on the resurrection?” Lyttleton then asked. “Yes,” said West, “but strange to relate, I had a similar experience. In examining all the evidence available, and weighing it according to the recognized laws of legal evidence, -I have become satisfied that Jesus Christ really rose from the dead, and I have written my book on that side.”

In the “Chronicles of the Eighteenth Century” (Volume I, page 212-214) it is said that the experiences of these men created “a great sensation” at the time. As here related, about the middle of this century, the home of the Wests at Wickham in Kent was a sort of literary retreat where Pitt and Lord Lyttleton among others often repaired; where they found “books and quiet, a decent table, and literary conversation. The writings of West and Lyttleton made such an impression that the University of Oxford, this author says, conferred upon Gilbert West the title of LLD for his treatise, and offered a similar degree to Lyttleton, which honor, however, he declined on the ground that if he were to write more upon such subjects, it might be thought that he did so for the praise of men.

Testimony of the Earl of Egmont

In the “Diary of the First Earl of Egmont (Viscount Percival),” published by a Historical Manuscripts’ Commission, His Majesty’s Stationery Office, London (1923), now in the Yale library, is found the following entry:

“May, 1747. This month appeared two highly commended tracts in defense of revealed religion. written by two notorious unbelievers who were of a club who associated themselves this, year, and went to Stowe, in Buckinghamshire, the seat of Lord Cobham, there to examine critically the Scriptures at their leisure, and put together all the contradictions and impossibilities they fancied they should find, in order to hurt Christianity the more; but behold, the result was that the two men I speak of returned, convinced of errors and resolved to do their best to undeceive others. The first is Gilbert West, Esquire, son of Dr. West, who married a sister of this Lord Cobham. This Mr. West, his nephew, is esteemed an exceeding good scholar; his book is entitled, ‘Observations on the History and Evidences of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.’ The other is George Lyttleton, Esquire, son of Sir Thomas Lyttleton, Bt., of Worcestershire. His book is entitled, ‘Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul.’ Volume III, 1739-1747.

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A Rift in the Darkness

The influence of this extraordinary religious incident, which spread especially through political and literary circles, made a rift in the clouds of intellectual darkness which overspread England about the middle of the eighteenth century, when it was said that “all men of rank were thought to be infidels.” The publication of these two sensational books brought a new revelation of Christian evidence, especially Lyttleton’s work on “The Conversion of St. Paul” the effect of which may be judged from the statement of Dr. Johnson, “Infidelity never was able to fabricate a specious answer to the treatise.” The book passed rapidly through nine editions, and rekindled among the higher classes that religious faith which the preaching of Whitefield and Wesley was reviving among the common people. The reaction which followed saved England, and perhaps the civilized world, from being drawn into the abyss of the French Revolution.

Lyttleton was at the time a very active member of the House of Commons, and his name appeared in most of the debates. He was also Lord Commissioner of the Treasury, and was rising in political influence. In 1755 he became Chancellor of the Exchequer, and was also elevated the following year to the House of Lords. As an intimate friend of Pitt, the famous Prime Minister, of Lord Chesterfield and Bolingbroke in Parliament, and of literary men like Dr. Johnson, Pope the poet, and others, the influence of his life and writings gained wide publicity. He wrote various works of prose, and was a poet of some recognition. Dr. Johnson has given us his biography in his “Lives of the Poets,- and Pope at one time wrote of him as “Still true to virtue, and as warm as true.”

In his Christian life he was a close friend of Philip Doddridge, D. D., the eminent religious writer and scholar, who called Lyttleton’s book one of the “masterly” productions of the age. He has left among his verses the oft-quoted lines: “Not one immoral, one corrupted thought, One line, which, dying, he could wish to blot.”

While West’s work, as we have shown, made a great impression among the religious and literary people of the time, and is generally mentioned in published accounts of Lyttleton’s book on the “Conversion of St. Paul,” I have not known of any modern edition of the book, or a synopsis of its teachings. The technical character of the arguments arising from the legal style of the author, together with frequent repetitions of thought, and the size of the work, have somewhat unfitted it for popular reading, and prevented its attaining the eminence which it so richly deserved, and which has attended the publication of its companion. volume of less than one hundred pages.

In giving to the reading public the substance of the two books united in one small volume, I have sought to reduce greatly the contents of both, the works without sacrificing any important sections, and have tried also to preserve the integrity and force of the arguments, eliminating the less interesting and less essential features, and supplying some helpful introductory and connective parts over my own name.

2. The Conversion of St. Paul

BY LORD LYTTLETON
Addressed to Gilbert West, Esquire
(Abridged by Lee S. Wheeler)

SIR, in a late conversation we had upon the subject of the Christian religion, I told you that besides all the proofs of it which may be drawn from the prophecies of the Old, Testament, from the necessary connection it has with the whole system of the Jewish religion, from the miracles of Christ, and from the evidence given of His resurrection by all the other apostles, I thought the conversion and the apostle ship of St. Paul alone, duly considered. was of itself a demonstration sufficient to prove Christianity to be a divine revelation.

As you seemed to think that so compendious a proof might be of use to convince those unbelievers that will not attend to a longer series of arguments, I have thrown together the reasons upon which I support that proposition.

In the twenty-sixth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, written by a contemporary author, and a companion of St. Paul in preaching the gospel (as appears by the book itself, chap. 20:6, 13, 14; chap. 27:4, etc.), St. Paul is said to have himself given this account of his conversion and preaching, to King Agrippa and Festus, the Roman governor:

“My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem,

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know all the Jews; which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most strait sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.

“Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead? I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.

“Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, at midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutes thou Me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art Thou, Lord?

“And He said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutes. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou has seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee. Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me.

“Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: but showed' first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

“For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me. Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: That Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

“And as he thus spoke for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning does make thee mad. But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. For the king knows of these things, before whom also 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.

“King Agrippa, believes thou the prophets? I know that thou believes. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuaded me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.”

In another chapter of the same book, he gives in substance the same account to the Jews, adding these further particulars:

“And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told you of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

“And when I could not see for the glory of that light being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.

“And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou should know His will, and see that Just One, and should hear the voice of His mouth. For thou shall be His witness unto all men of what thou has seen and heard. And now why tarry thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” Acts 22:10-16.

In the ninth chapter of the same book, the author of it relates the same story with some other circumstances not mentioned in these accounts. As, that Saul in a vision saw Ananias, before he came to him, “coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight;” and that when Ananias had spoken to him, “immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales.” Acts 9:12, 18.

And agreeably to all these accounts, St.. Paul thus speaks of himself in the epistles he wrote to the several churches he planted. the authenticity of which cannot be doubted without overturning all rules by which the authority and genuineness of any writings can be proved or confirmed.

To the Galatians he says: “I certify you, brethren that the gospel which was preached of me is not

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after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: and profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." etc. Galatians 1:11-16.

To the Philippians he says: "If any other man thinks that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews. As touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church. Touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." Philippians 3:4-8.

And in his epistle to Timothy he writes thus: "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." 1 Timothy 1:12,13.

In other epistles he calls himself "an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God," "by the commandment of God our Savior, and Lord Jesus Christ," "an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead.)" 2, Corinthians 1:1; Colossians 1:1; 1 Timothy 1:1; Galatians 1:1. All of which implies some miraculous call that made him an apostle. And to the Corinthians he says after enumerating many appearances of Jesus after His resurrection, "And last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." 1 Corinthians 15:8.

Now, it must of necessity be that the person attesting these things of himself, and of whom they are related in so authentic a manner, either was an impostor, who said what he knew to be false, with an intent to deceive. Or he was an enthusiast, who, by the force of an overheated imagination, imposed on himself. Or he was deceived by the fraud of others, and all that he said must be imputed to the power of that deceit; or what he declared to have been, the cause of his conversion, and to have happened in consequence of it did all really happen, and therefore the Christian religion is a divine revelation.

Paul Not an Impostor

Now, that he was not an impostor, who said what he knew to be false, with an intent to deceive, I shall endeavor to prove, by showing that he could have no rational motives to undertake such an imposture, nor could have possibly carried it on with any success by the means we know he employed.

First, then, the inducement to such an imposture must have been one of these two: either the hope of advancing himself by it in his temporal interest, credit, or power; or by the gratification of some of his passions under the authority of it, and by the means it afforded.

What could be his motive to take such a part? 'Was it the hope of increasing his wealth? The certain consequence of his taking that part was not only the loss of all that he had, but of all hopes of acquiring more. Those whom he left were the disposers of wealth, of dignity of power, in Judea; those whom he went to, were indigent men, oppressed and kept down from all means of improving their fortunes, they, among them, who had more than the rest, sharing what they had with their brethren. But with this assistance the whole community was hardly supplied with the necessaries of life. And even in churches he afterward planted himself, which were much more wealthy than that of Jerusalem, so far was St. Paul from availing himself of their charity, or the veneration they had for him, in order to draw that wealth to himself, that he often refused to take any part of it for the necessaries of life.

Paul's Letters Bear Witness to His Unselfish Labors

Thus he tells the Corinthians: "Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place; and labor, working with our own hands." 1 Corinthians 4:11.

In another epistle he writes to them: "Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents,

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but the parents for the children.” 2 Corinthians 12:14.

To the Thessalonians he says: “As we were allowed of God to be, put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak. Not as pleasing men, but God, which tries our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God is witness: nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.... For you remember, brethren, our labor and travail: for laboring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.” 1 Thessalonians 2:44.

And again in another letter to them he repeats the same testimony of his disinterestedness: -Neither did we eat any man’s bread for naught; but wrought with labor and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you.” 2 Thessalonians 3:8.

And when he took his farewell of the church of Ephesus, to whom he foretold that they should see him no more, he gives this testimony of himself, and appeals to them for the truth of it: I have coveted no man’s silver, or gold or apparel. Yea, you yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.” Acts 20:33, 34.

It is evident then, both from the state of the church when St. Paul first came into it, and from his behavior afterward, that he had no thoughts of increasing his wealth by becoming a Christian. Whereas, by continuing to be their enemy, he had almost certain hopes of making his fortune by the favor of those who were at the head of the Jewish state, to whom nothing could more recommend him than the zeal that he showed in that persecution.

As to credit or reputation, that, too, lay all on the side he forsook. The sect he embraced was under the greatest and most universal contempt of any then in the world. “We are made,” says he to the Corinthians, “as the filth of the world, the off scouring of all things unto this day.” 1 Corinthians 4:13. Yet he went on as zealously as he set out, and was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. Certainly, then the desire of glory, the ambition of making to himself a great name was not his motive in embracing Christianity.

Sought to Serve, Not to Rule

Was it, then, the love of power? Power! Over whom? Over a flock of sheep driven to the slaughter, whose Shepherd Himself had been murdered a little before! All he could hope from that power was to be marked out in a particular manner for the same knife which he had seen so bloodily drawn against them. Could he expect more mercy from the chief priests and the rulers than they had shown to Jesus Himself? Would not their anger be probably fiercer against the deserter and betrayer of their cause, than against any other of the apostles? Was power over so despised a set of men worth encountering so much danger?

Let us see, then, what power St. Paul assumed over the Christians. Did he pretend to any superiority over the other apostles? No; he declared himself “the least” of them, and less than the least of all saints.” 1 Corinthians 15:9; Ephesians 3:8. Even in the churches he planted himself, he never pretended to any primacy or power above the other apostles. Nor would he be regarded any otherwise by them, than as the instrument to them of the grace of God, and preacher of the gospel, not as the head of a sect. To the Corinthians he writes in these words:

“Now this I say, that every one of you said, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?” 1 Corinthians 1: 12, 13. And in another place, “Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom you believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?” 1 Corinthians 3:5. “For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake.” 2 Corinthians 4:5.

All the authority he exercised over them was purely of a spiritual nature, tending to their instruction and edification, without any mixture of that civil dominion in which an impostor can find his account.

As a Father to His Children

This is the manner in which he writes to the Philippians: “Wherefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” Philippians 2:12. And a little after, he adds the cause why he interested

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himself so much in their conduct: "That you may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world. Holding forth the word of life. That I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain. Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all." Philippians 2:15-17.

Are those the words of an impostor desiring nothing but temporal power? No; they are evidently written by one who looked beyond the bounds of this life. But it may be said that he affected at least an absolute spiritual power over the churches he formed. I answer, He preached Christ Jesus, and not himself. Christ was the head, he only the minister., and for such only he gave himself to them. He called those who assisted him in preaching the gospel, his fellow laborers and fellow servants.

Not Exalted by Learning

So far was he from taking any advantage of a higher education, superior learning, and more use of the world, to claim to himself any supremacy above the other apostles, that he made light of all these attainments, and declared that he "came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom." but determined to know nothing among those he converted "save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." And the reason he gave for it was, that their "faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." 1 Corinthians 2:1, 2, 5.

Now this conduct put him quite on a level with the other apostles, who knew Jesus Christ as well as he, and had the power of God going along with their preaching in an equal degree of virtue and grace. But an impostor, whose aim had been power, would have acted a contrary part; he would have availed himself of all those advantages; he would have extolled them as highly as possible; he would have set up himself by virtue of them as head of that sect to which he acceded, or at least of the proselytes made by himself. This is no more than what was done by every philosopher who formed a school; much more was it natural in one who propagated a new religion.

We see that the Bishops of Rome have claimed to themselves a primacy, or rather a monarchy, over the whole Christian church. If St. Paul had been actuated by the same lust of dominion, it was much easier for him to have succeeded in such an attempt. It was much easier to make himself head of a few poor mechanics and fishermen, whose superior he had always been in the eyes of the world, than for the Bishops of Rome to reduce those of Ravenna or Milan, and other great metropolitans, to their obedience. Besides the opposition they met with from such potent antagonists, they were obliged to support their pretensions in direct contradiction to those very Scriptures which they were forced to ground them upon. and to the indisputable practice of the whole Christian church for many centuries. These were such difficulties as required the utmost abilities and skill to surmount.

But the first preachers of the gospel had easier means to corrupt a faith not yet fully known, and which in many places could only be known by what they severally published themselves. It was necessary, indeed, while they continued together and taught the same people, that they should agree, otherwise the credit of their sect would have been overthrown; but when they separated. and formed different churches in distant countries, the same necessity no longer remained.

It. was in the power of St. Paul to model most of the churches he formed, so as to favor his own ambition. For he preached the gospel in parts of the world where no other, apostles had been, where Christ was not named till he brought the knowledge of Him, avoiding to build "upon another man's foundation." Romans 15:20. Now had he been an impostor, would he have confined himself to just the same gospel as was delivered by the other apostles, where he had such a latitude to preach what he pleased without contradiction? Would he not have twisted and warped the doctrines of Christ to his own ends, to the particular use and expediency of his own followers and to the peculiar support and increase of his own power?

That this was not done by St. Paul, or by any other of the apostles in so many various parts of the world as they traveled into, and in churches absolutely under their own direction. That the gospel preached by them all should be one and the same, the doctrines agreeing in every particular, without any one of them attributing more to himself than he did to the others, or establishing anything even in point of order or discipline different from the rest, or more advantageous to his own interest, credit, or power, is a most strong and convincing proof of their not being impostors, but acting entirely by divine inspiration.

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What Paul Gave Up

If, then, it appears that St. Paul had nothing to gain by taking this part let us consider, on the other hand, what he gave up and what he had reason to fear. He gave up a fortune, which he was then in a fair way of advancing; he gave up that reputation which he had acquired by the labors and studies of his whole life, and by a behavior which had been blameless, “touching the righteousness which is in the law” (Philippians 3:6). He gave up his, friends, his relations, and family, from whom he estranged and banished himself for life; he gave up that religion which he had profited in, above many his equals in his own nation, and those traditions of his fathers, which he had been more exceedingly zealous of. Galatians 1:14. How hard this sacrifice was to a man of his warm temper, and above all men, to a Jew, is, worth consideration.

Marks of Moral Excellence

It only remains to be inquired, whether the gratification of any other passion under the authority of that religion, or by the means it afforded, could be his inducement. That there have been some impostors who have pretended to revelations from God merely to give loose rein to irregular passions, and set themselves free from all restraints of government, law, or morality, both ancient and modern history shows. But the doctrine preached by St. Paul is absolutely contrary to all such designs. His writings breathe nothing but the strictest morality, obedience to magistrates, order, and government, with the utmost abhorrence of all licentiousness, idleness, or loose behavior under the cloak of religion. (See Romans 11 and 13, and Colossians 3.)

Nor does any part of his life, either before or after his conversion to Christianity. bear any mark of a libertine disposition. As among the Jews, so among the Christians, his conversation and manners were blameless. Hear the appeal that he makes to the Thessalonians upon his doctrine and behavior among them: “Our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile.” “You are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblamably we behaved ourselves among you that believe.” 1 Thessalonians 2:3, 10. And to the Corinthians he says, “We have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man.” 2 Corinthians 7:2. (See also 2 Corinthians 1: 12 and 4:2).

As, therefore, no rational motive appears for St. Paul’s embracing the faith of Christ, without having been really convinced of the truth of it, but on the contrary, everything concurred to deter him from acting that part, one might very justly conclude that when a man of his understanding embraced that faith, he was in reality convinced of the truth of it. And that, by consequence, he was not an impostor, who said what he knew to be false with an intent to deceive.

Paul Not a Mere Enthusiast

I come next to consider whether he was an enthusiast who, by the force of an overheated imagination, imposed upon himself through ignorance, credulity, or self-conceit. That the first of these qualities was in St. Paul may be concluded from that fervor of zeal with which he acted, both as a Jew and a Christian, in maintaining that which he thought to be right. And hence, I suppose, as well as from the impossibility of his having been an impostor, some unbelievers have chosen to consider him as an enthusiast. But this quality alone will not be sufficient to prove him to have been so in the opinion of any reasonable man. His zeal was eager and warm, but tempered with prudence, and even with the civilities and decorums of life, as appears by his behavior to Agrippa, Festus, and Felix; not the blind, inconsiderate, indecent zeal of an enthusiast.

As to ignorance, which is another ground of enthusiasm, St. Paul was so far from it that he appears to have been master, not of the Jewish learning alone, but of the Greek. And this is one reason why he is less liable to the imputation of having been an enthusiast than the other apostles, though none of them were such any more than he, as may by other arguments be invincibly proved.

I have mentioned credulity as a characteristic and cause of enthusiasm, which, that it was not in St. Paul, the history of his life undeniably shows. For on the contrary, he seems to have been slow and hard of belief in the extreme degree, having paid no regard to all the miracles done by our Savior, the fame of which lie could not be a stranger to, as he lived in Jerusalem; nor to that signal one done after His resurrection, and in His name, by Peter and John, upon the lame man at the Beautiful gate of the temple; nor to the evidence given in consequence of it by Peter, in the presence of the high priest, the rulers, elders,

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and scribes, that Christ was “raised from the dead.” (See Acts 3)

He must also have known that when all the apostles had been shut up in the common prison, and the high priest, the council, and all the senate of the children of Israel had sent their officers to bring them before them, the officers came and found them not in prison, but returned and made this report: “The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors. But when we had opened, we found no man within.” And that the council was immediately told that the men they had put in prison were standing in the temple and teaching the people; and that being brought from thence before the council, they had spoken these memorable words: “We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him.” Acts 5:18-32.

All this he resisted, and was consenting to the murder of Stephen, who preached the same thing, and evinced it by miracles. Acts 8:1. So that his mind, far from being disposed to a credulous faith, or a too easy reception of any miracle worked in proof of the Christian religion, appears to have been barred against it by the most obstinate prejudices, as much as any man’s could possibly be. And from hence we may fairly conclude that nothing less than the irresistible evidence of his own senses, clear from all possibility of doubt, could have overcome his unbelief.

Self conceit is another circumstance that, for the most part, prevails in the character of an enthusiast. It leads men of a warm temper, and religious turn, to think themselves worthy of the special regard and extraordinary favors of God; and the breath of that inspiration to which they pretend is often no more than the wind of this vanity, which puffs them up to such extravagant imaginations. That St. Paul was as free from it as any man, I think may be gathered from all that we see in his writings or know of his life. Throughout his epistles there is not one word that savors of vanity, nor is any action recorded of him in which the least mark of it appears.

In his epistle to the Ephesians, he calls himself “less than the least of all saints.” Ephesians 3:8. And to the Corinthians he says he is “the least of the apostles,” and “not meet to be called an apostle,” because he had “persecuted the church of God.” 1 Corinthians 15: 9. In his epistle to Timothy he says: “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners: of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting.” 1 Timothy 1: 15, 16.

Takes No Praise to Himself

Nor does he take any merit to himself, even from the success of those apostolic labors which he principally boasts of in his epistle. For in a former one to the same church he writes thus: “Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom you believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos Watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planted anything, neither he that watered; but God that given the increase.” 1 Corinthians 3:5-7. And in another place of the same epistle he says, “By the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain, but I labored more abundantly than they all. Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” 1 Corinthians 15:10.

I think it needless to give more instances of the modesty of St. Paul. Certain I am, not one can be given that bears any color of vanity, or that vanity in particular which so strongly appears in all enthusiasts, of setting their imaginary gifts above those virtues which make the essence of true religion, and the real excellency of a good man, or in the Scripture phrase, of a “saint.”

Love Exalted as the Greatest Thing in Life

In his first epistle to the Corinthians he has these words: “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profits me nothing.” 1 Corinthians 13:1-3.

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Is this the language of enthusiasm? Did ever enthusiast prefer that universal benevolence which comprehends all moral virtues, and which (as appears by the following verses) is meant by charity here; did ever enthusiast, I say, prefer that benevolence to faith and to miracles, to those religious opinions which he had embraced, and to those supernatural graces and gifts which he imagined he had acquired, nay, even to the merit of martyrdom? Is it not the genius of enthusiasm to set moral virtues infinitely below the merit of faith; and of all moral virtues, to value that least which is most particularly enforced by St. Paul, a spirit of candor, moderation, and peace? Certainly neither the temper nor, the opinions of a man subject to fanatical delusions, are to be found in this passage; but it may be justly concluded, that he who could esteem the value of charity so much above miraculous gifts, could not have pretended to any such gifts if he had them not in reality.

Paul's Vision of Christ

Nothing can be more certain than that when Saul set out for Damascus with authority from the chief priests to bring the Christians who were there "bound unto Jerusalem" (Acts 9:2), an authority solicited by himself, and granted to him at his own earnest desire, his mind was strongly possessed with opinions against Christ and His followers. To give those opinions a more active force, his passions at that time concurred, being inflamed in the highest degree by the irritating consciousness of his past conduct toward them, the pride of supporting a part he had voluntarily engaged in, and the credit he found it procured him among the chief priests and rulers, whose commission he bore.

If in such a state and temper of mind, an enthusiastic man had imagined he saw a vision from heaven denouncing the anger of God against the Christians, and commanding him to persecute them without any mercy, it might be accounted for by the natural power of enthusiasm. But that, in the very instant of his being engaged in the fiercest and hottest persecution against them, no circumstance having happened to change his opinions or alter the bent of his disposition, he should at once imagine himself called by a heavenly vision to be the apostle of Christ, whom but a moment before he deemed an impostor and a blasphemer. that had been justly put to death on the cross, is in itself wholly incredible.

This is so clear a proposition that I might rest the whole argument entirely upon it; but still further to show that this vision could not be a phantom of St. Paul's own creating, I beg leave to observe that he was not alone when he saw it. There were many others in company, whose minds were no better disposed than his to the Christian faith. Could it be possible that the imaginations of all these men should at the same time be so strangely affected as to make them believe that they saw "a great light" shining about them, "above the brightness of the sun" at noonday and heard the sound of a voice from heaven, though not the words which it spoke (Acts 9:3; 22:9) when in reality they neither saw nor heard any such thing? Could they be so infatuated with this conceit of their fancy, as to fall down together with Saul, and be -speechless-through fear (Acts 26:14; 9:7), when nothing had happened extraordinary either to them or to him? This supposition is so contrary to nature and all possibility. that unbelief must find some other solution, or give up the point.

Paul's Blindness and Conversion

Saul was struck blind, and continued so for three days. Now, had this blindness been natural from the effects of a meteor or lightning upon him, it would not have been possible for Ananias to heal it, as we find that he did, merely by putting his hands on him and speaking a few words. Acts 9:17, 18; 22:13. This undoubtedly surpassed the power of nature; and if this was a miracle, it proves the other to have been a miracle too, and a miracle done by the same Jesus Christ. For Ananias, when he healed Saul, spoke to him thus: -Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou might receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost." Acts 9:17.

And that he saw Christ both now and after this time, appears not only by what he relates (Acts 22:17, 18), but by other passages in his epistles. (See 1 Corinthians 9:1; 15:8.) For Him as he asserts in many places of his epistles, he learned the gospel by immediate revelation, and by Him he was sent to the Gentiles. Acts 9:21; 22:11. Among those Gentiles "from Jerusalem, and round about to Illyricum," he preached the gospel of Christ" with "mighty signs and wonders," wrought "by the power of the Spirit of God," to make them obedient to his preaching, as he himself testifies in his epistle to the Romans (Romans 15:19). And of which a particular account is given to us in the Acts of the Apostles, signs and wonders,

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indeed, above any power of nature to work or of imposture to counterfeit or of enthusiasm to imagine.

Now, does not such a series of miraculous acts, all consequential and dependent upon the first revelation, put the truth of that revelation beyond all possibility of doubt or deceit?

Paul Not Deceived by Others

Having thus, I flatter myself, satisfactorily shown that St. Paul could not be an enthusiast, who, by the force of an overheated imagination, imposed on him self, I am next to inquire whether he was deceived by the fraud of others, and whether all that he said of himself can be imputed to the power of that deceit? But I need say little to show the absurdity of this supposition. It was morally impossible for the disciples of Christ to conceive such a thought as that of turning His persecutor into His apostle, and to do this by fraud, in the very instant of his greatest fury against them and their Lord.

But could they have been so extravagant as to conceive such a thought, it was physically impossible for them to execute it in the manner we find his conversion to have been effected. Could they produce a light in the air, which at midday was brighter than that of the sun? Could they make Saul bear words from out of, that light (Acts 22:9) which were not heard by the rest of the company? Could they make him blind for three days after that vision, and then make scales fall from off his eyes, and restore to him his sight by a word? Beyond dispute, no fraud could do these things; but much less still could the fraud of others produce those miracles, subsequent to his conversion, in which he was not passive, but active; which he did himself, and appeals to in his epistles as proofs of his divine mission.

Conclusion

I shall then take it for granted that he was not deceived by the fraud of others, and that what he said of himself can no more be imputed to the power of that deceit, than to willful imposture or to enthusiasm; and then it follows that what he related to have been the cause of his conversion, and to have happened in consequence of it, did all really happen; and that therefore the Christian religion is a divine revelation.

That this conclusion is fairly and undeniably drawn from the premises, I think must be owned, unless some probable cause can be assigned to account for those facts so authentically related in the Acts of the Apostles, and attested in his epistles by St. Paul himself. That God should work miracles for the establishment of a most holy religion, which from the insuperable difficulties that stood in the way of it, could not have established itself without such assistance, is no way repugnant to human reason.

Miracles and Mysteries of Christianity Not Incredible

Those who reject Christianity as a divine revelation, acknowledge the morals delivered by Christ and by His apostles to be worthy of God. Is it then on account of the mysteries in the gospel that the facts are denied, though supported by evidence which in all other cases would be allowed to contain the clearest conviction, and cannot in this be rejected without reducing the mind to a state of absolute skepticism, and overturning those rules by which we judge of all evidence, and of the truth or credibility of all other facts? But this is plainly to give up the use of our understanding where we are able to use it most properly, in order to apply it to things of which it is not a competent judge. The motives and reasons upon which divine wisdom may think proper to act, as well as the manner in which it acts, must often lie out of the reach of our understanding; but the motives and reasons of human actions, and the manner in which they are performed, are all in the sphere of human knowledge, and upon them we may judge with a well-grounded confidence when they are fairly proposed to our consideration.

God's Ways Above Man's Conception

It is incomparably more probable that a revelation from God concerning the ways of His providence, should contain in it matters above the capacity of our minds to comprehend, than that St. Paul, or indeed any of the other apostles, should have acted, as we know that they did, upon any other foundations than certain knowledge of Christ's being risen from the dead; or should have succeeded in the

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work they undertook, without the aid of miraculous powers.

Nor do they who reject the Christian religion because of the difficulties which occur in its mysteries. consider how far that objection will go against other systems, both of religion and of philosophy, which they themselves profess to admit. There are in deism itself, the most simple of all religious opinions, several difficulties, for which human reason can but ill account; which may therefore be not improperly styled “articles of faith.”

Reason Embraces Faith

No wise man will deny the being of God, or His infinite wisdom, goodness, and power, which are proved by such evidence as carries the clearest and strongest conviction, and cannot be refused without involving the mind in far greater difficulties, even in downright absurdities and impossibilities. The only part, therefore, that can be taken, is to account in the best manner that our weak reason is able to do, for seeming objections. And where that fails, to acknowledge its weakness, and acquiesce under the certainty that our very imperfect knowledge or judgment cannot be the measure of the divine wisdom, or the universal standard of truth. So likewise it is with respect to the Christian religion. Some difficulties occur in that revelation which human reason can hardly clear. But as the truth of it stands upon evidence so strong and convincing that it cannot be denied without much greater difficulties than those that attend the belief of it, as I have before endeavored to prove, we ought not to reject it upon such objections, however mortifying they may be to our pride. All that concerns our duty is clear; and as to other points, either of natural or revealed religion, if He has left some obscurities in them, is that any reasonable cause of complaint? Not to rejoice in the benefit of what He has graciously allowed us to know, from a presumptuous disgust at our incapacity of knowing more, is as absurd as it would be to refuse to walk because we cannot fly.

From the arrogant ignorance of metaphysical reasoning, aiming at matters above our knowledge, arose all the speculative impiety and many of the worst superstitions of the old heathen world, before the gospel was preached to bring men back again to the primitive faith.

If the glorious light of the gospel be sometimes overcast with clouds of doubt, so is the light of our reason, too. But shall we deprive ourselves of the advantages of either, because those clouds cannot, perhaps, be entirely removed while we remain in this mortal life? Shall we obstinately and frowardly shut our eyes against that Dayspring from on high that has visited us, because we are not, as yet, able to bear the full blaze of His beams? True philosophy, as well as true Christianity, would teach us a wiser and more modest part. It would teach us to be content within those bounds which God has assigned to us, “casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalted itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” 2 Corinthians 10:5.

3. The History and Evidence of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ

Harmony of the Gospel Narratives

BY GILBERT WEST, ESQ.

(Condensed and Arranged by Lee S. Wheeler)

Introduction

WEST apparently was the first among English writers to correlate the incidents of the morning of Christ’s resurrection into a harmonious and satisfactory order. Having a mind trained to perceive the circumstantial evidence of a case, he saw the connection between the various reports as related by the different writers of the New Testament, and was able to resolve them into a harmonious narrative, which the American Tract Society described as unanswered and unanswerable, adding that in this treatise on the resurrection of Christ, “all seeming contradictions in the records of the evangelists are so fully explained, and the whole subject of the resurrection so amply and ably presented, that it forms one of the most convincing proofs of the truth of Christianity.”

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West's work is based upon the following observations:

1. That the women who first visited Christ's tomb on the morning of the resurrection, evidently came from different directions and in different companies, and as they did not all arrive at the same time, they consequently did not all see the same sights or relate exactly the same incidents.

2. That Mary Magdalene was twice at the sepulcher, reporting, first, only that the body of Christ had been removed from the tomb, leaving it open and empty (John 20:1, 2); while in the second instance she reported having seen Jesus in the garden. Verse 18.

3. That there were different appearances of the angels to the different visitors at the tomb, followed by manifestations of Christ to certain persons.

4. That these several facts were reported to the apostles at different times, by various women. (Compare the accounts in Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, and The Resurrection of Jesus Christ)

Our Savior was crucified on Friday ("the preparation," or day before the Sabbath). He expired about three o'clock in the afternoon of that day, and was buried that evening, before the commencement of the Sabbath. Sometime, and most probably toward the close of the Sabbath-after the religious duties of the day were over, the chief priests obtained of Pilate, the Roman governor, a guard to watch the sepulcher until the third day was past, pretending to apprehend that the disciples might come by night and steal away the body, and then give out that He was risen, according to what He Himself had predicted while yet alive. They accordingly made sure the sepulcher, and to prevent any possible conspiracy of the soldiers with the disciples, put a seal upon the stone which closed up the entrance to the sepulcher.

The Resurrection Morning

Very early on the first day of the week (the day immediately following the Sabbath, and the third from the death of Christ), Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, in pursuance of the design of embalming the Lord's body, which they had arranged for with the other women who attended Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, and for the performing of which they had prepared unguents and spices, set out in order to take a view of the sepulcher, just as the day began to break. About that time "there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men." Matthew 28:2-4. During their amazement and terror, Christ came out of the sepulcher; and the keepers, on recovering from their trance, arose and fled to the city.

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, in the meantime, were still on their way to the sepulcher, where, together with Salome, who appears to have joined them on the way, they arrived about sunrise. Mark 16:1-4. As they drew near, discoursing about embalming the body of their Master, "they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulcher? ... for it was very great," as the two Marys at least knew, who had seen it placed there, two days before, and noticed with what difficulty it was done. Matthew 27:60, 61. But in the midst of their deliberations about removing this great and sole obstacle (for it does not appear that they knew anything about the guard), lifting up their eyes while yet at some distance, they perceived that it had already been rolled away, at which Mary, evidently leaving the other women, hastened on ahead, as it appears that she was first at the tomb.

Mary First Spreads the Report

Alarmed at finding the sepulcher standing open and empty, and supposing that some unknown men had removed the stone and taken away the body, she did not wait for the other women, but hurried off to find the apostles and acquaint them with what had happened. John 20:1, 2.

The Vision of the Angels

While Mary Magdalene was going on this errand, the other Mary and Salome reached the tomb, and as they entered in they saw an angel sitting on the-right side, clothed in a long white garment, and were affrighted. "And he said unto them, Be not affrighted: you seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: He is risen; He is not here: behold the place where they laid Him. But go your way, tell His disciples and Peter that He goes before you into Galilee: there shall you see Him, as He said unto you. And they went out

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quickly, and fled from the sepulcher; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they anything to any man, for they were afraid.” Mark 16:6-8.

Peter and John Run to the Tomb

After the departure of Mary and Salome, came John and Peter, who, having been informed by Mary Magdalene that the body of the Lord had been removed from the sepulcher, and that she knew not where they had laid Him, ran both together to the sepulcher, and John outran Peter, and came first to the sepulcher. “And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then comes Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulcher, and sees the, linen clothes lie, and the napkin, that was about His head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple [John], which came first to the sepulcher, and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.” John 20:54.

[NOTE. As there were no evidences of violence or disorder apparent within the tomb, and the wrappings which had been removed from the body of Jesus were laid aside, John was led to believe that Jesus had risen, as He had before told them, although he was still ignorant of the Scripture prophecies relating to the resurrection. L. S. W.]

Jesus First Shows Himself Alive

Then the disciples went away again unto their own home. But Mary, having returned, -stood without at the sepulcher weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulcher, and sees two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She said unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.

“And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus said unto her, Woman. why weepest thou? whom seeks thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, said unto him, Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou has laid Him, and I will take Him away. Jesus said unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and said unto Him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. Jesus said unto her, Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father: but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God.” John 20:10-17. Mary now left the garden again to carry the glad news of Christ’s resurrection to the disciples.

Jesus Appears Also to Salome and the Other Mary

After this appearance to Mary Magdalene, to whom, as St. Mark expressly states, He appeared first, the other Mary and Salome, who had fled from the sepulcher in such terror and amazement that they said not anything to any one, were met on their way by Jesus Himself, who said to them, “All hail. And they came and held Him by the feet, and worshiped Him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell My brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see Me.” Matthew 28:8-10. (See also Mark 16:8.)

The Arrival of John and the Women With Spices

These several women and the two apostles being now gone from the sepulcher, Joanna with the rest of the Galilean women came, and others with them, bringing the spices which they had prepared for embalming the body of Jesus. And finding the stone rolled away from the sepulcher, they entered in. Not finding the body of the Lord Jesus, they were much perplexed thereabout; and “behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: and as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek you the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how He spoke unto you when He was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified and the third day rise again. And they remembered His words, and returned from the sepulcher, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.” Luke 24:4-11.

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Incident on the Road to Emmaus

The same day two of the disciples went “to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus Himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were held that they should not know Him. And He said unto them, What manner of communications are these that you have one to another, as you walk, and are sad? And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto Him, Art Thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and has not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?

“And He said unto them, What things? And they said unto Him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and have crucified Him. But we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done.

“Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulcher; and when they found not His body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that He was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulcher, and found it even so as the women had said: but Him they saw not.

“Then He said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

“And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and He made as though He would have gone farther. But they constrained Him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And He went in to tarry with them.

Jesus Makes Himself Known

“And it came to pass, as He sat at meat with them, He took bread, and blessed it and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him; and He vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures? And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how He was known of them in breaking of bread.” Luke 24:13-35.

No Discrepancy in the Accounts

The order of events being thus understood, all the objections against this part of the gospel history as contradictory and inconsistent, entirely vanish and come to naught. Unless authors who relate different and independent parts of the same history may for that reason be said to contradict each other, the evangelists, I will be bold to say, stand as clear of that charge as any of the most accurate historians, either ancient or modern.

No Expectation of Christ's Resurrection

That the minds of those who first came to the sepulcher were far from any illusion that Christ had risen, is evident from the fact that they came to perform the last offices usually paid to the dead, and by embalming the body to complete the interment of their deceased Master. And when, entering into the tomb, they found not the body, it was more natural for them to think with Mary Magdalene that some persons had taken it away and laid it elsewhere, than to consider that it was risen from the dead. And it is plain that Joanna and those with her were in this way of thinking, for when they entered in and found not the body of the Lord Jesus, Luke says, “They were much perplexed there about.” Luke 24:4. .

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Many and Infallible Proofs

All were thrown into amazement and confusion by what was happening. The miraculous events of the morning overwhelmed their understanding. It was all so different from the way they had hoped. It was absolutely necessary for the resurrection of Christ to become a well-established fact with the apostles, for as one of them afterward wrote, "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ: whom He raised not up, if so he that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ he not raised, your faith is vain. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." 1 Corinthians 15:14-18. In His resurrection were to appear "the first fruits of them that slept." Verse 20.

The effectiveness of their labors depended upon the evidence of the resurrection, of which they were called to be witnesses to the world, and which they were to proclaim by their own testimony, and by the testimony of others who had seen Jesus alive after His resurrection. They were, therefore, left for a time after the startling incidents that morning, to consider the empty sepulcher, and the reports of the women, the vision of the angels, and the testimony of Mary and others, that Christ had appeared to them, which, even when declared to them, seemed incredible.

It was necessary for them, also, to remember the words which Jesus Himself, at times, before had spoken to them, when He so repeatedly told them that He was to be taken and put to death, and the third day rise again. Matthew 16:21; 20:18, 19. While they were in this state of mind, Christ began to manifest Himself to them. First to Peter, and also to two of the disciples while on their way to Emmaus late that day. and in an unrecognized form, opening to their minds the scriptures in which His death and resurrection had been foretold (Luke 24:13-27), and afterward revealing Himself to them as they sat at their evening meal.

Finally He showed Himself openly to the whole company of eleven apostles, that evening at Jerusalem, coming into their midst and demonstrating His reality by visible signs and material proofs. Luke 24:36-47. By this progressive order of revelation, and the increasing force of evidence, the followers of Jesus were enabled to recover from the shock of disappointed hopes and the minds of the apostles were prepared to ace through the mystery of the rent sepulcher, and grasp the reality of Christ in His risen and glorified life.

A Great Cloud of Witnesses

There is seen a train of witnesses, a succession of miraculous events, followed by others in Galilee of larger magnitude. He being seen of above five hundred persons at one time, meeting with His apostles frequently for forty days eating with them, and publicly instructing them concerning the evangelization of the world and the kingdom of God. There was a massing of evidence, with scene rising out of scene in cumulous form, in what Luke refers to as "many and infallible proofs" (Acts 1:3), mutually strengthening and illustrating each other, and all concurring to prove one and the same fact, which as it was in its nature most astonishing, and in its consequences of the utmost importance to mankind, required the fullest and most exceptional evidence.

And I venture to say, never was a fact more fully proved, as must appear to any one who considers with me, (1) the matter of the evidence, its extraordinary nature, and various forms. (2) The character and dispositions of those whom it was intended to convince, their apparent honesty, intelligence, and adherence to former opinions, which made them slow to accept reports, etc. (3) The personal testimony of multitudes of both men and women, based upon the evidence of their senses in the case, forming a great cloud of witnesses. (4) The witness of Christianity itself: its agreement with Old Testament predictions and types of the mission of the Messiah, or world's Redeemer. The consequences of His national rejection by the Jews, and the acceptance of Christianity by Gentiles, viewed in the light of Christ's own prophetic declarations, and the events of history.

The Apostles Slow to Believe

The apostles relate to us in the Gospels how their own minds were blinded by Jewish interpretations of the prophecies respecting Christ, so that they were not expecting Him to die and rise again, but to establish a kingdom over Israel then and there.

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This erroneous view of the Savior's mission unfitted them to understand many of His sayings while He was yet with them, and led them to forsake Him when He was taken prisoner and crucified. They were disappointed, and lost their faith, and thus were led to desert Him and deny that they were His disciples. They were contemplating going back to their old occupations, and were therefore themselves surprised at the reports of the women who were first at the sepulcher. This frank confession of such ignorance and disloyalty on their part, however, is good evidence of their sincerity and truthfulness. Mark 16:11-13.

[NOTES. It was important, in view of their misunderstanding of the prophecies regarding the Messiah, that in connection with the manifest resurrection of Christ, the views held by the disciples should be corrected by receiving a true exposition of the Scriptures relating to that event. And this, it will be noted, is just what Jesus began to impart to them without delay on the day of His resurrection, thus revealing to them the cause of their disappointment, and restoring their faith, by making clear to their minds that what had now transpired was exactly what the Scriptures had pointed out was to be.

The Revival Among Christ's Followers

The blow which had fallen upon the disciples in the sudden seizure and crucifixion of Him with whom they expected soon to reign, His resurrection upon the third day, the revival which followed, healing their wounded and sorrowing hearts, restoring unity to the scattered flock, and leading them to return unto their Lord, had been vividly portrayed in the mysterious words of the prophet Hosea centuries before, when he said: "Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for He hath torn, and He will heal us. He hath smitten, and He will bind us up. After two days will He revive us: in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight." Hosea 6:1, 2.

The First to Rise From Death

"Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.... Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming." 1 Corinthians 15:20-23.

The resurrection of Christ upon the third day, as the forerunner and surety of the whole body of Christians finally to be raised at His return, was beautifully and marvelously symbolized in the ceremonial of the temple service among the Jews, by the presentation before God of the first sheaf of the spring's harvest, which, because it was to typify the resurrection of Christ, was always offered on the third day following the sacrifice of the Passover lamb. As that sheaf was the first sheaf of the harvest, so Christ was to be the first sheaf of the heavenly harvest, the harvest unto life eternal. Jesus seems to have been thinking of this just before His death, when He said to His disciples: "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone: but if it die, it brings forth much fruit." John 12:23, 24.

It is in the church that the body of Christ's humanity is completed, and His resurrection is the pledge of the resurrection of His children. L. S. W.]

Messianic Prophecy In a New Light

The fourth evidence appealed to by our Savior in proof of His resurrection, and to enable His followers to see more clearly into the work of the new dispensation now opening before them, was that of the scriptures in which are contained not only the promises of a Messiah and Savior of the world, but the marks and descriptions by which He was to be known. Of these there are so many, and those so various, so seemingly incompatible in one and the same person, and exhibiting Him under such a multitude of types and figures, that as it was absurd for a mere mortal to pretend to answer this character of the Messiah in all points, so it was difficult for those who by some expressions of the prophets were filled with the idea of a glorious, powerful, and triumphant Deliverer, to understand the intimation given in others of His sufferings and death.

But this difficulty proceeds rather from the prejudices and blindness of the interpreters, than from any degree of obscurity in the latter class of scriptures (those relating to His death), more than the former (which describe His glorious reign). His sufferings and death. .and His offering Himself up as a sacrifice

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for sin, are as plainly set forth in the writings of the prophets and in the types of the Mosaic ceremonies as His power and His priesthood; and if the Jews, and even His disciples, turned their expectations to the one and overlooked the other, it was owing to their mistaking the nature of His kingdom, and the end and design of His priestly office.

[NOTE. The dispensational order of events which provided for Christ's mediatorial work in the heavens before His reign upon earth, was among the subjects to which Christ referred, no doubt, when shortly before His death He said to the apostles: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: and He will show you things to come." John 16:12, 13. L. S. W.]

Prophecies of Redemption

Besides the expressed word of prophecy there were numerous predictions of another kind, of the sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ, held forth in the types and figures of the Jewish ceremonial service, as before noted, such as the slaying of the paschal lamb, the offering of the wave sheaf the third day after, etc.

That the Jewish rabbis and the fathers of the Christian church, as well as our Savior and the apostles, understood many things in the law of Moses and in the prophets and Psalms to be types and shadows of the things to come in Christ, is very certain. And if the existence of such types be once admitted, it is not difficult to show that they met their fulfillment in Christ as the great antitype to which they all referred. Whoever takes an attentive view of the predictions relating to the Messiah in the writings of Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms, will perceive the great scheme of Providence there revealed for the deliverance of mankind from sin and death, opening in a succession of prophecies through several ages of the world, and becoming more and more explicit as the times of accomplishment drew near.

Thus, the promise made to Adam and Eve of the Seed of the woman who was to bruise the serpent's head, was renewed to Abraham in clearer terms, and limited to his descendants in Isaac, through whom all nations were to be blessed. Genesis 12. Afterward it was confined to the tribe of Judah as the particular division of Jacob's race which was to maintain the government of Israel until the coming of the Promised One (Genesis 49:10); and finally, it was affixed to the family of David, from whom the Branch of righteousness and immortality was to spring. His virgin motherhood, the place of His birth, the universal character of His mission, the purity of His teaching, the divine likeness of His life, His vicarious death, and the heavenly nature of His reign, all are matters of description in such portions of the Scriptures.

The Beginning of Messianic Prophecy

The first prophecy relating to this subject in the books of Moses, and the first indeed that was ever given to man, is that recorded in the third chapter of Genesis and the fifteenth verse, which was addressed to the serpent, following the temptation and fall of man: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel."

Christian writers apply this to our blessed Savior, emphatically styled here the Seed of the woman, who came in the fullness of time to bruise the serpent's head by destroying the work of the devil, and restoring to the liberty of the sons of God those who were held in the bondage and captivity of sin. "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world."

The Portrait of Christ in Isaiah - Isaiah 53, BC 700

It is impossible for any one who is the least acquainted with the history of Christ, not to perceive many circumstances of His life, His sufferings, and His death plainly pointed out in this prophecy. And indeed so apparently and so completely was it fulfilled in Christ, that the later rabbis, to avoid the conclusion which might be drawn from this and other prophecies in favor of the gospel, have invented the distinction of a double Messiah: one who was to redeem us (restoring the national glory, and reigning like Solomon), and another who was to suffer for us (see Pearson on "The Creed"). "If we look upon this fifty-third chapter of Isaiah," says Bishop Pearson, "we must acknowledge it fulfilled to the highest degree imaginable in Jesus."

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Rejected Love

“He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.” (Compare this with the treatment of Christ related in Mark 14: 27-36; Luke 19: 41; Matthew 23:37, 38.)

The Man of Sorrows

“Surely He hath borne our grief, and carried, our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.” (Compare John 19:1-17; 1:34-36.)

His Suffering for Others

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth.” (Compare John 19:9-11; Matthew 27:19-50.)

His Extraordinary Death

“He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare His generation? for He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was He stricken.” (Compare Daniel 9: 26; Matthew 27:1, 2; Luke 23:7.)

Classed with Convicts, Buried With the Noble

“He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death; because He had done no violence, neither was, any deceit in His mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief.” (Compare Mark 15:33-39; Daniel 9:26, 27.)

Foresaw His Triumph Over Death

“When Thou shall make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.” (Compare Matthew 26:32; Mark 14:28; John 11:25.)

His Mediation Work Outlined

“By His knowledge shall My righteous servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He hath poured out His soul unto death: and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. (Compare Colossians 2:15; Ephesians 4:8-10.)

The Character of Jesus as Portrayed In the Gospel

If we join the prophets and evangelists together, it becomes still more manifest that the one foreshadowed in Old Testament predictions is identical with the Man of sorrows described in the New Testament. What the prophets foretold that the Messiah would suffer, that the Gospels record of the sufferings of Christ.

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Scene An Gethsemane

Isaiah speaks of His visage being marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men. Isaiah 52:14. The evangelists describe in the life of Jesus a strange and deathly agony which passed over Him in the garden of Gethsemane, when His features were baptized in bloody sweat, and He was repeatedly so prostrated that an angel came to strengthen Him, that He might drink the mysterious cup which ‘ was held out to Him. Luke 22:39-44. The description, no doubt, relates also to the effect of the brutalities upon His person described in Matthew 26:67, 68; and 27:27-30.

Scene on Golgotha

Isaiah saw Him wounded for our transgressions, and Zechariah adds, “They shall look upon- Him “whom they have pierced.” Chapter 12:10. The evangelists tell us that this was the manner of His death. He was nailed to a cross, piercing His hands and His feet, and His side was pierced by a spear. John 19:16-37.

Zechariah says they weighed for His price “thirty pieces of silver”, Chapter 11:12. Matthew relates that the priests covenanted with Judas to betray Jesus into their hands for exactly that sum. Matthew 26:15.

Isaiah says “He was numbered with the transgressors.” Chapter 53:12. Matthew relates that He was executed with two thieves, one on the right and the other on the left, and that He was put to death in place of a notorious criminal named Barabbas, who in Christ’s stead was set free, as it was a custom in connection with the celebration of the Passover to release some such condemned person. (See Matthew 27:15-30.)

Isaiah in this chapter (verse 9) speaks of His burial in these words, “He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death,” the circumstantial accomplishment of which is too remarkable not to be taken notice of.

Remarkable Coincident in the Burial of Jesus

The power of life and death had been taken from the Jews and lodged in the hands of the Roman governor from the time that Augustus annexed Judea to the province of Syria, some years after the birth of Christ. The chief priests, therefore, the rulers of the Jews, were obliged to apply to Pontius Pilate to put Jesus to death, and for leave to take down the bodies from the crosses after the crucifixion.

It was under these peculiar circumstances that Joseph, a rich man of Arimathea, not wishing to have the body of Jesus cast into the common fields of Golgotha, a place of burial for those executed there, and evidently deriving its name from the skulls of malefactors found there asked Pilate for the privilege of removing the body of Jesus, and placed it in his own new tomb, in a garden near the place. Matthew 27:57,58.

While, therefore, His burial was officially provided for only like the wicked companions of His death, under the general leave granted to the Jews for the burial of such bodies near the place of execution where they were taken down from the cross, by an extraordinary coincidence the strange distinction, foreseen and foretold many centuries before, now took place in favor of the body of Jesus, who, though numbered with the transgressors, was given burial among the rich, His body wrapped in fine linen with a mixture of myrrh and aloes, a hundred pounds’ weight, and laid in the new, costly sepulcher of a Jewish nobleman’s private burial place.

King David Foresees an Immortal Offering

“David speaks concerning Him [the Messiah] Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell [the gravel, neither wilt Thou suffer Your Holy One to see corruption.” Acts 2:25-27. These words can by no means be applied to David, who it was never pretended arose from the dead or ascended to heaven, while his tomb was well known when these things were written. But by divine illumination he foresaw that the Messiah, who, according to the flesh, was to descend from him, should be raised up from the dead to sit upon his throne; and thus, truly, it was his own flesh that would not be left in the grave, but raised up to sit upon his throne and reign over the people of God.

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Thus he foretold the resurrection of Christ in words that were literally and exactly fulfilled when Jesus arose from the dead without seeing corruption. As it is explained in the New Testament: "Being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spoke of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell [the grave], neither His flesh did see corruption." Acts 2:30, 31.

[NOTE. Similarly, inspiration, anticipating the birth of Christ, broke forth in prophetic exultation over the event six centuries before it occurred, giving expression to the joy of the house of David at the birth of Messiah, the Prince: "Thou has multiplied the nation: they joy before Thee. For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." Isaiah 9:3-7. L. S. W.]

The Reliability of Christian Evidence

What has hitherto been said relates chiefly to the proofs of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, as related before the apostles, those chosen witnesses of that great and astonishing event. And I hope upon a close, serious, and attentive view of the number and certainty of the facts upon which those proofs were grounded, and the fair and imposing manner in which they were offered for our consideration, that every judicious and candid inquirer after truth will allow that to the apostles, at least, the resurrection of Jesus was most fully and most exceptionally proved.

I shall now proceed to lay before the reader some arguments that induce us, who live at so remote a distance from that age of evidence and miracles, to believe also that Christ arose from the dead.

The positive proof of the veracity of the sacred writers is founded on the exact accomplishment of what they foretold of our Savior and His apostles, as recorded in the New Testament. Instances of this may be cited from many New Testament passages, embodying the fulfillment of Old Testament anticipations.

Infidels will perhaps say that they were written after the events described had occurred, and that the predictions were, therefore, adapted to the events; but they who make this objection will gain little from it since if the events themselves be admitted, it is no difficult matter to demonstrate from them the truth of Christianity.

The prophecies I shall produce relate to different states of the Jews and Gentiles, different not only from each other, but very different from the conditions in which both these classes were at the time when the prophecies were written.

1. The Hebrew Scriptures had announced that the Messiah would institute a new covenant, which would be first offered to the Jews, with whom the old covenant was mediated by Moses, and with whom it was still in force.

2. The Gentiles, i.e., all other nations, were to be admitted into its relations, and invited to participate in its blessings, so that they, too, might become the people of God.

3. The ceremonial law of the old covenant ritual, which was local and typical of Christ, was to cease in His mission, and, therefore not to be binding upon Gentiles. But the moral law of the ten commandments, the basis of the former covenant, was to become also the basis of the new covenant. To this both the Gentiles and the Jews were to pay obedience, as well as to other terms of the new covenant, such as acknowledging the Messiah, and receiving baptism as an outward sign of their acceptance of the covenant.

Condition of the Jews at the Time

At the time when Jesus was upon earth, as is well, known, the Jewish nation occupied a highly favored position in the religious world, and the blessings which they then enjoyed of spiritual favor, religious knowledge, and moral culture, stood out in marked and vivid contrast with the moral depravity, heathen darkness, superstitious bondage, and wretchedness which prevailed among other nations. These superior blessings came largely from the light imparted to that nation in the Sacred Scriptures, the Oracles of God which had from the earliest times been committed to them, teaching them more excellent forms of government, with just laws, and a holy priesthood to instruct the people in divine truth and ways of

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righteousness. They were God's chosen people, and heirs of His covenants of promise in a special degree.

From a human viewpoint, there was in Christ's time every reason to suppose that this condition of favor to the Jews, which had been developing through fourteen hundred years, would continue still, with increasing prosperity through the unlimited future of coming ages.

Christ's Prophetic Declarations

Had not Christ been indeed the Son of God, and the very person whose rejection was portrayed to the Jews in the parable of the vineyard, it is unaccountable that the national calamities there so strikingly pointed out to them should have so quickly overtaken that nation following the rejection and crucifixion of Jesus.

The Parable of the Vineyard - Matthew 21:33-45

"There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and dug a wine press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: and when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.

"When the lord therefore of the vineyard comes, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto Him, He shall miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

"Jesus said unto them, Did you never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard His parables, they perceived that He spoke of them."

By these words is plainly indicated the transference of the kingdom's blessings from the Jews to the Gentiles. And that the Jews did persist in rejecting the gospel till the destruction of the Holy City and temple, and that Gentile nations embraced it and have since inherited these blessings of God, is too evident to require demonstration. The Jews were cast out and scattered among all nations, and their land was desolated; and all that was prefigured in the parable was exactly fulfilled.

The Desolation of Jerusalem Foretold

"When He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou had known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace I but now they are hid from your eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that your enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee. And they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knew not the time of thy visitation." Luke 19:41-44.

And as some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, He said, "As for these things which you behold, the days will come in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." And they asked Him saying, "Master, but when shall these things be?" And He said, "Take heed that you be not deceived: for many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draws near: go you not therefore after them. But when you shall hear of wars and commotion, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass."

"When you shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies," and "the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place," -where it ought not," "then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out. For these be the days of

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vengeance. For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21.

Daniel’s Wonderful Prediction of the Time of the Messiah

[NOTE. Among the wonders of the Bible, nothing seems more remarkable than that the Hebrew Scriptures should have predicted that the Hebrews themselves, God’s chosen people, would fill up the cup of their iniquity in rejecting the Messiah, the heavenly Prince, and that this would be the immediate cause of their national ruin. Yet nothing in all the Sacred Writings is more boldly announced than this fact. It was to Daniel, while a captive in Babylon, that the divine messenger was sent, saying: “I am come to show thee; therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy.” Daniel 9:23, 24.

Here is a definite period called “seventy weeks- assigned to that nation, in which, as particularly stipulated, they were to -finish the transgression.”

Now the Jews were given two kinds of weeks, weeks of days for reckoning short periods, and weeks of years for computing periods of longer duration. In this scale every seventh year was a Sabbath year, or year of rest from labor, just as each seventh day was a day of rest. These years they were strictly commanded to hallow. (See Leviticus 25.) The longer scale was always understood to be meant in such cases as this, just as in reckoning the jubilee years. After every seven weeks of years, or seven times seven years then came the national jubilee. So all Jews well understood this prediction of “seventy weeks” to mean seventy times seven years.

The Time of the Messiah Announced

The messenger continues: “Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem (457 BC see Ezra 7) unto the Messiah the Prince (Anointed One) shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks.” Daniel 9:25.

The first seven weeks (forty-nine years) was allotted to the restoration, for it adds, “The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.”

The second division of the time, sixty-two weeks (434 years), which, added to the seven weeks, was to reach to the Messiah, reckoned from the decree (457 BC) would expire in 27 AD, the very year that Jesus was anointed with the Spirit at His baptism, and entered upon His public ministry as the Messiah, announcing the gospel of righteousness, and introducing the new covenant of salvation. (Compare Acts 10:36-38 with marginal dates of Matthew 4, 5, and Luke 4, 5.) *

The seventieth week would reach to 34 AD, which, according to this prophecy, would end the dispensation of the Jews as a favored nation. This agrees with the evidence found in the Acts of the Apostles, which shows that at that time the Sanhedrin, the supreme court of the Jews, took final action against Christianity, stoned Stephen to death, and raised a general persecution against the church, scattering the followers of Christ among the Gentiles. Acts 7, 8. It was the signal for the work to begin among Gentile peoples and was quickly followed by the outpouring of the Spirit upon the Gentiles as at the first it had come upon the Jews; the conversion of Saul, and the beginning of world-wide evangelism-a new dispensation. Acts 9, 11.

** That the period from 457 BC to 27 AD to exactly 483 years in length in apparent when it is understood that the decree of Artaxerxes was delivered in the autumn of the year 457 BC, and that Jesus was baptized and began His public ministry in the spring of 27 AD. While, therefore, the 483 years began in 457 BC and ended in 27 AD we can reckon in actual time only 456.50 years BC and 26.50 years AD, which total exactly 483 years.*

The “cutting off” of the Messiah, foretold by Daniel, was fulfilled at the crucifixion, and the typical system of sacrifices terminated with the Redeemer’s death on the cross, when the veil of the temple was rent asunder by unseen hands. This was noted in Daniel 9:26,27. It had occurred in the midst of the last

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prophetic: week, at the Passover in the spring of 31 AD and from that time, as the prophecy declared, the withdrawal of the divine presence, on account of transgression, left them desolate until the consummation, and “that determined” should be poured upon them. Verse 2 7.

“Desolation” and “Consummation”

And that “consummation” was swift in coming. Josephus, the Jewish historian, has left us the description of the coming of the Roman armies, laying waste their land and cities. And of the siege of Jerusalem; the appalling miseries which followed, ending in the taking and burning of that city and the temple, and the carrying away of the Jews into captivity among all nations, as Christ declared.

The Triumphal Arch of Titus at Rome, which was erected to celebrate the conquest and desolation of Judea, and through which passed the long train of Jewish captives, following the victorious standards of the Roman legions and chariots of war, still stands as a monumental evidence of the fulfillment of the sure word of God. And there, chiseled in the enduring stone, may still be seen the figures of the stalwart Roman soldiers, bearing on their shoulders the historic golden candlestick and other trophies, all that was left of what was most famed and most holy from the temple at Jerusalem, bearing witness to the world that Titus, son of the Roman emperor Vespasian, was the “prince” long foretold in Jewish prophecy, whose armies in 70 A. D. demolished both “the city and the sanctuary, sweeping away in a flood of war the fated nation that had filled up the measure of its iniquity in putting to death the only One who could save them, crying. “His blood be on us, and on our children. Matthew 27:25.

Since that time Jerusalem and Judea have been the spoil of Gentile masters. Romans, Greeks, Persians, Saracens, Mamelukes, Turks, and Arabs have all had their turn in treading it down. But the poor Jews, though they perform their devotions with their faces toward its ruins, as though it were the object of their worship as well as their affections, have been barred out. For a long time imperial edicts even forbade their entering the city, and it is only in comparatively recent times that their lives have been safe in the country of their forefathers, their Land of Promise, of holy places and sacred story. Though always desiring to return, no power has been able to reverse for them the judgment of God: -Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.” Matthew 23:38.

Attempt of the Emperor Julian to Prove the Words of Jesus Untrue

The heathen Roman emperor Julian, three centuries after the dispersion of the Jews, in his bitterness against the Christians, declared that he would rebuild Jerusalem and the temple, and restore the Jews, to their own land. In this way he hoped to destroy the credibility of the gospel, and restore the waning confidence of the Romans, many of whom were deserting their pagan temples and going over to Christianity.

The zeal of the Jews was equal to his own in such an enterprise, and the great work was begun. What could hinder an emperor from rebuilding Jerusalem and the temple? It had been done in the past, why not again? Julian dared to make the test. The foundations of the temple were begun, but the work was left uncompleted. Why was such an apparently noble project abandoned? Why was the magnificent work of reconstruction left to decay? Why could not the forces of two nations co-operating complete the restoration? Then would teeming multitudes have been seen wending their way up to Zion with praise to the emperor of Rome? But it was not so to be.

Julian may have sought to draw the mantle of silence over his shattered plans, but historians made account of the matter. Ammianus Marcellinus, the celebrated Roman historian of that time, though himself a pagan, relates that terrifying seismic disturbances so threatened the lives of the workmen whom the emperor engaged to rebuild the city, that they were compelled to discontinue their operations. That balls of fire bursting from the earth sometimes burned the men as they labored, and even rendered the place inaccessible. (Ammian. Marcell., Book 23, Chapter 1, Paragraph 2, 3.) The account is confirmed by others of that age, Sozomen, Cassiodorus, and Socrates. Chrysostom was a witness of the deserted walls of Julian’s infamous undertaking, as they existed in his day.

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How We Know That the Apostles Wrote the Gospels

The principal argument in proof that Christ rose from the dead is the testimony of His chosen witnesses, transmitted down in writings, either penned by themselves, or authorized under their inspection and approbation, viz., the Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Apocalypse. It may be proper to consider what reasons there are for believing their testimony to be genuine. To prove the apostles and evangelists to be the authors of those Scriptures which are now received under their names, we have the concurrent attestation of all the earlier writers of the church, deduced by an uninterrupted and uncontrolled tradition from the very time of the apostles themselves. This is such an authentication of these sacred records, as is not to be overturned by bare presumption and a surmised and unproved charge of forgery.

Many Wrote of Christ

It is highly probable that the same spirit which actuated the apostles to preach the gospel and bear witness of the resurrection of Jesus Christ in every nation of the then known world, should likewise incite them to deliver down to posterity in writing that testimony and those precepts upon which the faith and practice of aftertimes were to be established. And indeed, it is evident from Luke's preface to his Gospel, that many writings of this kind were current among the Christians of those times. (See Luke 1: 1-4.) But the apostles alone could prove what they knew, and they were the only authentic sources of those doctrines which they alone received from Christ.

The Testimony of Irenaeus,

Irenaeus, well-known Christian Father, who lived but fifty years later than the apostles, says that having first preached the gospel, the apostles delivered it afterward to us in the Scriptures. The New Testament Scriptures, containing the whole system of facts and doctrines which it was necessary for Christians to know and believe, it appears were thus committed to writing for the use of the churches that they had founded, to serve thenceforward, as he expresses it, for the foundation of their faith in Christ.

Churches Monumental Evidence of Apostolic Labors

Those churches, therefore, were the proper evidences to prove the apostles to be the authors of those writings which they received from them. And as the testimony they gave to the facts does not appear to have been liable to suspicion of fraud, so on the other hand it seems equally free from any probability of error or misinformation, for they must have had certain knowledge of the character and credit of the persons who delivered those writings to them in the name of the apostles, and many other undoubtable proofs to convince them of their being genuine, or to discover the falsehood if they were not. There are in all of Paul's epistles, for instance, many circumstances by which they might certainly have known him to be the author, which any reader can easily discover upon perusing these epistles.

Gospels in Use From Earliest Times

It is evident from the testimony of the oldest Christian writers, some of whom lived very near the time of the apostles themselves, that these Scriptures (the epistles) were cited, read, and generally received by the Christians of their age, and even before. If they were forged writings, as infidels claim, they must have been forged in the lifetime of the apostles, or very soon after their deaths. That they were forged and yet generally received as authentic while the apostles were yet living, nobody will, I imagine, venture to assert, who considers the many circumstances and facts therein related concerning the apostles themselves and numberless other people then living.

All Claims of Forgery Absurd

If they were forged and published soon after the death of the apostles, there was still great danger of the fraud being detected by many living witnesses who knew the truth. For can it be imagined that the

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Corinthians, for example, would have received as genuine, an epistle addressed to them, but not delivered to them until after the death of the apostle whose name it bore. And yet appearing from many circumstances therein mentioned, to have been written several years before, unless such an extraordinary delay was very satisfactorily accounted for? Would they not have demanded of the person who first produced it, how he came by it? How he knew it was written by St. Paul? Why it was not sent at the time it was written, especially as it was evident upon the face of the epistle that it was written upon the occasion of some disturbances and irregularities which had crept into the church, and in answer to some questions proposed to that apostle, which required a speedy reply? These questions and many more arising from the content of the epistle itself would have led to the exposure, had the epistle not been, as it indicates, a personal letter, treasured by the church from the author and apostle himself, in connection with the origin and organization of their church.

Unselfish Character of the Witnesses

It remains that we inquire into the character of the witnesses. If Christ did not rise from the dead, most assuredly He did not appear to the disciples and apostles and preach to them after His resurrection. But if Christ did rise from the dead, and did after His resurrection converse with His apostles, it will be granted that they had sufficient reason for believing in Him, and for acting in obedience to His command to preach the gospel throughout the world.

They not only quitted their houses, their lands, their friends, kindred, and every endearment of life, in order to propagate with infinite labor through innumerable difficulties and with utmost danger in every corner of the known world, the news of salvation to mankind, certain of meeting in every region with new enemies and opponents. But labored with their own hands to support the weak, disclaiming for themselves all authority, pre-eminence, and power, and were willing to be counted as the off scouring of the world.

Doctrines of Christians Evidence of Truthfulness

The belief of a judgment to come when God will judge the world by Jesus Christ, the renunciation of all hypocrisy and falsehood, and the obligation to speak the truth, are necessary articles of the Christian faith, and as such are strongly inculcated in all the teachings of Christ, and writings of the evangelists and apostles. Ephesians 4:25; Romans 3:7, 8. Now that any men who believed God would punish them for speaking an untruth, even though for the advancement of a good cause, should hazard themselves, and without prospect of gain, falsely affirm that they saw and conversed with Jesus Christ after His resurrection, knowing that they must hereafter be judged and punished by Christ for so doing, is too improbable to gain credit with any but those great believers of absurdities, the infidels and skeptics.

Facts Indicated by Exactness of Description

Another mark of veracity in the evangelists appears in their naming the time, the scene of action, the actors, and the witnesses of most of the events mentioned by them; of which I have given a remarkable instance in relating the subject of the resurrection; viz., the time was that of the celebration of the Passover, the solemn annual festival of the Jews; the scene was Jerusalem, the metropolis of Judea, at that time crowded with Jews; the actors and witnesses were the chief priests and elders, Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, the Roman soldiers, the guard which was set over the tomb, the disciples, and others.

[NOTE. It is said also that the apostolic Fathers quoted to such an extent from the writings now known as the New Testament, that if all the books of the New Testament were blotted out of existence, they could be quite largely reproduced from the writing of the Fathers, which proves that the books of the New Testament were in existence during the first and second centuries of the Christian era.

Here is indisputable, monumental evidence that from the very first those who accepted the gospel from the lips of the apostles received it, as Paul himself affirms, “not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God” (1 Thessalonians 2:13). And that the same was also committed to the apostolic churches in written form, as it has since existed.

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Apologists and the New Testament

The other testimony which we adduce in proof of the fact that the apostles wrote the Gospels and the Epistles of the New Testament, and that these writings were held as inspired Scripture by the Christian churches from the first, is collected from the Apologists, the name of a galaxy of learned men, philosophers, and others of literary ability, who arose early in the second century, and distinguished themselves by writing in defense of Christianity in times of persecution. Their productions form an important chain of Christian evidence, reaching from the reign of Adrian, 117 AD, within two decades of the apostles. into the middle of the third century.

Among the earliest and most noted Apologists were Quadratus, Aristides, Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Tatian, and Tertullian. As a class the Apologists were educated men of the world before they became Christians, and they were influenced to accept Christianity by the love and virtue which they witnessed among the followers of Christ and by the superiority of His teaching as they found it set forth in the Scriptures. They are, therefore, most competent and important witnesses to New Testament Christianity.

Aristides, an eloquent Christian philosopher of Athens, who addressed an Apology to the emperor Adrian about 125 AD, has left us a picture of primitive Christian life:

“They do good to their enemies; and their women, O King, are pure as virgins, and their daughters are modest; and their men keep themselves from every Unlawful union and from all uncleanness, in the hope of a recompense to come in the other world. Further, if one or other of them have bondmen and bondwomen or children, through love toward them they persuade them to become Christians, and when they have done so, they call them brethren without distinction. They do not worship strange gods, and they go their way in all modesty and cheerfulness. Falsehood is not found among them; and they love one another, and from widows they do not turn away their esteem; and they deliver the orphan from him who treats him harshly. And he who has, gives to him who has not, without boasting.

“And when they see a stranger, they take him into their homes and rejoice over him as a very brother; for they do not call them brethren after the flesh, but brethren after the spirit, and in God. And whenever one of their poor passes from the world, each one of them according to his ability gives heed to him and carefully sees to his burial. And if they hear that one of their number is imprisoned or afflicted on account of the name of their Messiah, all of them anxiously minister to his necessity, and if it is possible to redeem him, they set him free. And if there is among them any that is poor and needy, and if they have no spare food, they fast two or three days in order to supply to the needy their lack of food.

“They observe the precepts of their Messiah with much care, living justly and soberly as the Lord their God commanded them. Every morning and every hour they give thanks and praise to God for His loving-kindness toward them; and for their food and their drink they offer thanksgiving to Him.

“And if any righteous man among them passes from the world, they rejoice and offer thanks to God; and they escort his body as if he were setting out from one place to another near. And when a child has been born to one of them, they give thanks to God; and if moreover it happen to die in childhood, they give thanks to God the more, as for one who has passed through the world without sins. And further if they see that any one of them dies in his ungodliness-or in his sins, for him they grieve bitterly, and sorrow as for one who goes to meet his doom.

“Such, O King, is the commandment of the law of the Christians, and such is their manner of life.”

Justin Martyr, the converted Platonist philosopher, addressed his first Apology to the emperor Antoninus Pius, within fifty years after the death of the apostle John, and in this defense of the Christians it is distinctly stated that in the Christian assemblies, “the Gospels (Memoirs of the Apostles), or, the writings of the prophets, are read as long as time permits.” (Chapters 6 7.)

Athenagoras, also an Athenian philosopher, studied the Christian Scriptures for the purpose of refuting them, but was thus led into the faith. He sent to the emperor Marcus Aurelius a most able and elegant defense of Christianity, which abounds also in quotations from classical authorities. This work has been preserved, also his treatise on the resurrection.

Tatian, a learned east Syrian rhetorician and teacher of Greek literature, who was born but eight or ten years after St. John wrote his Gospel and the book ‘Of Revelation, was perhaps the first to collect and compile in canonical form any of the New Testament writings. He prepared a work called the “Diatessaron,” a harmony of the Gospels, in which Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were woven together into one life of Christ.

The “Diatessaron” made a deep impression on the church life of the time, and, the work was

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popularly read in some churches of the East about the third and fourth centuries, and influenced the Peshito and the Old Syriac New Testament. The original was long lost, but in 1888 an old Arabic copy made from an earlier Syriac text was recovered. "Only a short time before this discovery, a celebrated foreign critic had declared that if this lost work were ever recovered, it would be seen that Tatian's Gospels were not at all our Gospels, but very different records, since at that early date (AD 160-170) our Gospels as we now have them, with their accounts of miracles and assertion of our Lord's deity, and other supernaturalisms, were probably not received as authoritative, even if they were then in existence."

There are now several English translations of the book, and the fact is that they in no way differ from our own New Testament accounts, except as one translation of any work differs from another in its forms of expression. Now, therefore, as Professor Cobern, of the Egyptian Exploration Committee, says, "The scientific discovery of what is essentially the ancient form of this 'oldest life of Christ,' compiled from the four Gospels, has sufficiently answered such skepticism." (See "The New Archeological Discoveries and Their Bearing Upon the New Testament," pp. 200-204.)

Tatian, in relating an account of how he was converted from pagan philosophy to Christianity, says: "While I was giving my most earnest attention to the matter [the discovery of truth], I happened to meet with certain barbaric writings [the Old Testament Scriptures], too old to be compared with the opinions of the Greeks, and too divine to be compared with their errors. And I was led to put faith in these by the unpretending cast of the language, the artificial character of the writers, the foreknowledge displayed of future events, the excellent quality of the precepts, and the declaration of the government of the universe as centered in one Being." "Address to the Greeks," Chapter 29.

In connection with this experience, he became acquainted-with Justin Martyr, from whom he learned, also, of the New Testament and the teachings of Christianity, which later led him to compile the "Diatessaron." It was about this time also that Marcion, a teacher of Gnostic philosophy at Rome, whose father was bishop of Pontus, compiled a work for his followers, which included the Gospel of Luke and ten epistles of Paul.

This all goes to show how early the books of our New Testament, on account of a popular need, began to be compiled and issued in canonical form for religious use. At that time the original epistles of the apostles were accessible, and could be consulted for this purpose by the compilers, as appears from the statement of Tertullian, who before his conversion attained celebrity as a Roman lawyer of Carthage, and who in his work against heresy, speaking of the apostolic writings about 200 AD says that the authentic letters were still in the custody of the churches at Corinth, Philippi, Thessalonica, Ephesus, and Rome, where they might be seen and their contents learned. (See Tertullian, "On Prescription Against Heretics," chap. 36.)

Christian Monotheism

The rise of a pure and spiritual faith out of the Hebrew economy which would supersede the religion of the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, and be adapted to the needs of all nations, had been clearly announced in the earliest promises of Scripture records, and had become a desire and hope of the ages which followed. For thus it is written, "The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." Galatians 3:8. "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Verse 14. It was thus clearly defined in the ancient predictions that it would be through the Messiah that these blessings would be extended to Genesis tile nations. Numerous quotations from the Hebrew prophets to this effect may be cited, which are unmistakable in their application. Thus:

"The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." Genesis 49:10.

"In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and His rest shall be glorious." Isaiah 11:10.

"The Gentiles shall come to Thy light, and kings to the brightness of Thy rising." Isaiah 60: 3

"There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel." Numbers 24:17.

"From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same My name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place [of prayer, Revelation 8:31 incense shall be offered unto My name, and a pure offering." Mal. 1:11.

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This remarkable expectation of a Messianic Priest and Prince to rise from among the Jews, the influence of whose name and worship was to become universal, was well known among the nations of the East at the time of Christ's birth, and naturally created much apprehension and prejudice against Christian teaching, as an innovation calculated to unsettle the thrones of kings and weaken the prestige of pagan worship among the nations. All the power, learning, wealth, pride, artifice, and ambition of the world powers was, therefore, against the probability of such a hope ever being realized. And we know how from the first, these forces arrayed themselves in a vain and hostile attempt to arrest the progress of the gospel, even as the inspired psalmist prophetically exclaimed centuries before:

“Why do the heathen rage, and the people meditate [margin] a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

“He that sits in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure. . . . The Lord hath said: . . . Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee [i. e., from the dead]. Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession.... Be wise now therefore, O you kings: be instructed, you judges of the earth Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.” Psalms 2.

The Spread of Christianity

Jesus Christ came of a despised race, of a poor family, from an ignoble town, all of which, in an age of slavery, caste, and intolerance, was a great handicap. He had no political influence, no social standing, no wealth, no learning. His claims were therefore reviled, His teachings opposed, and His life exposed to persecution, until at last, maligned, condemned, and outraged, He was executed among malefactors, leaving but few followers, and they among the common people, who, like Him, were ignored and rejected of men.

He had predicted that His teachings would become established among all peoples, but appearances were altogether against the probability of such a thing ever being realized, for it proved to be a stumbling block to the Jews, and foolishness to the Gentiles, so that it was literally true that not many great, not many noble, not many mighty, embraced Christianity. But all history and our own experience assure us that the ignorant, the weak, the contemptible, gained the victory from the wise, the mighty, and the noble.

To what cause, then, can we attribute a success so contrary to all the laws by which the events of the world are governed, except to the interposition of God, manifested in the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, and the miraculous powers conferred upon His apostles and disciples? This power they exercised in delivering men from superstition, disease, and idolatry, and preaching repentance and remission of sins in His name. History bears abundant evidence of the manifestation of extraordinary gifts and operations of the divine Spirit among those who received and preached the gospel in primitive Christian times.

Supposing that Christ did not rise from the dead, it is certain, according to all human probability, that there could have been no such thing as Christianity; or, had there been, it must have been stifled soon. But we know to the contrary, that Christianity has already existed seventeen hundred years. ***[West's book was written in 1747. The quotations from his work end with this paragraph.]*** The great argument of infidels against the resurrection is founded upon its miraculous character, because it is above the ordinary course of nature. This, however, can be of no service to them, since they will still find a miracle in their way, namely, the amazing birth, growth, and increase of Christianity in the world.

4. The Light of the World

THE life of Jesus was in marked contrast with the life of the world around Him. Coming from above, He revealed those principles which are the foundation of the government of heaven—unselfish love, righteousness, and truth. So He was “the way, the truth, and the life.” “In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.” John 1:4.

Jesus showed His love by His attitude toward the poor, the unfortunate, and the afflicted masses of society about Him. This was unlike the great men and philosophers before Him, who had held the common

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people in contempt, and had not regarded them as any part of society, but only the conveniences and drudges, appendages of luxury and state, tools of ambition and material to be used in war.

“No man who had taken up the idea of some great change or reform in society, no philosopher who had conceived the notion of building up an ideal state, or republic, ever thought of beginning with the poor. Influence was seen to reside in the higher classes, and the only hope of reaching the world with any scheme of social regeneration, was to begin with them, and through them operate its results.”

But the loving Savior had “compassion on the multitude,” who were like sheep without a shepherd; and He made them the special object of His ministry. He found in them a simple and unaffected sincerity which was wanting in the higher classes. Therefore Christ loved the poor; and without any semblance of being partisan, and without descending to their level, He was able to lift them up into larger hope. He went about from city to city and from village to village to help them, teaching them, healing their sick, and encouraging and comforting all who were in sorrow and trouble.

From a worldly viewpoint this might seem a waste of time, and like throwing His life away; but Christ saw in them “the poor of this world rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom;” and beginning with fishermen and publicans and sinners, He laid the foundations of His kingdom upon the solid rock of truth, and not upon the shifting sand of human philosophy.

The Lift More Abundant.

Jesus had explained to His disciples that after His resurrection and glorification, He would send the Paraclete, an invisible and unconfined personality—the Holy Spirit. John 14:16. Through the Spirit, not only His doctrine, but His life, His nature, His virtues, His character, were to be communicated to them, so that they would stand related to Him as branches to the vine.

The great mission of the Spirit was to convict the world of sin, to impart righteousness, and to convince of judgment, thus inaugurating a world-wide evangelizing movement. John 16:8. For this heavenly inducement they were to tarry at Jerusalem. Luke 24:49.

Beginning at Jerusalem

The supernatural events which took place upon the day of Pentecost indicated that the dispensation of the Spirit had begun. In that one day, in the very city which a few weeks before had witnessed His crucifixion, three thousand Jews accepted Jesus as their Messiah. The apostle Peter, in declaring to the people the source of the demonstration of power they were witnessing said:

“This Jesus bath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand off God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost. He bath shed forth this, which you now see and hear.” Acts 2:32, 33.

The unparalleled spread of the gospel from that day onward, notwithstanding all efforts on the part of both Jews and Romans to arrest its progress, is one of the most remarkable facts of history.

The Transfusion of Character

The life seen among the Christians was a new life, so that they were called by the pagans “a new race of men,” “a peculiar people,” whose utter unworldliness was a rebuke to the wicked. The cry in the circus at Carthage was: “How long must we endure this third race?” As the world had hated Christ, it now hated them, and the rapidity with which they multiplied was a mystery to darkened minds. Christianity was as much different from other systems of thought and life, as Christ was different from other men. A quickening flow of His own life was imparted to them through the Spirit, resulting in a transfusion of character, so that the church could now take up and carry forward the work which He had begun.

Testimony of Eyewitnesses

Some who lived in those times of primitive Christianity have borne witness to the great change which came to men through faith in Christ. Thus Justin the Martyr, a convert from Greek philosophy and one of the first to appeal to the Roman emperor against the persecution of the Christians, wrote:

“We who once were slaves to lust, now delight in purity of morals; . . . we who once prized riches and possessions above all things, now contribute what we have to the common use. We who once hated and

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murdered one another, and on account of our differences would not have a common hearth with those who were not of the same tribe, now, since Christ has appeared, live in common with them, and pray for our enemies, and endeavor to persuade those who hate us unjustly, that living according to the admirable counsels of Christ, they may enjoy a good hope of obtaining the same blessings with ourselves from God, the ruler of all.” Neander’s -Memorials of Christian Life,” p. 61.

Caesar Loses the Battle Against Christ

That the Christians must have become very numerous throughout the Roman Empire while the apostles were yet living, is evident from the testimony of Tacitus, who says that Nero, in 64 AD, put to death “a vast multitude,” but not withstanding this, that “the pernicious superstition broke out again, and spread not only over Judea, where the evil originated, but through Rome also.” It will be remembered that Paul, who was imprisoned and put to death about this time by Nero at Rome, in writing from the Roman prison to the Philippians, speaks of Christians “of Caesar’s household.” Philippians 4:22.

The emperor appears to have become greatly alarmed over the progress of this teaching, to take the measures which he did to restrain it; for Tacitus goes on to say of those who suffered in this persecution:

“Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs, and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired. Nero offered his gardens for the spectacle and was exhibiting a show in the circus, while he mingled with the people in the dress of a charioteer or stood aloft on a car.”-Tacitus, “Annales,” Book XV, 44.

But those who had tasted the heavenly power of Christ’s resurrection and had risen to a newness of life through His Spirit, triumphed over abuse and death. Neither the promises of rewards on condition of retraction, nor the threats of cruel torture, moved them from their steadfastness, or restrained them from confessing themselves to be His followers. They were willing rather to sacrifice every worldly enjoyment and sever every earthly tie.

Pliny the Younger, governor of Bithynia, in a letter to the emperor Trajan within twenty years of the death of the last of the apostles, said that so many of every age and every rank and of either sex had become Christians that the “temples” were “already almost deserted.” He was perplexed to know what course to pursue, as the “superstition” was spreading not only through cities, but extended to the villages and also to the country.

Justin, the martyr philosopher, who wrote about fifty years after the time of the apostles, said that there was no race or wandering tribe of barbarians where prayers and thanksgivings were not offered up in the name of Christ. And Tertullian, the Roman lawyer and Apologist, who wrote to the emperor about the middle of the second century in behalf of the Christians, declared:

“We are but of yesterday, and we have filled every place among you,” cities,, islands, fortresses, towns, market places, the very camp, tribes, companies, palace, senate, forum, we have left nothing to you but the temples of your gods. For what wars should we not be fit, not eager, even with unequal forces, we who so willingly yield ourselves to the sword, if in our religion it were not counted better to be slain than to slay? Without arms even, and raising no insurrectionary banner, but simply in enmity to you, we could carry on the contest with you by an ill-willed severance alone. For if such multitudes of men were to break away from you, and betake themselves to some remote corner of the world, why, the very loss of so many citizens, whatever sort they were, would cover the empire with shame; nay, in the very forsaking, vengeance would be inflicted.” “Apology,” chapter XXXVII, edition 1885.

By the time of the emperor Valerian, 250 AD, during a bloody persecution, the Christians were estimated as one half ‘of the population of Rome. (See Rawlinson’s “Evidences,” p. 218.)

The Roman Catacombs Witness to the Supreme Sacrifice of the Christians

Between the time of the apostles and the conversion of the emperor Constantine, 313 AD, a period of two hundred sixty-five years, there were ten notable periods -of pagan persecution, covering in all about one third of the whole time. In those times Christians in and about Rome took refuge in the catacombs underneath the city. Here a vast network of tunnels and galleries, in the wonderful providence of God, afforded them chapels and cemeteries in which to worship and bury their dead. There appear to have been

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no less than sixty of these different catacombs opening around the city upon the fifteen great consular roads. Altogether they are estimated to contain about a thousand miles of subterranean streets, or tunnels, along which, hewn in the soft stone, are found innumerable successions of Christian tombs of that primitive period, the total number being estimated as high as seven million.

“Seven millions of deaths in (say) four hundred years would, under ordinary circumstances, imply an average population of from five hundred thousand to seven hundred thousand—an amount immensely beyond any estimate that has hitherto been made of the number of Roman Christians at any portion of the period. Perhaps the calculation of the number of graves may be exaggerated, and probably the proportion of deaths to population was, under the peculiar circumstances, unusually large. But still the evidence of vast numbers which the catacombs furnish cannot wholly mislead; and we may regard it as established beyond all reasonable doubt, that in spite of the general contempt and hatred, in spite of the constant ill usage to which they were exposed, and the occasional ‘fiery trials’ which proved them, the Christians, as early as the second century, formed one of the chief elements in the population of Rome.” – “Historical Evidences,” George Rawlinson, Pages 218, edition 1883.

“Further the word ‘martyr’ is frequent upon the tombs; and often where it is absent, the inscription otherwise shows that the deceased lost his life on account of his religion. Sometimes the view opens on us, and we see, besides the individual buried, a long vista of similar sufferers, as when one of Aurelius’ victims exclaims:

“O unhappy times, in which amid our sacred rites and prayers,-in the very caverns,-we are not safe! What is more wretched than our life? What is more wretched than a death when it is impossible to obtain burial at the hands of friends or relatives? Still at the end they shine like stars in heaven.”-Id., p. 219.

The Hope of the Resurrection Imperishably Incribed in the Catacombs

The most impressive events in the life of Christ, and some of His most precious lessons have been embodied in the symbols and paintings of the catacombs, a favorite subject being Christ in the character of the Good Shepherd. It is also said that the doctrine of, the resurrection is implied or expressed on almost every tomb that has been discovered. “It must be remembered that the prospect of his own resurrection was all that the new convert had to sustain him. . . . And the prospect of his own resurrection was bound up inseparably with the fact of Christ’s having risen. If Christ were not risen, preaching was vain, and faith was vain. Then all who fell asleep in Christ perished. The Christian was taught to base his hope of a happy future solely and entirely upon the resurrection and ascent to heaven of Jesus. Surely the evidence for these facts must have been thousands of times closely sifted.” - Id., pp. 222, 223.

Eventually the Christ for whom they died will come to judge the world; the day for which they looked will dawn. Amid the rocking of the earth,

“Rome’s martyrs, numberless, wake, and rise;
A shining host, emerging from the tombs
Of the Campagna and the catacombs,
Mid rush of hallelujahs crowd the skies.”
“City of the Seven Hills,” by Guinness.

Nor is the religion of Christ unique only in that it holds out a hope of the resurrection from the dead. Indeed, its great strength lies in the fact that it teaches how to live.

In lands where Christ is known, the laboring classes have been raised from bondage to freedom. womanhood has been emancipated from degradation and thralldom, and childhood from neglect and oppression. Captives taken in war, debtors, and foundlings are no longer doomed to inhuman servitude. There are hospitals, asylums, and orphanages for the sick, the widow, and the fatherless. To the extent that the teachings of Jesus Christ have found lodgment in human hearts, they have exerted their benign influence toward the abolishment of slavery, polygamy, torture, dueling, child marriage, infanticide, caste distinctions, and other relics of barbarism, and have led to mercy, justice, and protection.

This does not mean, however, the ultimate conversion of all men. The gospel is to take out of the world “a people for His name.” It is true today as when Jesus taught His disciples, that the sincere, earnest followers of Christ are the salt of the earth. And the promise of Jesus is that “this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” Matthew

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24:14. Those who respond to Christ's gracious invitation and open their hearts to His holy Spirit will find a place in His eternal kingdom. While the road to destruction is the broad way of the multitudes, and the way of life narrow; while "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived;" and while the great masses of earth's last day inhabitants are by the Savior compared to the wicked antediluvian world, yet "a remnant shall be saved." All who will may have the light of life. Soon "He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." "Behold, He comes with clouds, and every eye shall see Him."

5. How an Explorer Became Convinced

Sir William Ramsay's Story

THE story of Sir William Ramsay, whose discoveries in Asia Minor not only led to his own conversion from modern unbelief, but have revolutionized the views of the New Testament critics regarding the authorship of the book of Acts and the historical certitude of St. Luke's Gospel, has been called "fascinating beyond description- by a prominent writer on archaeology.

Romance and Providence

In his childhood Sir William's mind had been influenced by his mother's love for the life and teachings of St. Paul. The romance of that land of Bible story seems always to have left its lure over his mind, drawing it toward Asia Minor. The study of its history, its peoples, and its languages was a dream which came and went and came again during his university years at Oxford. It seemed a dream, however, never to be realized, owing to his limited resources and failing health.

A physician ordered him to go abroad, and for some years he traveled in European countries, writing for the Encyclopedia Britannica to cover expenses. His literary associations attached him to brilliant scholars who regarded the Bible as a book of myths. He says that he became "a worshiper of Wellhausen," and accepted without question the verdict of such modern critics as claim that the life of Christ and the Acts of the Apostles are forgeries of later times.

He therefore largely lost faith in God and interest in the study of the New Testament. But that light which shone so brightly on Paul upon the Damascus road was evidently guiding him for a strange concurrence of circumstances called him in 1880 to study archaeology in the British Museum, preparatory to a three years' expedition for travel and exploration in Greek lands in connection with Oxford University.

Back to the Bible

The work which Ramsay was occupied with in Asiatic Greece was the study of antiquities relating to Greek-Roman institutions, explorations among the ruins of earliest historic times, the discovery of monuments, inscriptions, and remains of art. At that time as he tells us, the book of Acts, as distorted by the critics, was regarded as the weakest part of the New Testament, and "no one that had any regard for his reputation as a scholar cared to say a word in its defense." So he felt that it would be time lost for him to bother with the translation of Christian inscriptions.

Still, nearly all travelers and explorers find the Bible among their most indispensable guides in those lands, in locating ancient cities, following old landmarks, and settling disputed points of history. Therefore, "without expecting to find any information of value regarding Asia Minor." he found it convenient, in becoming acquainted with the country, to refer to Luke's record of the journeys of Paul in the book of Acts.

Geography Proves the Bible True

He was in Phrygia, now called Anatolia, -weird with fable," the enchanted land of old king Midas, trying to discover if possible, the boundary of that province which in ancient times separated it from Lycaonia, much of which is now a wilderness of desolation, with here and there a village, some of them the remains of important cities where Paul and Luke once traveled and preached the gospel. It was purely a geographical question with him. But as he relates:

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“The first thing that made me begin to doubt the judgment which I had formed, or rather, had accepted from others, about the late origin of the Acts of the Apostles, was a discovery regarding the geographical statement in [Acts] 14:6: “They fled [from Iconium] unto, Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lies round about.” In these words it is implied that Paul and Barnabas fled over a frontier into Lycaonia.” Iconium, from which they fled, was not, therefore, it appears, according to Luke’s account here, in Lycaonia.

Here he thought was an instance of geographical ignorance and error on the part of the writer of the Acts, for any one who will look up the outlines of these provinces as charted on the maps of that time, 1880-90, will notice that according to the knowledge which they then had, they placed Iconium also in Lycaonia, following an old Roman authority. Cicero, instead of the Bible. Even Christian works, influenced by higher criticism, accepted this arrangement, and had set aside the statement in Acts as incorrect. Smith’s Bible Dictionary, for instance, Peloubet’s revision, Teacher’s edition (1884), speaks of Iconium as the capital of Lycaonia. Who was most likely to be correct, Cicero, or Luke who claimed to know fully whereof he wrote?

Discovers the Old Boundary Stone

Sir William Ramsay was there to find out. For although he then believed the skeptics right, he says he “always aimed at the truth, and lived for the truth.” And God declares, “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” One day, as Providence would have it, as he was tramping over that country, on the top of a lofty slope he passed a conspicuous landmark, a stone monument five feet in height, fallen over by the wayside. It bore an official inscription placed there by order of the Roman Senate and the people of the province, to mark the boundary line between Lycaonia and Phrygia, and it was dedicated to the frontier gods. It bore a date corresponding to 135 AD).

The emotions of the great scholar were stirred within him as he read the inscription. It told the whole history. Luke was right. Iconium (the modern Konieh) was where he had described it to be a city across the boundary from Lycaonia. The whole modern world was wrong.

Other remarkable discoveries followed. The stones cried out more and more that the Scriptures are God’s witness. Ramsay’s faith began to come back to him, and now for years he has been writing in defense of the faith which Paul preached and which he first learned at his mother’s lips.

Sir William Ramsay’s Testimony

The evidence of, Ramsay’s discoveries has been accepted by the whole world of scholarship. His books stand among the greatest works of archeological literature. He is considered an authority. Even the critics have reversed their decisions as to the accuracy of Luke’s narratives and the date of the Acts, since the publication of his books. He says:

“The more I have studied the narrative of the Acts and the more I have learned year after year, the more I admire and the better I understand. I set out to look for truth on the borderland where Greece and Asia meet, and found it here. You may press the words of Luke in a degree beyond any other historian’s, and they stand the keenest scrutiny and the hardest treatment.” He says he found the narrative in Acts “marvelously concise, yet marvelously lucid,” and that as the light came to him through these discoveries the reversal of his own judgment became complete.

6. A Russian Baron’s Conversion From Atheism to Christianity

SOME Years ago I heard Baron Uxkull, of Estonia, Russia, while visiting America in the interests of mission work in Russia. following an edict of the czar granting religious liberty to the people of that country in 1905. His experience, as told by himself and published at the time, is a marvelous instance of the operation of the Holy Spirit in the lives of men, and may be classed among modern miracles!

After being educated according to the customs of Russian aristocracy, this young nobleman served in the imperial guard of the czar, and many times it was his duty and privilege to sit at the door of his bedchamber. When he left the military service, he traveled through many European countries, giving his

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life up to social pleasures and sin, until he returned to his large estate upon the Baltic, restless and unhappy, disgusted with the world and with life, an unbeliever and an atheist.

Revival Among the Peasants

At this time a great religious awakening, which came like a wave from Sweden, was spreading among the peasants in that province. The poor had the gospel of repentance and the new birth preached to them. Their meetings continued far into the night. The people prayed, and confessed their sins, and claimed to be converted. But the nobility did not go to these meetings. Generally they made light of the spirit which was stirring the hearts of the common people, and attributed the unusual manifestation of religious fervor to their ignorance and their emotions. Yet it was noticeable that those most affected by these meetings reformed their habits, gave up their habitual drunkenness, profanity, stealing, and quarreling. So when his servants wished to have some of these meetings, Baron Uxkull gave his consent, and built them a hall for their services.

This pleased them very much, and they wanted him to attend the opening service in the new chapel. He thought it would do no harm, and concluded under the circumstances to go, and so he heard them sing and pray and testify of the goodness and blessing of God. But he felt no interest in, such things himself, and when they talked to him about religion, he explained that when one had education, that was sufficient. They reasoned with him some, however, that all must be converted and experience a change of heart in order to be fitted for heaven. Sometimes they wrote him kind letters, telling him that they were praying for him, that he might become a child of God; but without any signatures, as they were afraid to have their names appear. He burned or otherwise destroyed the letters.

Troubled by His Thoughts

Meanwhile, God's good Spirit was at work, and the baron became more and more uneasy. Once he thought: "Well, I ought to speak to some one about my feelings." He remembered a Lutheran pastor about twelve miles away, who was a university man, and thought that perhaps this man would talk to him from an educational viewpoint, and give him some helpful philosophy, so he decided to visit him.

When he told the minister of his doubts, and wanted to know why temptation should seem to have such control over people, and why the world was so full of sorrow, the minister said: "Go to God. He alone can answer you." "But," he said, "how can I pray? I don't believe in God or prayer. I thought you could give me some philosophy." The minister replied, "I haven't anything else to offer." So he went away more unsatisfied than before.

God Knows How to Guide

"And now," says the baron, "God in His marvelous grace found a way to bring me in touch with Jesus. I did not go to church; I did not go to meetings; I did not read the Bible. From the city a merchant, a bookseller, sent me a box of books, philosophic books, and among those books was one by the great Russian writer, Count Tolstoy, and the title was, 'Why Do We Live?' I thought that was a good book, and I would like to see what it said. In the first pages it said: 'O, we are so dissatisfied and disgusted with life many times! I said, 'That is just my case,' and we cannot be satisfied until we begin to love. We must love each other. Then we are satisfied.' He did not say, 'We must love God.' He was not a Christian. Then he said, 'All great teachers, all great philosophers, have said so. Confucius, Buddha, Jesus Christ, have all taught that we must love each other, and when we love each other, then we are happy and satisfied with life. Then our life is filled.' He spoke about those old heathen teachers, but he spoke much more about the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, and what Count Tolstoy said of Jesus of Nazareth was just the thing I needed to become interested in,-the personality and the teachings of the Lord Jesus."

Getting Acquainted With Jesus

"I remember it was in January, 1890, and I was so interested that I read this book the whole night through until I had finished it; and in this night I can say I began to love Jesus. I was attracted to Jesus. I did

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not know that He was the Son of God, but I liked Him as a noble and great Teacher, as you love Lincoln or Garfield. The next morning I thought I should like to read more about His teaching-I did not know enough about Him. In my library there were many novels. I burned them all; several hundred I put into the stove.

“But there was no book about Jesus in my library, and I did not know what to do. Then I remembered, ‘Well, you have your Bible from the school.’ (In the school every pupil was obliged to have a Bible.) For many years I had not touched it. I thought, ‘There will be the story and the teachings of Jesus.’ It was quite new to me. His teachings were so interesting and deep, and became always more interesting, so different from books of philosophy. His words were so attractive, so full of love, so full of life, and I liked Him very much. And sometimes the idea came, ‘Perhaps He is really more than human, perhaps He is divine, as the pastors say,’ and I was troubled in my heart. I did not, know what to believe.

“And then I thought, ‘Well, I will look back into history. I will see what the great men of history have said. Frederick II of Prussia, Napoleon of France. Voltaire, did not believe in the divinity of Christ. Men of great influence, the emperor Alexander I of Russia, Luther of Germany, Wesley in -England, men who had a great name in history, they believed in Jesus. What shall I do? On one side are great men, on the other side are great men. What shall I do? Where can I find the truth?’”

Spiritual Things Spiritually Revealed

“And there came a deep answer, ‘You will find it here: try to pray.’ But I said, ‘I cannot pray. I don’t believe.’ Then the Holy Spirit said, ‘Try; perhaps there is a God. If there is a God who answers prayer, He will hear you. Try. Perhaps you will find Him.’ Then I said, ‘I will try,’ and I said: ‘O God, if you are there above, and if you hear the prayer of a man on earth, then show me the truth. I do not know what I shall believe about Jesus.’”

He That Asked Received Light

“After this prayer there was no special answer, but when I read the Bible (I was just reading the Gospel of John), and while I was reading the story of the life of Jesus, and His words and His teaching, O, there was new light, just like electric light, in the Bible! In this light I saw that He was very great, that He was more than a man. I saw that He was divine, that He was really the Son of God, that He was Cod. Now it was a great and a new thing to sit before Jesus and to see that He was the Son of God. Then the whole world changed, His whole teachings changed, His whole life changed, it was all in a new light. All His words were much more important, all His love was much more divine, much more touching, that He, the Son of God, loved such people as we.

“And then what a terrible thing that they have killed Him who was so noble, who was so wise, who was so good, and they have killed Him, killed Him! Why did not God prevent this unjust thing? Why did God leave His Son to die on the cross? And then the Holy Spirit, like a voice in my heart, told me, ‘It was for you. It was for you He was crucified. You have sinned; . . . you are cursed, and He took your curse upon His shoulders, He took your punishment upon Himself. Now look at Him as He is there on the cross. Look how His holy blood is flowing. It is that your soul may be purified and clean.’”

“Then I broke down, and could say only, ‘My Lord and my God!’ Then eternal life began for me. I was unspeakably happy. Before that I was disgusted with life. I did not understand life. Now I understood it. Now I was glad.

Confessing Christ Before Men

“Then I thought, ‘You must be honest, and go to those persons and tell them they were right and you were wrong when the chapel was opened, and when you were speaking against them. Go up and say they were right. So on Thursday evening, when they had their little prayer meeting, when they were all gathered there, I came in and said to them, ‘I have something to say to you. I am also now such a converted man as you, and your Jesus is also my Jesus, and your Bible is also now my Bible.’ They said, ‘Praise the Lord! We have prayed for you. Now we will thank Him. That is the story of how I became a child of God.’”

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7. Dr. Nelson's Struggle With Infidelity

IN the early years of the nineteenth century, the social and religious life of America was much affected by the backwash of French philosophy and skepticism which flowed in from the Old World. The common practice of men to idle away their evenings in little circles about the tavern fires, talking politics and passing infidel remarks about religion, was one of the demoralizing customs of the time.

There lived at the time, in this country, a talented young physician, Dr. David Nelson, who later became widely known as the author of a famous religious work entitled, "The Cause and Cure of Infidelity." It was published in both America and England.

The story of this remarkable book and the experience of its author is very interesting, and the main features of it may be told with profit. We will let Dr. Nelson open the narrative in his own words.

The Story of Dr. David Nelson

"My parents were professors of religion, with a plain education, but well informed in holy things. Firm, ardent, and unassuming, infidelity came not before their thoughts. It seemed to be their impression that entire unbelief very rarely existed; and that where it was avowed, it could scarcely be sincere. I never remember to have heard the truth of inspiration questioned by mortal lips until the age of sixteen, when, having passed through the usual college course too hastily. I went to read medicine in Danville, Kentucky.

"As soon as I mixed with society, I, of course, entered the company of some who were admirers of the French philosophy. I was not as much with the world as others, but I heard them speak occasionally. When talking of religion, their feelings were always awake. They seemed to believe that in disregarding inspiration there was something peculiarly original and lofty. The sparkle of the eye, the curl of the lip, and the tone of the voice, if interpreted, seemed to say that the rest of mankind were contemptible fools, but I was not."

"Their remarks impressed me, but not deeply. That their sarcasm and jeers influenced me toward infidelity was because men love darkness more than light; for their arguments were so destitute of fact for foundation that, ignorant as I was, I could sometimes see that they in reality favored the other side.

"I had some longing after the character of singular intellectual independence, and some leaning toward the dignified mien; but I did not assume either as yet, for my habits of morality remained, and my reverence for superior age and deeper research. It was necessary that I should receive praise from some source before all diffidence and modesty should be swallowed up in self esteem. And this intoxicating poison was not wanting.

"After the expiration of three years I became surgeon's mate, or second physician, to a regiment of Kentucky militia, which wintered near the Northern lakes. The approbation of many around me there led me to feel as though I was one of the actors on life's wide stage. After this, as I frequented the wine club or the card party, reverence for the Bible diminished; and as my respect for holy precepts diminished, my sinful habits increased. Infidelity inclines us toward pride, festivity, and dissipation, while these engender infidelity. Like two ponderous metallic globes hung together on the side of a declivity, they mutually assist each other down the steep, and the farther they proceed, the greater is their momentum.

"After this, I became first surgeon to a regiment of Tennessee troops which served at Mobile. There I became acquainted with many officers of the regular Army, whose intimacy was not calculated to lead me toward God or heaven. During this time, and after this, all worldly success only injured me. It increased my haughtiness, or added to my means of profuse pecuniary expenditure. Revelry darkened the cloud that enveloped my soul, and of course I advanced rapidly in unbelief.

"In my race of infidelity I never reached entire atheism. I was what was called a deist. After a time I began to have moments of doubt, whether or not God existed; and moving still onward, it was not long before those short seasons of atheism began to lengthen and to blacken-when I was mercifully arrested. The means of my escape employ our next attention." – "The Cause and Cure of Infidelity," pp. 220-223.

How His Eyes Were Opened

At this time Dr. Nelson had not yet read the infidel books himself, but while in this state of mind, on having a volume of Voltaire's works given him, he read it, expecting, as he says, to find there

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satisfactory evidence in support of his views. Being of a candid and discriminating mind, however, he was not favorably impressed with the character of the arguments presented. "In the entire volume," he says, "there was not one solitary article which was not a kind of ridicule, which proved nothing for our side; or a little castle erected on historic falsehoods, but of such a shape that those who had never read a tolerable course of history could not tell but they were truths."

Dr. Nelson gives various examples of such quibbles "built on falsehood," which met his glance every time he opened this "Philosophical Dictionary," as the work was called. One instance was the attempt to misconstrue the statement of Solomon so as to make it appear untrue, quoting the author of Proverbs as speaking of wine sparkling in "the glass." This he avowed could not have been written by Solomon, for - there was no glass in Solomon's days." "My blood ran somewhat cold on reading this," says the doctor, "but I had then read some history. I knew that Archimedes was said to have burned the Roman fleet with burning glasses, which no one thinks of disputing, and we have no more account of glass in the days of Archimedes than we have in the days of Solomon. I knew that Voltaire knew this, and it was not through ignorance that he penned his assertions. I knew that the author knew that ten thousands . . . would read who would know nothing of the facts, and of course the statement of the dictionary would appear to them plain and conclusive. I was aware that if I had known nothing of ancient history, this false position would have appeared to me an incontrovertible argument."

His impressions of the unfairness and dishonesty of Voltaire were afterward strikingly confirmed by the discovery that Solomon is not represented in the Bible as saying anything about "glass," but only of the wine giving its "color in the cup!" (Proverbs 23:31) a common drinking cup.

"I read again, 'Among the Jews a man might marry his sister.' All I could say to this was, 'Among the Jews a man was forbidden to marry his sister.' [Leviticus 18:6-9] I began, to feel startled for my creed and for my religious views," the doctor wrote. And he began to ask, "Why resort to lies as weapons, if ours is the right side in this controversy?" "It seemed strange that in a book written by one so able and so famous, there should not be one fair argument one truth unmixed with a lie," thought he. "I could have felt more like retaining my infidelity if there had been only a few positions based on historic fact; a few fair, truthful objections to the Bible, amid the chapters of misrepresentation; but I could not find one. I looked over it again, and I could not find one." - "Cause and Cure of Infidelity," pp. 224-230.

Thoroughly Tested Infidelity

Although he began to feel ashamed of the company he found himself in, yet Dr. Nelson did not at once renounce his unbelief, but remained an infidel still. As he later confessed: "The heart of man in these cases receives error readily, and relinquishes it slowly and reluctantly." He thought that other infidel books might be different, so he decided to try the most celebrated and learned production of a historic character which skepticism had put out, and procured a copy of Volney's "Ruins of Empire."

Volney had traveled in the Bible lands with the object of overthrowing Christianity. Still he thought that one so informed should be reliable authority. He was at first captivated by the literary style of the work, and more apparent regard for accuracy in the text, but the notes he found pernicious, and finished this author in a more dissatisfied state than before.

In the reading of this artful and boasted work, he says, "I there found again falsehoods unalloyed with other material, and these untruths were of the most notorious kind, and of the most malignant texture. I was indeed discouraged as these facts thus influenced me."

Tired of the inveterate enmity and recklessness of those writers who had wasted their genius in the cause of the French Revolution, which aimed to destroy both the church and the Bible, he now concluded to try an American author, the notorious Thomas Paine, whose "Age of Reason" was then quite the rage among the skeptics of the country. It must be, he reasoned, that a better spirit of sincerity and truthfulness will be found in this book, which is reputed to have turned thousands from Christianity. But it was the same sort of arguments, a rehash in part of what the French wits had already put together.

"I read it," he says, "and I could not say that I found in it either suavity or philanthropy, dignity or sublimity, honesty or truth, but the opposite of them all: the opposite, although the writer was a man of talents."

"The writings of Paine drove me farther from his belief than I had ever been. I was ready to exclaim, If this moves the multitude, then what may not move them? If this pleases them, then they surely must love the side they advocate."

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Investigates the Other Side

After this experience with Paine, Dr. Nelson says: "I determined that I would read some on the opposite side, and that I would also at the same time take a more thinking review of my own objections to the religion of Christ."

He was at this time in the State of Tennessee, where he was engaged as military surgeon. Having no copy of the Scriptures then in his possession, he borrowed one. As he relates: "I inquired after a Bible which -might have Christian notes in it. An old lady lent me hers, which I had often seen her poring over, hours at a time. From her cast of mind I knew that in the work there must be thought, or she could not be thus engaged. It was Scott's Family Bible. In the year 1818 some of them had found their way to the forests of Tennessee.

"I read the Bible with Scott's notes. My objections to the Holy Book, which were based upon my ignorance, disappeared as soon as I was informed. After I had read Scott's Family Bible, I felt like reading it again. It is true that I was half driven from infidelity by the infidel authors. To find no aid, and no truth or loveliness where I had looked for it, inclined me to listen with more calmness and impartiality to the other side.

The Great Transition

"In Scott I found no controversy tinctured with smutty, indecent filth. I found no self-complacent ridicule; no silly jeering; no truth twisted or mixed up with nine tenths of actual untruth. The difference between the two styles and the two modes is known only to those who have felt the sudden transition from one to the other."

Dr. Nelson was deeply impressed with the spirit of Scott's writings, especially when referring to those who opposed the Christian faith. "It seemed from the way he wrote," he says, "that their salvation in heaven -would give him more exultation than it would to have the world believe a thousand slanders about them." He saw no disposition to malign the character or misjudge the motives of his enemies. All this seemed like breathing a new atmosphere. "This difference of temper," says he, "between the advocates and opponents of Christianity, made me more willing to read on."

What he found in Scott, awakened in him a desire to study other Christian authors, and he at once procured and read several others of the best works obtainable upon the evidence of Christianity. "I was pleased and astonished," he afterward wrote, "to see them all evince the meekness and modesty and benevolent forbearance which struck me in the author first named. They all instructed me. This investigation went on for many months."

Light Shining in Darkness

"But it was what I afterward discovered which settled me as on the rock of truth." In his unbelief many passages of Scripture had appeared darkness itself to his mind. But as he read and informed himself, he marveled to see this darkness dissolve away, and as his mind cleared up, these parts of the Bible were seen to be full of meaning and harmony, beauty and glory. Then, as he says, "I discovered that my infidelity had been based upon my ignorance, encircled with the love of sin, whilst its practice had beclouded and deformed my soul."

His experience also in attending the sick and the dying, the contrast between the hopeful and cheerful death of Christians and the indifferent, stolid, or terrified actions of the ungodly and unbelieving, convinced him more and more of the certainty of the Christian teaching.

His Deep Conversion

Like Saul of Tarsus, when Dr. Nelson saw the enormity of his sin in rejecting Christ, who gave His life to save us, he felt himself "the chief of sinners," and, like Peter after he had denied his Lord, he "went out and wept bitterly." In words of strong emotion and manifest penitence he humbly says in his confession of faith:

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“With my face in the dust, while a joy inexpressible fills my soul, I can say: I know that my Redeemer lives, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.” [Job 19:25-27] “Cause and Cure of Infidelity,” Page 263.

Gives Up His Profession

To win others from the darkness of unbelief to faith and hope in Christ, soon became the ruling passion of Dr. Nelson’s life. He left his lucrative professional career in 1825 to enter the Presbyterian ministry. He set his slaves free, and became an ardent advocate of emancipation. He became pastor of the Presbyterian ministry of Danville, Kentucky, but afterward removing to Missouri, he established Marion College, near Palmyra, and became its first president. As the antislavery agitation increased in intensity, he went to Quincy, Illinois, where he established an institute for the missionary education of young men. He died in 1844.

8. The Bible Prophecies

ONE thing which made a deep impression upon the mind of Dr. Nelson as he investigated the evidences of Christianity and read history with an open mind, was the fulfilled prophecies of the Bible. In fact, the editor of the Christian Herald once stated that Nelson was converted by observing the fate of Tyre and Babylon, which were among the most famous cities of antiquity and were in their splendor at the time when the Bible was written, so that what is there foretold of them cannot be explained as having been written after the events occurred. The Old Testament containing these accounts had been translated into the Greek language for the kings of Egypt, and was read throughout the world nearly three centuries before the birth of Christ, and therefore long before what it predicted of the wicked cities and nations of old came true.

In his book, Dr. Nelson relates his astonishment at the discovery of these facts, of which, though an educated man, he was so long in ignorance; and devotes several chapters to interesting accounts of his findings in this field of observation, because, as he states, many others, like himself, are unacquainted with these divine predictions, and the striking manner in which their fulfillment has come about and been recorded. Any review of Nelson’s “Cause and Cure of Infidelity” would be incomplete without noticing what he says of the prophecies and their fulfillment, especially those of Tyre, Nineveh, Babylon, and Egypt. These accounts are arranged from his notes, with some more recent matter.

The Doomed City of Tyre

Tyre from the earliest ages was the great seaport of the ancient world, the mart of all the Mediterranean commerce, carried on by the famous “ships of Tarshish.” Situated on the coast of Phoenicia, it connected the inland traffic of Asia with the ports of Egypt, Carthage, Greece, Italy, and the isles of the West. Distant countries traded in its fairs, and its merchants were the honorable of the earth. The king of Tyre had supplied King Solomon with building materials for the great temple at Jerusalem, and at one time maintained very friendly relations with the Jews, their near neighbors.

About seven centuries before Christ, because the Tyrians engaged in slave traffic, dealing unjustly and shipping many of the children of Israel for slaves into foreign countries, Isaiah, Amos, and other prophets of God were given divine warnings of the punishment to be visited upon the wicked city. (See Isaiah 23; Amos 1; Joel 3; Ezekiel 26 to 28.) Thus the Lord said:

“Behold, the Lord will cast her out, and He will smite her power in the sea.” “They shall lay thy stones and thy timbers and thy dust ‘in the midst of the water.’” “I will also scrape her dust from her,” and she shall “be no more.” Zechariah 9:4; Ezekiel 26:12, 4, 21.

All this strange judgment came upon Tyre in a most remarkable way when Alexander the Great destroyed the ancient city. And then in order to take the most newly fortified section, which was on an island he had the ruins of old Tyre cast into the sea, making a mole from the mainland -to the island, half a mile away. The site of the city was thus left utterly bare and desolate.

Still Tyre was built again, and became a great city. It was populous and flourishing at the

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beginning of the Christian era, and continued to be a place of some importance down into the dark Middle Ages, when it began to decline and pass into oblivion. Finally the old sunken causeway, or mole, silted up by earthquakes, again united the island with the shore, making a harbor for fishing boats, and thus a strange coincidence of nature prepared the way for the accomplishment of the last part of this remarkable prophecy:

“I will make her like the top of a rock. It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea: for I have spoken it, said the Lord God.” Ezekiel 26:4, 5.

Nelson says that Volney, the noted French infidel, in his book of travels, “Ruins of Empire,” about the close of the eighteenth century, wrote: “The whole village of Tyre contains only about fifty or sixty poor families, who live obscurely on the produce of their little ground and a trifling fishery.” (See Nelson, p. 43.)

In 1868 Coffin, a Civil War correspondent of the Boston Journal, in making a trip around the world, visited Tyre. He said the sun was just going down, and he had the guide pitch his tent right over the ruins, where the rocks had been scraped bare, and he took out his Bible and read this chapter. He said that the fishermen were just then spreading their nets to dry on the rocks of Tyre, exactly as “the sure word of prophecy” had foretold more than two thousand years before.

The Debasing of Egypt's Glory

In Bible times Egypt was one of the most powerful nations of the world. Nature and art had from the earliest ages combined to make the country productive, prosperous, and secure. The number of its cities, their popularity and wealth, according to ancient historians, almost surpass credibility. It was called the granary of the world, so great were its exports of corn and other foods. Its resources seemed unlimited and unending.

The wisdom and learning of the Egyptians was proverbial, and their military strength and success extended their conquests over many surrounding countries. The imposing dynasties of their kings reach into millenniums of time, and their monuments, obelisks, tombs, temples, palaces, and pyramids, which have withstood the wasting of ages and the ravages of war and are still visible at a distance of thirty miles, are among the most massive and impressive works of man to be found upon the earth.

Such being the case, it is the more remarkable that a prophet of the Bible should give utterance to the declaration that the period of Egypt's glory and prosperity was about to close forever, and the country sink permanently out of the class of great nations, yet that is what was predicted. And improbable as it then seemed, that is just what has happened. Egypt's destiny was to be unusual, unlike that pronounced upon any other people. It was not said that the Egyptians would become extinct, like the Babylonians and the Assyrians, nor scattered into all the world, like the Jews, but this is what God said:

“The sword shall come upon Egypt and the pride of her power shall come down. I will make the land waste, and all that is therein, by the hand of strangers: and there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt.” “I the Lord have spoken it.” Ezekiel 30:4-13

Notice, by a reading of the entire reference, that the rule was to be taken from them and placed in other hands, and that no prince of Egyptian blood was ever again to govern there; but that the land was to be given over to foreigners to lay waste.

“They shall be there a base kingdom. It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations: for I will diminish them that they shall no more rule over the nations.” Ezekiel 29:14-15.

Soon after this time, the last Egyptian prince of the thirtieth dynasty was driven from his throne, and has never had a successor. Two thousand years have passed over Egypt, and it remains under the rule of strangers.* Still, though much diminished, it is there, “the basest of the kingdoms,” a land of ancient ruins, filth, dogs, and Arabs. Persians, Greeks, Romans, Saracens, and Turks have in turn ruled over the Egyptians, and now the British control them. Now manifestly a power higher than that of man controls the destiny of nations.

**** King Fuad I, the present king of Egypt, is not by birth an Egyptian but an Albanian. He is one of the sons of the late Khedive Ismail Pasha, who in turn was the second of three sons of Ibrahim, a grandson of Mehemet Ali. Mchemet Ali is thus the founder of the present royal house of Egypt. He was born at Kavala, a small seaport on the frontier of Thrace and Macedonia. His father, an Albanian, was an aga, a small yeoman farmer, and he himself began life as a petty official and trader in tobacco. By a***

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compromise between the powers of Europe, Mehemet All was made a hereditary ruler of Egypt. So Egypt Is In reality under foreign rule, and to this day, as the word of God foretold, has been without a prince.

There is one other feature of this prophecy which deserves notice. It is this: "I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause their images to cease." "Thus will I execute judgments in Egypt and they shall know that I am the Lord." Ezekiel 30:13, 19.

As Nelson says, when Ezekiel lived, nothing could have been more improbable than to suppose that the idols and images should cease out of Egypt, where the people were so strangely prone to worship crocodiles, serpents, birds, beetles—anything but God. Idols and images were to be seen everywhere, and no matter what it was, they kneeled before it. It was a strange prediction to speak of causing images or idols to cease out of a land where, too, continued baseness was to prevail; because we associate idolatry and images with ignorance and degradation.

Such a prospect was not even in sight when Ezekiel lived. It was a thousand years before this came to pass. And who could have dreamed of how it would be brought about? Only God could then foresee that there would arise such a fiercely fanatical people as the Mohammedans, who, when they overran and ruled Egypt, would break in pieces and destroy all the images and idols in the country. Yet that was the way God caused it to be done; so that for centuries there has been no idol worship among the people of Egypt. Even the colossal statue of Memnon, about sixty feet in height (representing Amenophis III, a Pharaoh of the eighteenth dynasty), seated on a throne of stone and watching over the plain of Thebes and the ancient tombs of its kings, as the Statue of Liberty overlooks New York harbor, has been mutilated by the destructive hands of strangers, so that one of the arms is broken off. Yet there it still stands, in its stony silence, the symbol of Egypt's sovereignty, witnessing to the fulfillment of God's prophetic word: "Behold, I am against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and will break his . . . strong arm; . . . and I will cause the sword to fall out of his hand." Ezekiel 30:22, A. R. V.

The Judgments Upon Babylon

From the revolt of Babel the Assyro-Babylonians had been foremost among the races of the Old World in idolatry, war, and oppression, until during the dynasty from Nabopolassar to Belshazzar they held the dominion of the world. It was at this period that they overthrew the Jews, destroyed Jerusalem, which then contained the famous temple of Solomon, and carried the people into exile and servitude.

Babylon was in those days the hub of the world. Its fortifications were well-nigh impregnable, and its mighty kings were emboldened to defy the powers of both heaven and earth. It was then that God made known to His people through the prophets that at the end of seventy years He would overthrow Babylon, and give the dominion to Cyrus, king of Persia, who would restore them to their own land. Strong and assuring were the words which the prophets were told to write:

"Though Babylon should mount up to heaven, and though she should fortify the height of her strength, yet from Me shall spoilers come unto her, said the Lord. . . . And I will make drunk her princes, an her wise men, her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men: and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, said the King, whose name is the Lord of hosts.

"Thus said the Lord of hosts: The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burned with fire; and the people shall labor in vain, and the folk in the fire, and they shall be weary." Jeremiah 51:53-58.

"Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling place for dragons, an astonishment, and a hissing, without an inhabitant!" Verse 37.

"The wild beasts of the desert with the wild beasts of the islands shall dwell there, and the owls shall dwell therein: and it shall be no more inhabited forever; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation." Jeremiah 50:39.

Nelson points out how improbable it was from any human viewpoint that Babylon should ever come to such an end. It had already stood for nearly two thousand years, and was growing in greatness all the time; and it was situated on the important river Euphrates, in the midst of one of the most fruitful plains of the whole East, where grain grew to prodigious size, and according to ancient authorities produced from two to three hundred fold, the whole region being intersected by numerous canals, affording unending irrigation, and where the climate was mild and fruits were abundant.

Century after century rolled away before the curse of God came upon Babylon to the full extent of

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the prophecy. Overthrow followed overthrow. Its walls were thrown down, its palaces dismantled, its treasures plundered, its armies destroyed, yet its streets were not deserted all at once. Even after five hundred years it contained 600,000 inhabitants. But the building of Ctesiphon on the Tigris as the new capital of the Parthian kings, and later the building of Bagdad by the Arabs, was a fatal turn in the fortunes of Babylon.

Slowly but surely the city became deserted and desolate. and thorns and thickets of the wilderness obstructed its untrodden streets and vacant courts. The ruins became the haunt of all kinds of wild life, and the Sassanian kings and nobles of the land made the place a hunting ground, even taking animals there from far-off islands to be used in the chase, thus in an unforeseen way bringing about the accomplishment of those strange words of the prophecy: "The wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces." Isaiah 13:22.

As the Dark Ages came on, those Bible lands were lost sight of for about a thousand years. . Savage hordes of Arabs, Tartars, and Turks swept them again and again with pillage and devastation, and when in modern times travelers visited the country, only vast "heaps" and pits and -pools of water" were found.

Since Nelson wrote, the spade of the explorer has opened some of these great mounds of Babylon, discovered the long buried remains of the royal palace where Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar held forth. unearthed some of the principal streets and temple courts, with numerous monuments, inscriptions, and records preserved in tablets of clay.

There the sculptures of the dead
Witness to their words and deeds,
And confirm what God has said
Of the Chaldees and the Medes.

Among those who have recently published accounts of what they saw at Babylon, is Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, Kt., M. A., and Litt. W of Cambridge and Oxford, and keeper of the Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities of the British Museum, who may be quoted in this connection. This archaeologist and traveler says:

"We rode over the mound of Araran, and pulled up our horses on a small hill of debris which stood close by the huge mass of brickwork which marks the site of the great fortress of Babylon, or the 'Kasr.'

"At this point we stood well above every other part of the ruins, and we had a clear, good view of them and of the surrounding country. In the west, south, and east we saw large sheets of flood water, with wisps of mist clinging to their surfaces, and over the land round about them there was the shimmer of heat which foretold that the day would be hot. We agreed that Babylon must have been surrounded by gardens and groves of date palms, and that the region round the city must have been very fertile and pretty; but when I saw it that morning, it was a howling wilderness, said by the natives to be bleak and terrible by night, and scorching and equally terrible by day. I saw no flocks and herds, and no people, and there seemed to me to be nothing but desert everywhere, and it was almost impossible to say where the desert ended and the ruins of the city began. . . .

"As for the ruins themselves, they were indescribable. At the Kasr were huge masses of brickwork, and near them lay the famous basalt lion mentioned by so many travelers, but everywhere else there was nothing except broken bricks and pottery, and sand, dust, and filth of all kinds, mixed together and piled up in heaps and ridges. . . . Fortresses, palaces, hanging gardens, walls, gates, bazaars, houses, all had disappeared, leaving, as far as I could see, no trace; and I could not help thinking what every traveler must have thought as he looked over the ruins of Babylon, how literally have been fulfilled the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah concerning the complete and utter destruction which was to come upon Babylon.

"Babylon, which her founders arrogantly called 'Tintira,' i. e., 'The Grove of Life,' and 'Ka-Dingira,' i. e., the 'Gate of God,' is a 'desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness.' Babylon, the 'glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency,' is overthrown, even as were Sodom and Gomorrah. It has been swept with 'the besom of destruction,' and . . . become literally 'heaps.' No Arab pitches his tent there, and shepherds do not 'make their fold there.' . . . The wild beasts of the desert lie down there; creatures that shriek fill their houses; creatures that wail dwell therein; and devils in the forms of hairy goats dance there. Jackals screech in its strongholds (or citadels), and serpents [hiss] in its palaces of delight. (See Isaiah 13:19-22.) Babylon has become a 'horror, a thing to hiss at in derision, and a place

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without an inhabitant,' and the god Bel has been visited even as Jeremiah prophesied (Jeremiah 51:37-44), and his ziggurat destroyed, and even its ruins have been removed to another place.

"The broad walls of Babylon have been utterly broken, and her high gates burned with fire (Jeremiah 51:58), and their ruins 'have become a possession for the porcupine,' and 'sheets of water' (Isaiah 14:23) surround the city. In the pits among the heaps and among the broken brickwork we saw many hollows in which the wild animals of the desert (foxes, jackals, wild dogs and wild cats, hyenas, and wolves) had evidently sheltered, and in many places we saw lizards, and serpents, and slim snakes two feet in length, and scorpions. Wherever we turned there was ruin and desolation. It was easy to believe that no one would willingly cross the ruins after sunset, for apart from the pitfalls in the shape of holes in the ground, the wild beasts that lived in them made the ruins most unsafe for travelers." – "By Nile and Tigris," Volume I, Pages 275-277.

The journalist and traveler, William T. Ellis, has just published a work entitled, "Bible Lands Today," and under the heading, "By the Waters of Babylon," says:

"Something like a feeling of awe toward the old Hebrew prophets, whose utterances were so largely devoted to Assyria and Babylon, fills the mind of the traveler in Mesopotamia who knows his Bible. Contrary to all human probability, and to the reasonableness of history and geography, these Old Testament prophets predicted that the glory and might of the ancient world empires of Mesopotamia would disappear. They specified the complete destruction of Nineveh and Asshur and Babylon; and all three of these capitals are today mere heaps of uninhabited ruins.

"There is a mellowing mood of devotion which ensues upon a leisurely visit to Bethlehem and Nazareth, and Olivet and Jerusalem; but a thrill and glow of the consciousness of the awful sovereignty of Jehovah is imparted to the devout person who stands on the heaps of dirt that once were the capitals of Assyria and Babylon and Persia. 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.' The prophets have been vindicated. The proud peoples who oppressed Israel and defied Jehovah have been humbled literally into the dust." - Pages 405, 406.

"Old Euphrates still flows on,
Though its course is choked with sand;
But the walls of Babylon
And its towers no longer stand.

There the jackal stops and glares
At the graven demigod;
And the bats doze on the stairs
Where the queens and nobles trod.

Where was once a city great.
With its moving multitude,
Now the owl calls to its mate
In the moonlight solitude.

Let the world behold, and say
That it proves what God has said,
That there is a judgment day
For the living and the dead."

The Burial and Resurrection of Nineveh

"Woe to the bloody city! It is all full of lies and rapine; the prey departed not. Hark! The noise of the whip, and the noise of the rattling of wheels, and prancing horses, and bounding chariots. The horseman mounting, and the flashing sword, and the glittering spear, and a multitude of slain, and a great heap of corpses; . . . they stumble upon their bodies," selling the nations by lewd deeds and families by her sorcery. Nahum 3:1-4, A. R. V.

This is a picture of Nineveh, the great capital of Assyria and metropolis of the world, as God beheld it when He moved His prophets in the days of Nahum and Zephaniah, seven hundred years before

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Christ,' to publish to the world its fate, for its persistent iniquity and oppressions-Nineveh, that "exceeding great city," noted for its wonderful palaces, its gardens of natural history, and its works of art.

Fire and water were the forces by which God had declared He would destroy the city, and according to the ancient heathen historian Diodorus Siculus, the king of Nineveh knew of the prophecy that fate had appointed the river to destroy them, and so gave up in despair and fired his own palace, when the calamity came. This was the prophecy:

"The gates of thy land shall be set wide open unto your enemies: the fire shall devour thy bars." Nahum 3:13. "The gates of the river shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved [melted]." Nahum 2:6, Noyes' translation. This is a wonderful part of the prophecy:

"I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile, and will set thee as a gazing stock." Nahum 3:6. "I will show the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame." Verse 5. "When He hath uncovered the cedar work." Zephaniah 2:14, margin. "The cedar wainscoting shall be torn away." It now remains for us to describe the strange manner in which these last statements of the prediction met their fulfillment.

How Nineveh Was Discovered

It was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that explorers turned their attention toward the site of Nineveh: In 1840 Austin Layard, a wandering English scholar, after surveying the ruins of Asia Minor where the fallen columns of Christ's day lie hidden in thickets of myrtle and oleander, passed on, with his companion, to the banks of the Euphrates and the Tigris. While they looked for some landmarks by which to locate the site of Nineveh, traveling along the river, and then back into the plain among some mounds which seemed to be the vestiges of an ancient city, they rested for the night at a small Arab village.

Layard's Dream

That night Layard dreamed of palaces underground, of gigantic monsters, of sculptured figures, and endless inscriptions, and fancied himself wandering in a maze of chambers from which there was no outlet. At dawn with some Arab workmen he began his excavations, and on the first day they removed many slabs of stone, and following down a wall, they struck the entrance of a great square chamber in which were many inscriptions in arrow headed characters. The name "Nineveh" read in the ruins, and the extent of the walls, leave no doubt about the identification.

The work which was done on the site of Nineveh by Layard and M. Botta, the French consul at Mosul, was continued for some years and attended with remarkable results. Nearly one hundred halls and chambers, with walls paneled with slabs of stone and pictorially decorated with scenes of Assyrian history, customs, and traditions, covering at least two miles of base reliefs, were unearthed. The pavements of some of the halls were from twenty to thirty feet below the surface of the mounds.

Uncovering the Cedar Work

The royal palaces showed traces of having been destroyed by fire, great quantities of calcined alabaster and charred cedar wood being removed. Some of the cedar still gave off its early fragrance when used by the workmen for making fires. There, guarding the entrances, they saw great man-headed lions with eagle wings, the symbols of might and dominion, and halls adorned with giant human figures and winged monsters. There were libraries with books of stone and clay, preserving accounts of creation and the flood; sculptures of Paradise, the divine Presence, and the tree of life, with cherubim, man-headed and eagle-headed, and in the form of griffins, guarding the entrance. There were kings and priests worshipping, and fierce demons being driven before human-headed cherubim, illustrating the conflict between the good and evil powers.

The Palace Library of Sardanapalus

In one of these palaces Layard found the royal throne, and near it, beneath fragments of beautiful blue and opaque glass, was discovered a rock-crystal lens or magnifying glass, for reading, many of the

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inscribed tablets being so finely engraved that such glasses must have been required both to make and to read them. This throne and reading glass are probably the oldest remains of the kind upon earth, and like the architecture, the sculpture, the paintings in colors of blue, red, black, white, yellow, and green, the beautifully enameled bricks, the elegantly woven fabrics, the pottery, the vases, and vessels of gold, of silver, of bronze, of copper, and alabaster, the ivory ornaments, and jewels found in tombs, with other objects too numerous to mention, all gave evidence of the high degree of culture in literature, art, and science which prevailed in these first cities built by the children of men after the great flood.

Awed by the Man Headed Lions

The Arab inhabitants of the plain were astonished and much excited at the sight of the great, majestic, man headed lions and giant monsters with massive wings, and were afraid that Nimrod himself might come to life. So for a time they could scarcely be prevailed upon to go on with the work or allow it to proceed.

“Ourfathers.” said they, “have for hundreds of years pitched our tents in these places, but without knowing that there was anything remarkable buried there; and now you Franks [and English] have no sooner arrived with your measuring sticks than you have traced the plan of the country, and brought to light magnificent temples and numerous treasures. Is it your books or your prophets that have revealed these secrets to you?” But ultimately they were persuaded to go on with the excavation.

The God of Asshur Depart for Other Lands

At last, when all this collection of gods, and genies, and kings, and priests, and warriors of old, preserved in sculptured stone and painted frieze, had been raised up from their graves and assembled once more on the banks of their native Tigris, they were floated away overseas, to London and Paris, there to grace the halls of the great museums and be unveiled as a gazing stock to nations.

“With an overrunning flood He will make an utter end of the place thereof.” Nahum 1:8.

It was indeed a supernatural coincidence when Nineveh, by means of river gates and walls, had been able to control the torrents of the Tigris for nearly two thousand years, that now, after God had declared it, when an army was besieging the city, the waters should suddenly rise to such an unprecedented height as to break open for the space of twenty furlongs that great wall upon the top of which three chariots could drive abreast, so that the troops could rush in and capture and burr! the city. Yet this was what happened. (See Diod. Sic., lib. 11, pp. 81-84. Also Nelson’s “Cause and Cure of Infidelity,” p. 63.)

The Grave of Nineveh

“The Lord hath given commandment concerning thee, that no more of thy name be sown: out of the house of thy gods will I cut off the graven image and the molten image: I will make thy grave; for thou art tile.” Nahum 1:14. “Thou shall be hid.” Nahum 3:11.

The burning of the city, and continued floods from the overflowing of the river through the broken walls, soon filled the streets with mire, and buried in a marsh what was not consumed. The effect was fatal and final. The city never rose again. Royal palaces, temples, gods, the plunder, and the slain, were all mingled in a common grave. Twice twelve hundred years passed away, and Nineveh was forgotten. Only ridges of green hills where flocks grazed marked the place of its burial-the overgrown remains of walls. And no one knew except from the Bible what might be buried there.

The Stones Now Crying Out

When Nelson wrote in the early part of the nineteenth century, the last part of this prophecy concerning Nineveh had not yet been fulfilled. It was still covered with abominable filth. But God had declared that it should be raised up and made a gazing stock to the world in the latter, days.

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Nineveh Becomes a Gazing stock

And there Nineveh stands today, holding forth in her hands the old stone books which the Master had need of, to tell the world her story, and which were kept covered until this time; for when they will no longer hear Moses and the prophets, it is time for Nineveh to rise up against this generation and condemn it because of unbelief.

In giving an account of the discoveries of Layard and Botta, before an audience of the learned men of Europe, M. Paulin Paris, president of the French Institute, paid solemn homage to the Bible, saying: "It is true that our Books and our prophets have made us acquainted with these cities, so long buried but which, now rediscovered, bear testimony to the truth of their accounts and their predictions." – "Stones Crying Out," p. 447.

Nations Behold Her "Shame"

Day after day the throngs who wander through the Nineveh galleries of the British Museum in London, now gaze upon those great man-lions of the heathen, and cherubim figures with massive wings, and wonder over the meaning of those giant forms which guarded the portals of palaces and temples, and awed the races of three thousand years ago. There, too, fixed in enduring stone, and portrayed upon the broken walls, are seen their kings and princes upon thrones, and riding in war chariots and upon horses, in blue and vermilion, leading armies, storming cities, receiving processions of captives in fetters of iron, and pronouncing judgment of servitude, torture, and death upon their enemies, just as when Daniel and Ezekiel and other Jewish captives saw them and described them. Ezekiel 23:5-15.

9. Modern Miracles

How George Muller Demonstrated the Fatherhood of God

ONE of the most positive proofs of the truth of Christianity and its supernatural reality known to modern times, was given to the world in the life and experiences of the late George Muller, founder of the Ashley Down Orphanages of Bristol, England, who demonstrated that what Christ said is true: "If any one has the will to do God's will, he will find out whether My teaching is from God, or whether I speak on My own authority." John 7:17, Twentieth Century trans.

"Born in the town of Kroppenstedt, Prussia, on September 27, 1805, George Muller had very early given himself up to a course of sin. His father, who was collector of the excise, seems to have made the mistake of, allowing the boy too much money to spend, considering his age, not in order that he might spend it, but to accustom him to possess money without spending it. The principle had an opposite effect altogether. It led him into many sins."

He frequently sought to deceive his father as to what became of the means given him, and although found out and punished, he was not reformed. He often stole the government money in his father's keeping. He also, when sent by his father to church to be confirmed one Easter, defrauded the minister out of most of the offering which his father gave him for the clergyman, so void did he seem to be of either honesty or honor.

At the classical school of Halberstadt, where he was sent to prepare for the university, it being his father's desire that he become a clergyman, much of his time was spent in novel reading and sinful practices, frequenting taverns, and wasting time and substance in dissipating pleasures, and while, unknown to him, his mother lay dying, he was playing cards till 2 AM and roaming the streets the next day half intoxicated.

Alas! bereavement made no lasting impression upon his conduct, for he continued to steal from his father, to contract debts, to make excursions where he could put up at expensive hotels and live extravagantly for several days or a week at a time, and then leave without paying his bills. Once he was compelled to leave his best clothes as security.

Finally he was arrested and imprisoned for three weeks. While at the jail, finding a thief occupying the adjoining cell, he befriended him, and afterward, by Mullet's request, the governor of the jail permitted the thief to share his cell. Sinful habits began to affect his health, and later on while in school at Nordhausen, he, as a consequence, became ill and was confined to his room for more than three months. In

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those days, though possessing many books, Muller had no Bible.

Even after entering Halle University, he kept on in his reckless course. On one occasion he drove about the country with three companions in pleasure, for four days, defraying expenses by pledging their belongings. At another time, restless for travel and adventure, he, with a former school fellow named Beta, whom he met in a tavern (but had known at Halberstadt), and two other students, after again securing money by pledging various articles, including books, slipped away from the university, and made an extended tour through Switzerland, forging letters from their parents, at Muller's suggestion, to secure their passports. Such was the miscreant character of young Muller during the first twenty years of his life, and he was thus apparently well on the road to a career of crime when an event happened which miraculously influenced his spirit and turned him into another man.

George Miller Transformed

One Saturday night at the university, learning that his friend Beta was going to a cottage prayer meeting at the house of a tradesman named Wagner, George Muller asked if he might go along, and Beta consented, although he had misgivings about introducing him to such a gathering. Upon entering, however, Mr. Muller apologized to the master of the house for coming uninvited, and was put at ease by the kindly reply, "Come as often as you please; house and heart are open to you."

The small company sang a hymn, and then one of the number knelt down and asked the blessing of God upon the meeting. Mr. Muller had often attended religious services at church, and the university was a Lutheran institution, yet up to this time he had never seen any one on his knees in prayer, nor had he ever so prayed himself. After the prayer, a chapter from the Bible was read and a printed sermon; and then after another hymn and prayer the service closed. It was a simple, quiet gathering, yet revolutionary in the heart of George Muller.

From that prayer meeting the gay and godless young man went forth a Christian, saying to his friend, "All my former pleasures are as nothing in comparison with this evening." It was the scene of the humble prayer which seemed to affect him. The Spirit of God must have made in that hour a deep impression upon his sinful heart, for prayer was ever after to be the helm and sheet anchor of his life.

From the very beginning of his new life Mr. Muller was graciously given a measure of simplicity and of childlike disposition in spiritual things so that while he was exceedingly ignorant of the Scriptures, he was enabled to carry the most minute matters to the Lord in prayer. And thus very early in his experience the great central habit of his life was formed, that of simple, earnest, and believing prayer, a source of strength and grace which never failed him.

Struggle With Sin and Agnosticism

Now although his former associates and fellow students made light of his sudden change and new manner of life, he was able to bear it gracefully. He read the Scriptures, loved the society of Christian people, - went to church from right motives, and stood openly and decidedly on the side of Christ. Still he was not yet rooted in the new life, and now began a hard battle, with his old practices and selfish instincts pressing upon him and buffeting him with the weakness of the flesh and the insinuations of doubt.

The German universities were at that time becoming hotbeds of rationalism, or skeptical philosophy. Spirituality in religion was dying out, leaving a dead formalism to survive it, so that the public means of grace to which George Muller had access were few.

"Though I went to church regularly," he tells us, "when I did not preach myself [as a divinity student], yet I scarcely ever heard the truth for there was no enlightened clergyman in the town. And then it so happened that I could hear Dr. Tholuck, or any other godly minister the prospect of it beforehand, and the looking back upon it afterward, served to fill me with joy. Now and then I walked ten or fifteen miles to enjoy this privilege."

As might be feared, however, we are told that he fell deeply, about that time more than once, in forgetfulness of his Savior. So he bought a crucifix and hung it up in his room, thinking that being thus frequently reminded of the sufferings of Christ, he would be restrained from yielding to temptation. But instead, as he relates, "the crucifix was as nothing," and he felt himself going down and losing sight of God.

Had it not been for the little weekly devotional meetings at the Wagners', and the light which

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shone out from the large Orphan Asylum at Halle, founded by the noted Christian philanthropist, Francke, and supported by faith and prayer, his spirit might have sunk at last under the waves of agnosticism, and - Muller's Life of Trust" would never have been written. The everlasting arms were underneath him, however, and "in self-humiliation," it is said that "after a season of doubt he was constrained to fall upon his knees behind a hedge, though the snow was a foot deep, to surrender himself anew to the Lord, to pray for future strength, and to thank Him for His mercy." These experiences purified his life, and taught him to know the Lord as his personal Savior, and to place no confidence in the flesh.

The Evidence of True Conversion

Young Muller was now as ardent in Christian work as he had before been in the pleasures of sin. He wrote letters of affectionate appeal to some of his former worldly companions, often spoke to the people, and distributed religious tracts and missionary papers. A strong desire arose within him to devote himself to the missionary cause, and this desire he communicated to his father with every reason to expect that he would be pleased. In this hope, however, he was to meet with disappointment and sorrow, and had to bear reproach for not consenting to pursue his father's ambition that he become "a clergyman with a good living." Yet he remained steadfast, knowing that it would be wrong to go against his own convictions of duty for the sake of worldly advantages and reputation.

All efforts to conciliate his father were unavailing, whose spirit of opposition finally led him to declare that he would no longer consider George as his son. He was led by this, however, to cast himself wholly upon his heavenly Father for material assistance to finish his education. The event thus proved a steppingstone to those great achievements of faith which so distinguished his after life, and for which God was now evidently preparing him.

"Only those are crowned and sainted
Who with grief have been acquainted."

Early Sacrifices and Adventures of Faith

From the beginning of his public ministry, Mr. Muller's life was characterized by a spirit of charity and unselfish benevolence toward all who were poor, unfortunate, and neglected. At Berlin, after leaving the University of Halle, he preached several times a week in the wards of the poorhouse, and on Sundays visited one of the prisons, working for the inmates while locked with them in their cells.

Going to London upon the advice of Dr. Tholuck of Halle, he entered the service of the Society for the Promotion of Christianity among the Jews. But owing to their restrictions against the missionaries in their employ working for other classes, he finally felt impressed that he should separate from them, as they were unwilling to grant him this freedom, even after he offered to serve them without the salary they were paying him, if they would only leave him free to preach the gospel alto to others. The same conscientiousness and unselfishness were afterward shown in his church connections as a pastor.

At Tiegnmouth, when the church in Devonshire was appreciative of his ministry and his congregation was paying him a good salary, he developed that prominent characteristic of depending on God, which led him to decline a salary made up from the customary pew rents and willingly made himself dependent upon a freewill-offering box placed in the chapel, and what God provided otherwise in answer to prayer, explaining to the people his convictions that the pew-rent system was contrary to the mind of the Lord. He believed that in God's house the pews should be open freely to all alike, and that tithes and offerings are God's appointed means of supporting the work of the gospel.

Mrs. Muller, then a bride of only a few weeks whose brother had recently given up a salary of £ 1,500 a year to go and labor as a missionary in Persia, trusting solely in the Lord to supply the necessary support, was in full sympathy with her husband in walking out by faith in this new method of Christian living. And they were never disappointed in trusting God, for that year their income so far exceeded their regular salary that they gave one third of it to the work of the Lord as a surplus.

The following year their income was about four times their regular salary, the third year, five times; and the fifth year, nearly six times that amount; and they continued to enlarge their gifts to God proportionately, dispensing annually one third of their total income. This custom of giving back into the work of God all that was over and above their personal expenses, became an established principle with Mr.

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and Mrs. Muller, even when it multiplied to thousands of pounds a year.

The Scriptural Knowledge Institution

Mr. Muller was not a man of “one idea,” and as he saw means multiply in his hands in answer to prayer, there arose in his heart new plans for using it to the glory of the Giver, plans projecting always beyond the visible means of their realization, so that the increase was constantly required to meet the current expenses, and the upkeep of the work rested wholly on continued help from God.

While in Devonshire, Mr. Muller became intimately associated with a young minister of kindred spirit named Henry Craik, and in 1832 together they accepted calls from two congregations of Bristol to come there and labor together in evangelistic and pastoral work, with the result that a general revival of religion followed, and Bristol became thereafter the center of Mr. Muller’s extraordinary missionary activities.

Here in 1834 Messrs. Muller and Craik founded the Scriptural Knowledge Institution, an organization formed for the establishment of Christian schools; to teach the Scriptures to the people at home and abroad; to circulate the Bible and other religious books, especially among the poor; and to aid and extend missionary operations in all lands. The work was to depend for its support wholly upon the providence of God through prayer and faith, without ever seeking the patronage of the world. So entirely without material means for undertaking such a work were these trusting servants of God, that within two days after the organization of the work one of the founders wrote: “Today we have only one shilling left.”

And yet that work flourished and is still flourishing after nearly a century of success, operating schools in England, Italy, Spain, Czechoslovakia, China, India, Africa, South America, Mexico, the West Indies, and among the Jews, besides aiding various other missionary undertakings, including medical work for lepers. Reports show that nearly 150 laborers are employed, and are operating in more than twenty-five different fields of the world in many languages, Italy alone having five schools.

Before Mr. Mullet’s death, he was able to report that since this work started from nothing, \$7,500,000 had been received and expended in the work of the institution. With this, 121,683 persons had up to that time (1897) received training in the schools, and 281,652 Bibles, 1,448,662 New Testaments, 243,539 other portions of God’s word, and 111,489,067 Scripture books, pamphlets, etc., had been distributed.

Along with these items include the feeding, clothing, and educating of 9,844 orphans, and we have before us a work of such magnitude that it would have bankrupted almost any of the nobility, performed by a penniless man. And all without ever asking any one in this world for a single cent to assist him in his efforts. It was a practical demonstration of the teachings, of Christianity, whose Author said, “He that believed on Me, from within him shall flow rivers of living water.” John 7:38, A. R. V. It shows what the love of God when received into the heart may accomplish through the weakest of men, and that there is no limit to the good which such a one may do in the world.

Providing Homes for the Fatherless

The work for orphans was a gradual development, but became the central body of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution. As early as 1833 Mr. Muller’s sympathetic interest in homeless children began to manifest itself in a small way by giving to a few children gathered out of the streets, a bit of bread for breakfast, and then teaching them for about an hour and a half to read the Scriptures. At that time in England, Poor children, bereaved of their parents, were left to fall into irresponsible hands, or be sheltered by the poorhouse or the jail. Moved with compassion toward this large and scattered flock of God’s little waifs, Mr. Muller soon began to have an intense longing to do something more definite and extensive for their relief and instruction.

At length, after much prayer for suitable buildings and £1,000 to open a home for the orphans, with proper help to care for them, and without solicitation, the necessary means were accumulated. The first money was a gift of 1 shilling from a poor missionary; the second, 1 shilling, and the third, a legacy of 6 shillings and 6V2 pence from a little boy. Then came a gift of £100 from a poor seamstress, and still more and larger donations, until a house was rented and an orphanage opened for thirty girls.

As Mr. Muller read his Bible, he was much impressed with passages which speak of our God as the “Father of the fatherless” (Psalm 68:5), and “the Helper of the fatherless” (Psalm 10:14). The Lord also

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comforts His people in bereavement, saying, "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in Me." Jeremiah 49:11. Such promises led George Muller to believe that God would manifestly provide for the orphans if some one would be a faithful and fatherly steward for Him, to administer the funds in their behalf.

And so he offered himself for service, covenanting with God that he would accept all the orphans who came to him and provide proper care for them, if only God would furnish the needed means. He saw in such an undertaking not only the assistance of the orphans, but an outstanding demonstration to the whole world of the existence of God and His loving care for the children of earth. It was a noble aspiration.

"I judged myself bound," he says, "to be the servant of the church of Christ in the particular point on which I had obtained mercy; namely, in being able to take God by His word, and to rely upon it. This seemed to me best done by the establishing and carrying on of an orphan house. It needed to be something which could, be seen even by the natural eye. Now if I, a poor man, simply by prayer and faith, obtained without asking any individual, the means for establishing and carrying on an orphan house, there would be something which, with the Lord's blessing, might be instrumental in strengthening the faith of the children of God, besides being a testimony to the conscience of the unconverted of the reality of the things of God. This, then, was the primary reason for establishing the orphan houses.

"I certainly did from my heart desire to be used by God to benefit the bodies of poor children bereaved of both, parents, and seek in other respects, with the help of God, to do them good for this life. I also particularly longed to be used by God in getting the dear orphans trained up in the fear of God. But still the first and primary object of the institution was, and still is, that God might be magnified by the fact that the orphans under my care were, and are, provided with all they need only by prayer and faith, without any one being asked by me or my fellow laborers, whereby it might be seen that God is faithful still and hears prayer still."

Rapid Growth of the Work

As it became known that there was a good man prepared to take charge of the fatherless and motherless, providing for them a comfortable home, with board clothing, and Christian teachers, without money and without price (the only requirements being that they must be children born in wedlock, and deprived by death of both their parents, and destitute), the small family and the increasing needs became larger and larger. At the end of only eight months another house had to be rented to accommodate thirty-six infants; and nine months later a third house was opened for thirty boys. Subsequently a fourth house had to be secured, capable of accommodating thirty more children.

In Mr. Muller's straitened circumstances the wants of this large and helpless family of little ones drew upon his faith and prayers constantly. Repeatedly their wants had to be met only from hour to hour and from meal to meal by the Father of the fatherless, in response to urgent supplication. To carry such responsibility was no romance, but a tremendous care and test for any man. As he himself relates, "The last penny was reached over and over again, but it was merely for the trial of faith, and in the end Clod invariably appeared, and the orphans lacked nothing."

"Long before the trial came," observes Mr. Muller, "I had more than once stated publicly that answers to prayer in time of need the manifestation of the hand of God stretched out for our help-were just the very ends for which the institution was established."

And so the man of God did not become weary in his well doing, but sometimes in plenty and sometimes in poverty the work went on, and grew, and somehow continually, without asking the help of man or going into debt, the needs were supplied. And yet, though the funds in hand were often not sufficient for more than two or three days together, the advisability of admitting more orphans, providing there was room for them, was never questioned, and he turned none away. What he did was to pray that more food and clothes might be sent in.

Sometimes the day started without a penny; sometimes with just one penny in hand; once with two and three-fourths cents; and again with only one fourth of a cent. On one occasion the supplies were so reduced that at four o'clock in the afternoon it was not known where food for supper would come from; but along came a visitor, and after looking over the place, dropped a sovereign, into each of the offering boxes. Had the gentleman not been pressed for time, however, and so hastened to leave his gift and depart. it would have been too late to provide for supper that evening.

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Food All Gone

On another occasion, when the food was all gone, and neither Mr. Muller nor the matrons of the homes had a few pennies left with which to buy bread, the situation indeed looked dark. But the workers met together, and after earnest supplication, Mr. Muller, feeling the need of exercise on the way home, took a longer route than usual, and in so doing, met a Christian man who had twice called at his house that morning to leave £20 for the work, but had, it appears, not found any one in. Had Mr. Muller not taken this road, or had he been but a moment later, the money would probably have failed to reach them in the hour of greatest anxiety.

One day when Mr. Muller and his helpers had just risen from their knees in presenting their needs before the Lord, he exclaimed, "God will surely send us help." He looked, and perceiving a letter lying on the table which some one had just brought in, opened it to find £10 a wonderful and timely assistance!

"The funds are exhausted," said this steward of God to his helpers one day; but he was mistaken, for a lady rooming next door to one of the homes had a sum of money in hand for the institution which she had brought from London four or five days previously. "That the money had been so near the orphan houses for several days without being given," said Mr. Muller in his notes, "is a plain proof that it was from the beginning in the heart of God to help us; but because He delights in the prayers of His children, He had allowed us to pray so long; also to try our faith, and to make the answer so much the sweeter."

Being in sore need of money one time, Mr. Muller wrote: "If the Lord were not to send means before nine o'clock tomorrow morning, His name would be dishonored. But I am fully assured that He will not leave us." That day only a few shillings came in, but before eight o'clock the next morning deliverance had arisen in a remarkable way: A gentleman in going to his business that morning, had proceeded about half a mile on the way, when he felt constrained to stop and remember the orphans.

"I cannot well return now," he said, "but will take something this evening," and so walked on. Nevertheless his mind was so agitated over it that he turned back. He had gone only a short distance when he began to think of the important matters awaiting him at the office, and so turned his face once more toward his place of business. But again the voice said within him so strongly: "Go at once; go at once, and not wait till the evening." And so he returned and handed in three sovereigns, which Mr. Muller found awaiting him when, before breakfast that morning, he came to the orphans' house to learn if any help had come.

Instances of this kind might be multiplied indefinitely, but through all the years, it can be said to the wonderful praise of His name, "the God of the orphans never suffered His little ones to hunger or thirst; His help was always sure."

The Buildings at Ashley Down; Fathering 2,000 Orphans

The continually increasing applications for admission and the unsuitability of the rented buildings in Bristol for such home schools for the orphans, next compelled Mr. Muller to consider the necessity of building on a commodious scale. The houses which they were now occupying accommodated only 150 children, and he saw that a building was needed which would house double that number.

From £10,000 to £15,000 was required to erect such a structure, and the man, as we are told, "bad not a penny to call his own." He had, however, become acquainted with the One who "hangs the earth upon nothing" (Job 26:7), and began to apply to Him for the needed help. He gave himself to prayer for thirty six days before he received the first donation. It was for £1,000, the largest amount ever given to his work up to this time. After sixty-five days more offerings flowed in, in varying sums from a farthing up to £2,000, and by the end of 607 days of prayer, sufficient means had come in so that work on the building was begun, for Mr. Muller operated on a cash basis, and would not contract debts.

The land upon which the institution stands at Ashley Down, near Bristol, was held by the owner at a certain price, and Mr. Muller called twice in one day to buy it, but as he did not find the owner at home either time, he thought perhaps the Lord might be arranging otherwise, and so did not go again that day, as he might have done. The next time he called, after earnest prayer, he found the landowner, and learned that he had had a very restless night, and while lying awake thinking upon his business affairs, had decided to sell the land at a reduced price, so it was purchased for £560 less than it would have cost the day before. Surely the Lord works in a mysterious way His wonders to perform. Thus House No. 1, upon this rolling, spacious green, was opened in June, 1849.

The next year it became necessary to plan an enlargement of the institution, and the proposition of

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another building was considered, and made the subject of much prayer for many months. Almost the first gift toward the new undertaking was a sixpence from one of the orphans. All the early contributions were small. Finally, however came a gift of £8,100, the joint contribution of several Christians. Then along with smaller ones from factory girls and other poor persons came another large donation of £5,207 in one day; and still further sums, large and small, so that the work went on until 1857, when House No. 2 was opened; and only a few years later, in 1862, a third, building was added, the two together costing nearly £50,000.

Even before No. 3 had been completed, Mr. Muller had come to feel the importance of still further expansion of this work of God. Applications for the admission of more orphans came almost daily, and sometimes several times a day. The prosperity of the undertaking made it seem more and more apparent that God meant to make this orphan colony on the breezy heights of Ashley Down an object lesson to the world of His unfailing mercy and providence.

And George Muller's eye was still single in his conviction that the great purpose in operating the institution was for the evidence which it afforded that the living God of four thousand years ago is still the living God, and will now, as then, respond to all who truly serve and obey Him. Thousands of sinners had already been converted; and multitudes of Christians had been greatly strengthened in their faith and holy purpose. The attention of hundreds of thousands of people in England and other lands was being drawn to this extraordinary work, and tens of thousands were coming to see it. And so the desire of Mr. Muller's heart was being realized in seeing the needy cared for, souls saved, and God glorified.

Now the time came when more land adjoining the institution was needed. Hundreds of prayers had been going up to heaven that the land might be obtained. To use one of Mr. Muller's own expressions, , this ground had been bedewed with prayers. Still, when the time came to negotiate for it, their expectations failed, and they were staggered for a time by what seemed a deathblow to their hopes. While they waited upon God however, with patience and renewed entreaty, the obstacles vanished, and the land was obtained for £1,500 less than the owner had originally asked for it.

In addition to the cost of the land, £58,000 had to be received before this fourth building could be erected, yet through prayer so much money came in that by 1868 House No. 4 was opened, and in 1870 House No. 5.

Altogether these five houses had cost £115,000 and were capable of accommodating 2,050 children, with the large staff of helpers. Each house is a complete institution in itself, that is, besides being the home of some hundreds of orphans, and those caring for them it has its own school, laundry, infirmary, and other appointments. Large gardens surround all the buildings. All are simply and strongly constructed, with light and lofty rooms, containing a total of 1,700 windows.

The schools of the institution provide for the education of the children from kindergarten age to the completion of grammar grades, the system being much like that of the public schools, except that special attention is given to the moral and religious features of their training with instruction from the Holy Scriptures.

All the teaching is under inspectors, who lay down the courses of study and supervise the examinations. At the age of fourteen the boys are apprenticed in various trades, outside, but the girls as a rule are retained under the care of the institution until seventeen, or until they are qualified for situations, and an entrance is found for them in Christian homes or some suitable occupation. And all, both boys and girls, when they leave the orphanage, are given an outfit of clothing, etc. and their expenses are temporarily met from the funds of the institution. A parental care is thus extended over them until they can get a start in life.

A Perpetual Miracle

Think, reader for a moment of one poor man building up and maintaining such a work for half a century, with never any means except that coming in from unknown sources from day to day. Imagine the responsibility of having two thousand little ones daily to feed and clothe and educate. With outfits and premiums continually to be provided for those going out to apprenticeship or domestic service or special training; with thousands of articles of furniture, etc., frequently to be bought, repaired, or replaced. With children occasionally ill; and the large staff of overseers of one kind and another, such as school inspectors, matrons, masters, teachers, medical officers, nurses, laundresses. cooks, etc., to be paid.

Realize if you can what even the milk bill for hundreds of infants would amount to from week to week. And what it would mean not simply to shelter and feed, but actually to take the place of the fathers

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and mothers of all these waifs from babyhood to youthful maturity, and then only can you begin to understand that a miracle is continually being wrought before the eyes of the whole world in the life of this institution, and a personal testimony borne to the truth of Christianity, the authenticity of the Bible and the power of genuine prayer.

The Teaching of Jeans About Prayer

Some one has said. "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed," and while in its broadest sense this is so, since God understands even the secret workings of the heart, yet praying must go beyond "wishing" if much is to be expected of it. Prayer has direction and form, and in the New Testament usage implies "request," "intercessions," "supplications." to God. Philippians 1:4; 1 Timothy 2:1. The words of some of Jesus' prayers have been recorded for us in the Gospels. John 17; Matthew 26:36-44; John 11:41-44; 12:27, 28; Luke 23:34, 46. Sometimes they were offered up "with strong crying and tears." Hebrews 5:7. He also taught His disciples to pray, not always the same words, nor in "vain repetitions, as the heathen," but "after this manner." (See Matthew 6:9-13.) He is our example. He is also our mediator, or the medium through whom our prayers reach God and are granted. "No man comes unto the Father, but by Me." "I am the way." "Whatsoever you shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son," said He. John 14:6, 13.

Winds Obey the Voice of Prayer

In his prayers, as in other things, George Muller followed the Bible literally as God's book of promises and instructions. He fervently entreated the heavenly Father in simple faith and in the name of Jesus, asking only for such things as appeared to be according to the mind of the Lord.

A remarkable instance of such prevailing prayer occurred when at one time the boiler of the heating apparatus was discovered to be leaking so that the fires had to be put out for three days to enable the workmen to take out and repair the brickwork in which it was embedded. A bitter cold north wind was blowing and all the orphans in the building were in danger. Christ who quieted the winds and the sea of old, was appealed to now to change the wind to the south and give warm weather, and that the workmen might hurry the repairs. That very day the wind veered strongly to the south, and continued there until the work was done so that the children did not suffer from the cold, and this men called Mr. Muller that evening and asked to be allowed to work all night to take advantage of the favorable weather.

Mr. Muller found by many experiences that his connection with God manifestly affected the success of the work, and the measure of assistance which came from men. Unless this fellowship was kept up, things went wrong and back; but the more absolutely he relied upon his heavenly Father, the more help came and the work succeeded. "It is better to walk by faith than sight, And the pitch-black night with no outer light, Is the time for faith to shine."

Christianity a Supernatural Force

The mission of the Son of God to this world was to re-establish here the divine laws of the kingdom of heaven among men. The effect of the operation of these higher laws of life upon the elements of the natural world was witnessed in the miracles which attended His earthly ministry. The entrance of the supernatural agency of the Spirit into the world for the purpose of redemption began a new dispensation—a new administration in the order of the ages. Christianity was thus a supernatural force acting upon the world, and we read that the disciples "went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." Mark 16:20. This offers an explanation of the work of George Muller the Lord was working with him, confirming His word before a rationalistic and materialistic generation.

The Secret of Muller's Success

The work of George Muller all grew out of faith in the Bible as the word of the living God, and in the efficacy of fervent prayer. Several hours of each busy day, burdened with the cares of so many of God's

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little ones, were spent in Bible study and prayer for light and understanding and guidance in handling the work. When Moses committed the leadership of the children of Israel to Joshua, he said to him: "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shall meditate therein day and night, that thou may observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shall make thy way prosperous, and then thou shall have good success." Joshua 1:8.

George Muller did this. He made the test, and he had "good success." He was a great lover of the Bible, which he read through from cover to cover four times every year. At the time of his death he had read the Good Book through between one and two hundred times. This means that he daily gave about four hours time to reading the Holy Book.

Translating the Bible Into Practical Lift

In the life of Christ it is said that "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." so perfectly did He fulfill and express in His daily life all the teachings of God's written word. In this, Jesus was man's divine example. He said: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God.

George Muller sought thus to live, and to, translate the written promises of the Bible into actual and visible facts, that the world might see it fulfilled in deeds and in truth, and be led to believe.

Favorite Texts

Among the Scripture texts which most influenced and guided Mr. Muller's life, was Luke 6:38: "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom." Many times he saw this verified. He gave, and God caused men to give bountifully to him in return. Again he found it written that Jesus said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." He tells us that he believed this to be true, and sought to act accordingly. Mr. Muller's own words are: "My aim never was, how much I could obtain, but rather how much I could give." His manner of life confirmed this, for while as the steward of God he handled much money he was careful not to consume it for his own comfort and convenience.

During the later years of his life, Mr. Muller declined to accept the offer of a fund for his support, preferring to live with his orphan children, sharing their simple life. He had his own private room very plainly furnished. He provided a home for so many of God's children, yet he never had time or means to think of building one for himself. It can be said of him as of the apostle Paul, He was "poor, yet making many rich." And he died as he had lived, with no earthly possession, save a few books, a little furniture, and about £60 in money on hand awaiting disbursement, little more than was needed for his funeral expenses. "We lose what on ourselves we spend: We have as treasure without end Whatever, Lord, to Thee we lend."

Since Mr. Muller's death in 1898, the work which he fathered for sixty-two years has been carried on by or Wright, his son-in-law, who was long associated. Mr. Muller in the directorship of the institution, together with others of his staff of management, on the same principle of faith and prayer, and with the same results, showing plainly that not the personality of man, but the providence of God is the strength and support of the work. The world has changed. Times have changed. There have been wars, financial panics, famines, and epidemics, but God has not changed, and this work has not ceased to prosper. Since Mr. Muller's death more than £1,016,000 has been received for the support of the institution, so that every want has been supplied, and in the report of 1925-1926, the management states that "to us the work seems today greater proof than ever of God's power and willingness to answer believing prayer."

A Challenge to Unbelief

Arthur T. Pierson, D. D., in an article entitled, "Proof of the Living God," says: "No one can understand this work who does not see in it the supernatural power of God, without that, it is an enigma, defying solution; with that, all the mystery is an open mystery." Mr. Muller himself felt that. He often compared his work for God to "the burning bush in the wilderness," always aflame and threatened with destruction, yet not consumed. Look at the outlay a yearly expenditure which rose as high as £25,000 for

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the orphans alone, irrespective of other outlays.

“Here is a burning bush indeed, always in seeming danger of being consumed, yet still standing on Ashley Down, and still preserved because the same presence of Jehovah burns in it. Not a branch of this many-sided work [the Scriptural Knowledge Institution] has utterly perished, while the whole work still challenges unbelievers to turn aside and see the great sight, and take off their shoes from their feet, for is not all ground holy where God abides and manifests Himself?”

Let those who doubt the evidence of a, living God and who think that the facts can be accounted for by natural causes, test the matter for themselves. The field is still open, and the constituency is large. Unbelievers outnumber Christians. Let us have the experiment conducted, not on the faith basis, but in strictly scientific method.

“When we see an infidel carrying on such a work, building five great orphan houses and sustaining over 2,000 orphans from day to day without any direct appeal to human help, yet finding all supplies coming in without even a failure in sixty years, we shall be ready to reconsider our present conviction that it was because the living God heard and helped George Muller. that he who began with a capital of one shilling, took care of more than ten thousand orphans, aided hundreds of missionaries, scattered millions of Bibles and tracts, and in the course of his long life expended about \$7,500,000 for God and humanity; and then died with all his possessions valued at less than \$800.”

Man the Steward of God

George Muller regarded himself as really a steward of God, and kept a strict account of the institution's business. He also published an annual statement of all receipts and expenditures connected with the work, recognizing it as a duty which he owed the patrons of the institution and the public. His books and the accounts of the work published by others were also means used of God to make the world acquainted with what the Lord was doing through His servant, and to stimulate a greater interest in such holy and benevolent enterprises throughout all lands.

A Vast Field of Opportunity Opened Before the Church

While George Muller refrained from making any direct appeal to the people for means to carry forward his work for orphans, it was that the interposition of God in their behalf through prayer might be the more manifest, not that it would be wrong to do so under different circumstances, for it is a recognized principle of ethics that society should support the weak and dependent. There has been, however, a manifest awakening of the public conscience over this matter since it became evident that such are the special objects of God's care. For the spirit of compassion, not only for its own but for the multitude, has always been a distinguishing characteristic of the Christian religion and life.

It thus belongs to the church and its ministry to lead the world in works of charity and to urge upon those who have means the duty of doing good unto all men as they have opportunity. In this they have the example of the prophets (Daniel 4:27); and of Christ who called upon the young nobleman to sell that he had and give to the poor, and to come and follow Him (Matthew 19:21); and last, the commandment of the apostles (1 Timothy 6:17).

God's answers to George Muller's prayers show the unlimited possibilities open to the Lord's people and they indicate in miniature, perhaps, something of how God may be expected to work in coming times as darkness more and more covers the earth and all lands are enveloped in distress. The glory of the Lord will then be upon the people who know God and are filled with His Spirit. They will have a vision of His work and through their connection with heaven, new and undiscovered channels of blessing will be opened to suffering humanity, and streams of benevolence will break forth among all nations. For so it is promised: “Thy heart shall thrill and be enlarged; because the wealth of the nations shall come unto thee. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praises of Jehovah.” “Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers; and thou shall know that I am Jehovah; and they that wait for Me shall not be put to shame.” Isaiah 60:5, 6; 49:23. A. R. V.

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10. William Miller

The Great Prophetic Movement

IN the first part of the past century there began throughout the world a great religious awakening, affecting not only all churches, but the world in general, the first wave of which culminated about 1843-44. It was not emotional in its nature, but in demonstration of the harmony and truth of the Bible as a divine revelation, and was attended with the Spirit and power of God. Infidel circles everywhere, which had resisted the influence of the gospel, were broken up, and in fact that form of unbelief known as deism, which prevailed after the French Revolution, was practically wiped out, and disappeared like snow banks before the warmth of spring, opening the way for a succession of spiritual revivals and the far-reaching missionary operations of later times.

It was a singular thing that the work started in many parts of the world about the same time, and with the same characteristics, although the leaders were unknown to one another. It took form from rays of light which seemed to come at that time from the fulfillment of Bible prophecies, particularly those of Daniel and the book of Revelation, giving clearer views of the coming and kingdom of Christ, as indicated in 2 Peter 1: 19, where it is promised that the study of the "sure word of prophecy" would lead to the "day dawn," when a bright light, called "the day-star," would rise in the hearts of those who were looking for the return of Christ.

In America the movement began from the conversion of William Miller, a prominent infidel of Low Hampton, New York, who later became the most widely known evangelist and exponent of the Bible prophecies, more than a thousand infidels being turned to faith in Christ within a few years through his preaching.

William Miller's Conversion

Miller had been an admirer of Ethan Allen and other patriots of Revolutionary days, who held infidel views, and was active in civic and military affairs. When the War of 1812 broke out between Great Britain and this country, he was commissioned as a captain, and was with the American forces operating along Lake Champlain. And after peace came and Lafayette visited America, Captain Miller was among the military men who gave him a reception and dined with him as he passed through the State of New York.

It was during his military life that Mr. Miller received some impressions which were calculated to lessen his confidence in deism, and cause him to realize that there is an overruling Power in human affairs. He says:

"I was particularly impressed with this view when I was in the battle of Plattsburg, when with about 1,500 regulars and about 4,000 volunteers, we defeated the British, who were 15,000 strong, we being also successful at the same time in an engagement with the British fleet on the lake. At the commencement of the battle, we looked upon our own defeat as almost certain, and yet we were victorious. So surprising a result against such odds did seem to me like the work of a mightier power than man."

He remembered that according to Bible history, Jehovah many times thus delivered the children of Israel from their oppressors, and was led to compare the American colonies in their struggle for liberty with the history of the Jews. "It seemed to me," he said, "that the Supreme Being must have watched over the interests of this country in an especial manner, and delivered us from the hands of our enemies."

Such impressions gave him an interest to know more about the Bible, and to acquaint himself with the history of nations, and so when he retired from the army after the war, he gave more time to such studies. He found that his former views gave him no assurance of happiness beyond the present life. Beyond the grave all was dark and gloomy. To use his own words:

"Annihilation was a cold and chilling thought, and accountability was sure destruction to all. The heavens were as brass over my head, and the earth as iron under my feet. Eternity! What was it? And death why was it? The more I reasoned, the further I was from demonstration. The more I thought, the more scattered were my conclusions. I tried to stop thinking, but my thoughts would not be controlled. I was truly wretched, but did not understand the cause."

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Spiritual Vision of the Savior

He continued in this state of mind for some months, feeling that eternal consequences might hang on the character of his belief; and during this time his deistic principles seemed an almost insurmountable obstacle before him. Soon after this, he says “suddenly the, character of a Savior was vividly impressed upon my mind.

It seemed that there might be a Being so good and compassionate as to Himself atone for our transgressions, and they save us from suffering the penalty of sin. I immediately felt how lovely such a Being must be; and imagined that I could cast myself into the arms of, and trust in the mercy of, such a one. But the question arose, How can it be proved that such a Being does exist? Aside from the Bible, I found that I could get no evidence of the existence of such a Savior or even of a future state. I felt that to believe in such a Savior without evidence would be visionary in the extreme.

Christ the Key to the Bible

“I saw that the Bible did bring to view just such a Savior As I needed; and I was perplexed to find how an uninspired book should develop principles so perfectly adapted to the wants of a fallen world. I was constrained to admit that the Scriptures must be a revelation from God. They became my delight: and in Jesus I found a friend.” Jesus Christ became to me the chief among ten thousand; and the Scriptures, which before were dark and contradictory now became the lamp to my feet and light to my path. My mind became settled and satisfied,

“The Bible now became my chief study, and I can truly say I searched it with great delight. I found that the half was never told me. I wondered why I had not seen its beauty and glory before, and marveled that I could ever have rejected it. I found everything revealed that my heart could desire, and a remedy for every disease of the soul. I lost all taste for other reading, and applied my heart to get wisdom from God.”

Captain Miller immediately erected the family altar, and publicly professed his acceptance of Christianity, which he had formerly ridiculed, and called “a blind faith.” He united with the little Baptist church at Low Hampton, of which one of his uncles was pastor, the church of his mother and sisters, opened his house for prayer meetings, and did everything which he could do to redeem the past. He had always been a good citizen, a kind neighbor, a friend of the poor, and an affectionate husband and father and he now became a sincere and devoted Christian, and an ornament and pillar of the church.

Miller’s System of Bible Study

After Captain Miller’s renunciation of infidelity he was perplexed to know how to answer his deist friends who brought up the old objections and supposed contradictions which he had formerly used against the Bible and Christianity. He asked them to give him time, and he would harmonize everything. He then set him self prayerfully and devotedly to reading the Scriptures. Laying aside all preconceived opinions. he resolved to receive with childlike simplicity the most natural and obvious meaning of the word. He says:

“I commenced with Genesis, and read verse by verse, proceeding no faster than the meaning of the several passages should be so unfolded as to leave me free from embarrassment respecting any mysticism or contradictions. Whenever I found anything obscure, my practice was to compare it with all collateral passages.”

“In this way I pursued the study of the Bible, in my first perusal of it, for about two years, and was fully satisfied that it is its own interpreter, I found that by comparison of scripture with history, all the prophecies, at far as they had been fulfilled, had been fulfilled literally; that all the various figures, metaphors, parables, similitudes, etc., of the Bible, were either explained in their immediate connection, or the terms in which they were expressed were defined in other portions of the word; and when thus explained, are to be literally understood in accordance with such explanation. I was thus satisfied that the Bible is a system of revealed truths, so clearly and simply given that the ‘wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein.’ “But Scripture must be its own expositor.”

Sometimes therefore whole nights as well as days were spent in searching the Scriptures, that he might know the truth as it is in Jesus; and the beautiful grove near his comfortable home, overlooking the landscape between the upper Hudson River and the southern extremity of Lake Champlain, now became his temple for meditation and prayer.

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It was while engaged thus in seeking light from God that he came upon those great prophetic outlines of Daniel's visions which explain the history of the Bible, and give one a clear view into the glorious kingdom of Christ. That not "far-off divine event. Toward which the whole creation moves." There he saw the light which made the Bible a new book to him, a light which was then dawning on the world and which was to shine brighter and brighter until the perfect day. 2 Peter 1:19.

"Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth"

Many good men had written of the wonders of Daniel's prophecies, but in their teaching the truth had been so mixed with error that the light could not shine clearly through it. Only those whose minds have been illuminated by the Spirit of God can discern clearly the dispensational order of the plan of salvation, and rightly divide the word of truth. It was here that the Jews stumbled, and the Christian church has been in danger of a similar error in interpreting the prophecies relating to the second advent of our Lord.

"Father Miller," as he came to be called, saw clearly that as Christ came once literally and personally to die for the sins of the world so He is to come again the second time to judge the world and to establish the everlasting kingdom of God on earth. He saw that the gospel age is clearly distinguished from the kingdom age; and that the second coming of the Lord is the crowning event of the Christian dispensation, the "blessed hope" of the church. Titus 2:11-13.

The Call to Preach

As Providence designed, no doubt. Mr. Miller's views were not derived from academic training, but from personal and devotional searching of the Scriptures and consequently were little influenced by the sectarian theology of the times. His studies were pursued, not with the intention of becoming a clergyman, but rather as a layman to prepare himself for successful Christian work among his large circle of unbelieving friends.

In fact, for nine years he struggled against the conviction that he must give to the world the truths which God had revealed to him. And though he sometimes officiated in his home church in the absence of a regular minister, he modestly hoped that he would never be called to preach, notwithstanding he tells us the words kept ringing in his ears, "Go and tell the world of its danger." It was in the autumn of 1831 in response to the urgent request of a near-by Baptist church which applied to him in an emergency, that he first publicly presented his views regarding the second coming of Christ. And from that time the churches of various denominations were thrown open to him on all sides, till he was unable to answer the calls which came to him to hold protracted meetings from city to city and from State to State. The Baptist Church licensed him to the ministry, and a wave of religious revivals spread before him far and wide as he traveled and preached. He was a man mighty in the Scriptures, and his heart was full of yearning for the unbelieving and the unsaved.

So great was the public interest in his prophetic teaching that Mr. Miller was urged to publish his lectures in newspapers and books, and when he did so, it seemed to open the gates of light, and awaken the country. Many publishers became interested in the work, and multiplied and extended the new movement. Religious journals sprang up in the United States and Canada to proclaim the fulfillment of prophecy though out the world.

Many strong and able leaders also were now arising in different lands and among other religious bodies, and directing the work, and from this time it is the message rather than the leaders which engages our attention.

The Beginning of a World-Wide Movement

As might be expected, the prophetic movement was not confined to any one religious sect or body, but broke out simultaneously among nearly all religious denominations and in all quarters of the globe; in America, as mentioned, first among Baptist churches under the leadership of Miller; then among Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and others, until about three hundred ministers were engaged in its proclamation. In the Church of England it manifested itself so powerfully that seven hundred clergymen preached it. In Sweden, among the Lutherans, it appeared in the same character, but was carried

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by the “Rapare,” or child evangelists, and youth, who seemed wholly moved by the Spirit of God in their preaching.

At the same time it appeared in many other countries and languages widely separated. In Holland it was headed by the eminent Dutch revivalist, Hentzepeter: in Germany, by Bengel and others; in Switzerland, by the learned Gaussen; in Palestine and the Near East, by Joseph Wolff, the great missionary; also among the Moravians of south Germany, the Russians on the Baltic, Molokaners on the shores of the Caspian Sea. Jews of Yemen, priests of Tartary, followers of St. Thomas in India, and others. In fact, it seemed the beginning of the latter rain of the Spirit which was to be poured out in the last days. Joel 2:23-32.

The influence of this awakening throughout the Christian world has been felt more and more as time has gone on, and the light of the prophecies as then seen has served to guide the minds of this generation, and to unify them in their spiritual faith and hope.

11. Concluding Thoughts

THE great Master once said of those who believed in Him, that from them would flow streams of living water, a beautiful simile of the spiritual blessings that issue from the lives of those who have the love of God in their hearts.

Yet even the wise and prudent in their unconverted state are often insensible to spiritual realities. The natural man is incapable of lifting himself from the thralldom of sin, and only as the human heart is quickened by the Spirit of God can it discern the things of God.

But for one to deny the existence of a higher Power because one has not yet felt His quickening touch, is most unreasonable. The mineral kingdom, lying in darkness is utterly oblivious of the light and life which prevail above it in the vegetable kingdom, and the vegetable world is equally unconscious of the still higher life of the animal kingdom on the plane above it. The fact therefore, that man cannot by his physical senses penetrate the veil that hides from him the kingdom of God, and explore the mysteries of the supernatural world, is no evidence against their reality.

“The ant that hurries over the wall Of Rome’s St. Peter’s or St. Paul,
Though wise in instinct of its own,
What can it know of sculptured stone, Of altars, organs, incense cloud,
Of thoughts of saints in worship bowed?”

“What can thou know of things above. Of God, His universe, His love; What can Icelandic beings know Of
Florida, or Eskimo, Who never saw but snow and ice. Of fields of bloom, of fruits, and spice?”

“Even so the things of God knows no man, but the Spirit of God,” although through revelation the knowledge of these things is “freely given to us” by the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 2:11,12. Otherwise such knowledge is too high for human understanding, as it is written: “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, said the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.” Isaiah 55: 8-9.

Man’s Need of God

Man, the crowning work of mundane creation, stands at the head of the kingdom of nature, as known to mankind. Not only has he physical senses of perception which put him in touch with the material things of the natural world, but he has also moral and spiritual senses enabling him to distinguish good from evil, to appreciate the beautiful, the pure, the sublime, and the holy and opening to him a universe unknown to mere animal intelligence.

Nature teaches us that where there is an instinct, there is always something to match it. The instinct of the bee, the beaver, and the bird raise no false expectations. They all have their correlatives; and that marvelous impulse that impels and guides the migrating bird to its distant winter paradise in the tropics, is only exceeded by the impulse to worship which is found in the human heart but which has become perverted by sin until millions bow down to idols of wood and stone. How far human nature has fallen from the perfection enjoyed by Adam and Eve before they sinned, can be seen when we consider the

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well-nigh universal wickedness of the world. As the Scripture says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," and again, "The natural man received not the things of God: for they are foolishness unto him."

Said the Savior, "You must be born again." And when a man is thus born a second time, a new life of purity and beauty and power springs up in the heart and is manifested in the life. Scoffing at the things of religion is due to a sort of moral color blindness. The sinful, unregenerated human heart is unconscious of spiritual realities, just as those physically color blind are unconscious of certain colors of the spectrum. But in either case, it is unreasonable for them to deny what is so universally evident to the quickened senses of those whom God has converted. Where blind eyes are opened, joy and gratitude fill the soul, and the certainty of the new experience is as evident as that of the man in the Gospel whose eyes had been anointed, when he declared to those who disputed with him over Jesus, "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." John 9:25.

It is said that the fish which live in the waters of Mammoth Cave have only vestiges of eyes, their organs of vision having so shrunken away in that underworld of darkness that they have lost their sense of sight. Mankind has become much like that in this world of spiritual darkness and moral depravity, "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." Ephesians 4:18. But Jesus came into the world to open the eyes of the spiritually blind. And when the spiritual eyesight, is restored, the spiritual perceptions quickened, then God is able to open up to the human mind the wonders of the spiritual universe.

Notable instances of this awakening are seen in the cases of West, Uxkull, Muller, and Miller, to whom there was opened up an extraordinary comprehension of the great spiritual truths of salvation. The divine Spirit revealed to them the love of God, the divinity of Christ, the inspiration of the Scriptures, the communion of prayer, the forgiveness of sins, the operations of the Holy Spirit, the overruling providence of God in human affairs, the fulfillment of sacred prophecy, the resurrection, and the future life.

"In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in His bosom that, transfigure you and me."

"We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Corinthians 3:18. In conclusion we quote the words of the apostle Paul's the beloved Ephesian believers:

"Making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places: ... and hath put all things under His feet. and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church." Ephesians 1: 16-22.

Such a view of Christ is for all who believe in Him, and whose faith reaches within the veil that hides Him from mortal sight.

"Jesus, these eyes have never seen
That radiant form of Yours;
The veil of sense hangs dark between
Thy blessed face and mine.

"Yet though I have not seen, and still
Must rest in faith alone,
I love Thee, dearest Lord, and will,
Unseen, but not unknown.

"Like some bright dream that comes unsought,
When slumbers o'er me roll,
Your image ever fills my thought.
And charms my ravished soul."

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Ray Palmer.