

Why We Believe the Bible

Amos R. Wells





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UNITED SOCIETY OF CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR

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Why We Believe the Bible

Outlines of Christian Evidences
in Question-and-Answer Form

By
AMOS R. WELLS

*Editorial Secretary of the United
Society of Christian Endeavor*



United Society of Christian Endeavor
Boston and Chicago

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Preface

EVERY Christian should be able to give a reason for the faith that is in him—many reasons. If he is not able to do this, he will not have much faith in him very long. His faith will be at the mercy of the first suggestion of doubt, the first crafty falsehood of infidelity. It will not stand the shock of sorrow. It will fall before the onset of temptation. It will retreat from the black presence of death.

For the sake of others also, as well as for his own welfare, the Christian should know why he believes. We are to be Christ's witnesses, every one of us, as truly as the first disciples and apostles. Every Christian should be an evangelist, a missionary. In no other way is the kingdom of God to come. In no other way is the world to be won to its Redeemer. And how can we bear witness effectively if we cannot meet the doubts of others, and satisfy them with reasons that have satisfied ourselves?

It is these considerations that have led me to write this little book. I have been preparing to write it for more than twenty years. My

own acceptance of evangelical Christianity was due to my discovery in my college library of Mark Hopkins's "Evidences of Christianity." While professor of Greek at Antioch College and since then in Sunday-school work and as editorial secretary of the United Society of Christian Endeavor I have often had to meet and satisfy the doubts of young people on religious questions. I have found no book quite suited to such work, and this book is an attempt to meet the need.

Every Sunday-school teacher should be well grounded in Christian evidences. So, of course, should be every pastor. So should be all workers in young people's societies and all evangelistic workers. Every parent should know how to answer the natural inquiries of his or her child regarding the fundamentals of religion. To all these it is hoped that this book will be useful.

I know that there is little that is original in the contents; most of these lines of proof were developed long ago. I have, however, incorporated the most important of the many recent discoveries in the field of archæology that have so powerfully confirmed the Bible, and I hope that the book will be found to be permeated with the modern spirit. The question-and-answer form is, so far as I know, unique among books

of this class. I adopted it to give sprightliness to the presentation for the private reader, and also to facilitate the use of the book as a textbook in young people's societies and in Sunday-schools.

Each of these chapters treats a vast subject, requiring many volumes for its full elucidation. I have tried to select the topics most important for every Christian to understand, and to give clearly and simply the information that will be most useful in strengthening faith. If the book leads its readers to pursue the subject further in larger and abler treatises it will have accomplished its best result.

AMOS R. WELLS.

Boston.

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Why We Believe the Bible

CHAPTER I

HOW THE BIBLE CAME DOWN TO US



HAT sort of manuscripts were the originals of the Old Testament books?

They were written with black ink on skin or parchment, each in one or more long strips or rolls. With the exception of a small part of some of the latest books, they were written in Hebrew, the consonants alone being used. It is these original manuscripts which were inspired. The vowel signs were added in the sixth or seventh century after Christ.

What has become of these original manuscripts?

They were all destroyed long ago, since the Jews would not tolerate soiled or worn-out copies of Scripture, but burned them or buried them. The oldest Old Testament manuscripts

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we have are copies made in the ninth century after Christ.

What helps us to know, in doubtful points, just how the original manuscripts read?

The Hebrew Targums, or Bible paraphrases, beginning before Christ. The voluminous Hebrew commentary, the Talmud. The valuable translations of the Old Testament into other languages, especially that into Greek, the Septuagint, made in Egypt about B. C. 250.

What may give us confidence that we have the Old Testament essentially as it was originally written, in spite of all this copying of one manuscript from another?

The extreme care with which the copies were made, especially those intended for the synagogues. The columns must be of exactly equal length and the words precisely on the line. The letters were carefully counted, and the omission of a single letter from a single word, or even the touching of two letters, would condemn a copy, if it was intended for reading in public worship. And imperfect copies were always destroyed.

What sort of manuscripts were the originals of the New Testament books?

They were written in Greek, and probably on

the coarse, perishable paper made of the pith of the papyrus reed. It is no wonder that the originals long since crumbled to dust. Later, when the papyrus became scarce, vellum and parchment were substituted, and in the ninth century men began to make a coarse paper from cotton rags. Slaves were employed as copyists at first, and thus the copies were low in price. In the middle ages the monks made their copies with the same loving care that the Hebrew scribes exercised toward the Old Testament manuscripts.

What is the age of the oldest New Testament manuscripts we possess?

We have two priceless manuscripts written in the fourth century, the Sinaitic (discovered in a convent on Mount Sinai and now in St. Petersburg) and that treasured in the library of the Vatican. In the British Museum is the Alexandrine manuscript, discovered in Egypt, made in the fifth century. No manuscript has yet been found earlier than these.

Why should the fact that the oldest New Testament manuscripts are four centuries later than Christ not disturb us?

Because we have far earlier and more numerous manuscripts of the New Testament than of any other ancient writing. If we doubt the

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New Testament on this score, we should reject Homer, the earliest complete manuscript of which is from *the thirteenth century after Christ*; and Herodotus, the earliest manuscript of whose writings is of the ninth century; while Virgil, Cicero, Plato, and all the other classics are scarcely better off, and far inferior to the New Testament in manuscript authentication.

In doubtful points how are we helped to know just what the original New Testament manuscripts said?

By the many quotations from the New Testament made by the early Christian writers, going back to the times immediately following the apostles; and by the early translations of the New Testament into other languages than Greek, such as the old Latin version of the second century, the Syriac version (possibly as old), and Jerome's Latin translation of the fourth century.

What were the first Bibles in English?

The translation of Jerome's Latin translation made by Wyclif and finished in 1382. Then, in 1525-30 the great translation of Tyndale from the Hebrew and Greek (but from late manuscripts). Then several independent trans-

lations came into use, so that, to remedy the confusion, the Authorized or King James Version of 1611 was carefully prepared. This was the one English Bible till our own day.

Whence arose the need for a new translation?

The discovery of the oldest New Testament manuscripts, of the fourth and fifth centuries, and much increased knowledge of the original texts derived from a study of ancient versions, quotations, and commentaries. This cleared up so many doubtful points that the Revised Version of 1881-5, followed by the American Version of 1901, may be held to be an almost perfect reproduction, in the English language, of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures. We may use this version with entire confidence that we are getting the exact thoughts of the sacred writers.

What bearing has the history thus outlined upon our faith in the Bible?

It is a history whose like, or anything approaching it, is not to be related of any other book in the world, including the sacred books of other religions. The most scrupulous care in copying before the days of printing; the widest authentication by means of references, quotations, and translations beyond those vouch-

safed to any other book ; and the marvellous providential preservation and discovery of manuscripts more ancient and more numerous than we have of any other ancient volume,—all of this tends wonderfully to strengthen our faith in the written Word of God. This faith will be confirmed by the more detailed study we shall make in the chapters that follow.

CHAPTER II

PROOF OF THE BIBLE FROM SECULAR WRITERS



HAT if we were shut up to proving the Bible from itself?

We should be abundantly able to do so. The Bible is its own conclusive evidence of its authenticity, as we are to see further along in this course of studies. But the Christian is sure, if he is aggressive, to meet many types of doubters, and some of them will be most easily convinced by proof of the Bible from outside itself. Such proof also serves to strengthen the faith of the believer. Lack of space compels us to deal only with the New Testament, whose authenticity is most likely to be attacked by sceptics, and most important to be established.

What is the evidence of writers who were not Christians? First, of Josephus?

There is a remarkable passage in Josephus's "Jewish Antiquities" (Book XVIII., Chapter III., Section 3), referring to Jesus as the Christ,

speaking of His wonderful works and popular teachings, and describing His crucifixion by Pilate and His resurrection. Josephus was born in A. D. 37, soon after the crucifixion. It is constantly argued that this passage must be an interpolation, but it is found in all the Josephus manuscripts, and is precisely in the style of the Jewish historian.

What is the famous mention made by Tacitus?

This masterly Roman historian, of the generation following the apostles, wrote that Nero charged the Christians with his own crime of the burning of Rome. Tacitus adds a reference to the crucifixion of Christ as a criminal by Pilate in the reign of Tiberius.

What is the evidence to be drawn from Celsus?

Celsus, a little younger than Tacitus, was a determined foe of Christianity. In his works he refers constantly to the Christian records, instancing many important facts recorded in the Gospels; and he was evidently familiar also with the other books of the New Testament.

What is the evidence of other non-Christian writers?

Lucian, the Grecian "Mark Twain" (born A. D. 124), pictured the constancy of the Christians under trial, and painted a grotesque por-

trait of Paul. Porphyry, the foe of Christianity who wrote about A. D. 295, makes many direct quotations from New Testament books, and mentions them often by name. After his time the references to the New Testament in heathen writers become continually more numerous.

Passing to Christian writers, what is the evidence of Clement of Rome?

He has been thought to be the Clement mentioned affectionately by Paul in Phil. 4 : 3, but modern scholars hold otherwise. At any rate, Irenæus, who was probably born between A. D. 120 and A. D. 130, says that this Clement was well acquainted with the apostles. Clement of Rome wrote a long letter to settle a dispute among the Christians in Corinth, and in that letter he cites the four Gospels, the Acts, and five of Paul's letters, together with Hebrews, First Peter, James, and the Revelation,—fourteen books and seventy-three references. This ancient epistle was probably written before A. D. 100, or not long after the last of the New Testament books.

What other very early writing have we?

The Epistle of Barnabas, which was held so sacred by the early Christians that they sometimes bound it up with the Bible, and it is thus

attached to the most ancient of our New Testament manuscripts, the Sinaitic. Modern scholars do not believe that it was written by Paul's companion, but it is certainly as old as A. D. 120, and possibly still older. This epistle makes several evident citations from the Gospel of Matthew, even prefacing one quotation with the words, "It is written," never used except to introduce quotations from Holy Writ.

What other document has come down to us from the same time?

"The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," a condensation of Christian doctrine and practice, discovered less than thirty years ago. It may be as old as the Epistle of Barnabas, and was certainly written before A. D. 140. It makes four references to "the Gospel of our Lord," in such a way that a written record is clearly meant, and it uses sentences that seem to have been taken from Matthew, Luke, and John.

Who was Polycarp, and what is his testimony?

He was born A. D. 69, and died a martyr's death, A. D. 155. He was a disciple of the Apostle John himself, and became bishop of Smyrna. At his trial he was bidden to deny Christ, and nobly answered, "Eighty-six years have I served Him, and He never did me any

injury ; how then can I blaspheme my King and Saviour ?” He wrote a long letter to the church at Philippi,—a letter containing some definite citations of the New Testament, especially of Matt. 26 : 41 and 1 John 4 : 2-4.

What witness is borne by Papias ?

Papias was a bishop in Phrygia, and was a contemporary of Polycarp. Possibly he also talked with the apostles ; at any rate, he knew some of Christ’s own disciples. He wrote a book on Christ’s teachings, in the course of which he describes how Mark wrote his Gospel from information given him by Peter, and how Matthew at first wrote his Gospel in Hebrew, and people had difficulty in understanding it.

What is the evidence of Justin Martyr ?

Born in Samaria near the close of the first century, he became a learned Christian scholar, and was put to death under Marcus Aurelius about A. D. 166. We have three of his writings, defences of Christianity, in the course of which he makes about two hundred references to and citations of the New Testament, especially quoting from all four of the Gospels, which he usually calls “Memoirs of the Apostles.” He speaks in one place of a fact concerning Peter as coming from “his Gospel.” That fact is recorded in Mark, who got his facts from Peter.

What is the evidence borne by Marcion?

Marcion was a contemporary of Justin Martyr and knew Polycarp, the disciple of John. He was so ardent a disciple of Paul that he refused to receive the other Gospels, but accepted Luke's alone, because Luke was a companion of Paul. He made up a New Testament of his own, consisting of Paul's Epistles and Luke's Gospel, and thus by his rejection of the other books gave evidence that the rest of the church accepted them.

What does Irenæus tell us?

Born in the first quarter of the second century, Irenæus became, in A. D. 177, bishop of Lyons. He remembered Polycarp, so that he was only one remove from the apostles, and he knew other disciples whom the apostles had taught. In his writings Irenæus speaks of the four Gospels as having existed from the time of the apostles, and gives a definite account of the origin of each of them, mentioning their writers by name. Similar exact testimony is given by the contemporaries of Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian of Carthage.

What is the witness of later writers?

Of course, as Christian books became more numerous, quotations from the New Testament

increase. Indeed, if the New Testament had been entirely destroyed about A. D. 400, it might be almost completely recovered as cited in the pages of the early Christian writers.

How does all this compare with the history of the classics?

Says Rawlinson, "It is of very rare occurrence for classic works to be distinctly quoted, or for authors to be mentioned by name, within a century of their publication." Herodotus is said to be cited only once in the first century, once in the second, not at all in the third, and twice in the fourth. The first quotation of Thucydides is two centuries after his history was published.

What is the conclusion to be drawn from all this evidence?

We may be sure of the authenticity of the New Testament writings, that they were written by the apostles and immediate disciples of Christ and in the first century; and this certainty rests upon a series of ancient quotations whose like cannot be adduced to prove the authenticity of any other book of ancient times.

CHAPTER III

PROOF OF THE BIBLE FROM ARCHÆOLOGY



WHAT is the value of the proof of the Bible from archæology?

The discovery of records, on stone, clay, or paper, that have lain buried for ages, carries us back to the very times of which the Bible speaks. So far as these records go, their testimony cannot be doubted. It is as if Rameses or Nebuchadnezzar or Cyrus should rise from the dead and confirm the accuracy of Scripture. Let us study a few specimen archæological discoveries, that we may see in what way they prove the Bible.

What is the Code of Hammurabi?

It is the most remarkable discovery ever made bearing on the Bible. It was found in December, 1901, and January, 1902, by the French archæologist, M. de Morgan, who was making excavations in Susa, in Persia (the Shushan of Esther). He discovered a mass of black diorite eight feet high, six feet in circumference at the base and five feet at the top. It is now in the Louvre, in Paris. Upon this monument

are more than 3,600 lines of inscriptions, setting forth 248 laws formulated by Hammurabi, king of Babylon about 2250 B. C. He was the Amraphel of Gen. 14 : 1, who joined with five other kings in the capture of Sodom, and from whom Abraham afterward wrested the booty, including Lot and the other captives. These laws are arranged in a very systematic way, and cover a large number of subjects relating to both person and property. Though written in the time of Abraham, they show that courts and a high state of civilization existed in Babylonia for centuries before his day.

How does this discovery tend to prove the Bible ?

It had been held that the laws of the Pentateuch could not have been written by Moses because they belonged to a state of civilization centuries after his time. Indeed, for a long time it was believed by sceptics that Moses and the men of his day did not even know how to write and had no books. The Code of Hammurabi shows us a civilization as far developed as that of the Pentateuch existing nearly a thousand years before Moses. Moreover, the resemblances between the two sets of laws are in many parts so close as to show common customs of the two nations or else some indirect or

direct knowledge of Hammurabi's code on the part of Moses. The immense superiority of the Bible, however, is shown by the fact that, as Professor Price says, "The Hammurabi laws look rather at the external act, while the Pentateuch regards the inner thought, feelings, and desires." This is the element of inspiration.

What are the Tel el-Amarna tablets?

They are more than three hundred tablets made of baked clay, found in 1887 by a peasant woman at the village of Tel el-Amarna on the Nile, about 170 miles south of Cairo. They proved to be cuneiform inscriptions in the Babylonian language, and are a series of letters written to two Egyptian kings about 1400 B. C. by the governors of Syria, Palestine, Phœnicia, and Philistia and the kings of Assyria and Babylonia.

How do the Tel el-Amarna tablets help to prove the Bible?

They show that Palestine was then tributary to Egypt, but that it had been for a long time previous a province of Babylonia. They show that Palestine was at that time (when the Hebrews were captives in Egypt) in a greatly disturbed state, and among the enemies of the Canaanities is named a people called Khabiri,—probably the Babylonian equivalent of "He-

brew,"—some part of the Hebrew race. In such a state the country would be far more easily taken by the Hebrews under Joshua. The letters contain the name Jerusalem, which was not known to have been in use at that early date.

What is the Black Obelisk?

It is a famous monument of black marble, now in the British Museum. It was cut in the reign of Shalmaneser II., king of Assyria B. C. 860–825. A series of sculptured pictures shows men of different nations bringing tribute to Shalmaneser, and among them are a file of Jews. The inscription says that these came from Jehu, whose career as king of Israel is fully set forth in the Bible.

How does this discovery help to prove the Bible?

This monument, with other Assyrian records of the time that have been deciphered, describes the wars that were waged by Assyria with Syria, and show how Syria was a buffer state for Israel, and how the Assyrian defeat of Syria left Israel free to expand and become strong. This furnishes a perfect explanation of much in the history of the Northern Kingdom that the Bible does not stop to unfold, and it all fits in

perfectly with the record in Kings and Chronicles.

What is the Moabite Stone?

It is a large slab of black basalt, now in the Louvre. It was found in ancient Moab, east of the Dead Sea, and was cut in the reign of Mesha, King of Moab, about 850 B. C. The stone is a tribute to Chemosh, the Moabite deity, and the inscription relates how he became angry with his people and allowed Omri, King of Israel, to conquer them and exact from them a large annual tribute. After the death of Ahab the Moabites revolted, and won back their independence.

How does the Moabite Stone help to prove the Bible?

In language and literary style it comes very close to the Bible, and reads like a chapter from Kings or Chronicles. It refers to Jehovah, illustrates a number of details of the Bible, and perfectly harmonizes with what the Bible tells about the relations between Moab and her Hebrew neighbors.

What are the Egyptian discoveries of the time of the Hebrew bondage?

The mummy of Rameses II., the Pharaoh of the bondage, has been found. The city of

Pithom has been discovered, and the actual storehouses built by the Hebrew slaves, the lower portions built of bricks containing straw, but most of them being made of bricks without straw. We also have the mummy of Meneptah II., the Pharaoh of the Exodus. We possess a hymn of victory addressed to him and mentioning Israel. It is probable also that the inscriptions show the death of his son while yet young, in the last of the plagues.

How do these Egyptian discoveries confirm the Bible record?

They all fit in perfectly with the Bible account. Other researches show the location of Goshen, where the Hebrews lived, and the line of boundary forts that turned the escaping host of slaves down to the Red Sea. The Bible harmonizes with all that is known of Egyptian civilization.

How do discoveries regarding the Hittites confirm the Bible?

There are in the Bible many references to the Hittites, and they are pictured as a considerable nation. Until recently nothing was known of this nation except what the Bible tells us, and therefore some scholars denied that there ever was such a people. But now the records

of Egypt and Assyria show us the Hittites as a people that for nearly seven centuries was one of the greatest in the world, occupying northern Syria and southern Asia Minor. In that region there have been discovered many of the ruins of Hittite buildings, and many of their crude rock carvings, together with inscriptions in strange hieroglyphics that have not yet been deciphered.

What are the Oxyrhynchus papyri?

They are very ancient manuscripts, on the brittle papyrus, found recently in a low mound near the Nile in the Libyan desert of Egypt. Among these is a fragment of a book of sayings of Jesus. The scholars conclude that it was written at some time between A. D. 100 and A. D. 150, very close to the time when the Gospels were written. Some of these sayings are also in the Gospels, and some, like the saying quoted by Paul in Acts 20 : 35, are not recorded by the evangelists. These fragments carry the documentary evidence of the truth of Christianity back from the fourth century to the very time of the apostles.

What other archaeological discoveries are important as confirming the Bible?

They are so many that they can only be indicated roughly. The ruins of Abraham's birth-

place, Ur of the Chaldees, have been found. We have portraits of some of the Canaanites whom Joshua fought. We have Shishak's sculptured account of his campaign against Rehoboam, the images of captives bearing the names of Gaza, Adullam, Aijallon, Gibeon, Shunem, and perhaps Jerusalem. We have Tiglathpileser's records mentioning Uzziah, Ahaz, Menahem, Pekah, and Hoshea, five kings of Judah and Israel. We have Sargon's account of his capture of Samaria; and Sennacherib's history of his invasion of Palestine, mentioning King Hezekiah. Manasseh is mentioned in an Assyrian list of tributaries. Belshazzar, whose existence was so long denied by the sceptics because he was not named outside the Bible, is recorded in the Babylonian inscriptions as being the son of King Nabonidus and coregent with him. The unearthing of Nineveh has proved its vast extent, and the extrication of the palace of Susa from the dust of ages has confirmed the book of Esther. These and many other discoveries have not only proved the Bible correct at definite points, but they have authenticated the whole trend of Bible narrative, and every year they are explaining what had not been understood in the Bible, and removing difficulties which have been the infidel's stock in trade.

CHAPTER IV

PROOF OF THE BIBLE FROM ITS EFFECT UPON THE WORLD



How has the Bible advanced human freedom?

The other nations were built upon slavery: the Hebrew peoples, even when they allowed slavery, surrounded it with many alleviations, and no one was held in servitude more than seven years or beyond the year of jubilee. Rome, whose empire contained one hundred and twenty million persons, kept sixty million of them in the most cruel slavery. They were overworked, underfed, treated with all inhumanity, and killed at the pleasure of their owners. The Christian church at the very start received slaves as equal to freemen. All through the ages since, Christianity has condemned slavery and driven it from its borders. While Mohammedans in Africa were enslaving millions and dragging them off to Asia, Christendom has purged itself finally of the foul blot, though it required the

most terrible civil war of all history. This has all sprung from the Bible teaching of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men.

What has the Bible done for women ?

Among all the ancient people except the Hebrews the position of women was degraded in the extreme. In the old Roman days any husband could put his wife to death with no fear of punishment. Greece honored most highly the women that ministered to the lowest passions. But the Hebrews enjoyed a pure family life, and honored their wives and mothers. There are no women in the long list of Greek and Roman sovereigns, but Miriam, Deborah, and Esther held the fate of their people in their hands. What honor is paid in the Bible to Rebekah and Rachel, Ruth and Hannah! In the New Testament women are given exalted honor, and the Virgin Mary, Mary and Martha of Bethany, Mary Magdalene, and the Syro-Phœnician are especially exalted. In the Acts Dorcas, Lydia, and Priscilla are mentioned with peculiar regard. To-day, even after three millenniums, the position of women in the East is far more degraded than it was among the ancient Hebrews. They are the burden-bearers, the drudges, the harem dolls. It is only in Christian lands that the career of

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Frances Willard would be possible, or that of Florence Nightingale, or that of Queen Victoria. It is only in Christian lands that men and women stand side by side, equal partners in doing the work of the world.

What has the Bible done for working men?

Manual labor is scorned in the lands where the Bible is not honored. Plato and Aristotle taught that manual labor was degrading. The Roman Emperor Augustus ordered the execution of a senator who had lowered his dignity by helping some workmen. The Hebrews, on the contrary, compelled every man to learn a trade. Moses tended sheep. David was a shepherd boy. Amos was a farmer. The Saviour of the world was a carpenter. His chief apostles were fishermen. Paul was a tent-maker. It is in Christian lands alone, and as a direct result of the teaching of the Bible, that laborers are gaining their rights, and co-operation is taking the place of exploitation in the domain of industry.

What has the Bible done for architecture?

It has vastly ennobled and exalted it. Heathen temples, in the main, are gorgeous, grotesque, massive, but not inspiring. They speak of fear rather than love. They are mys-

terious caverns which the priests alone can penetrate. Christian architecture, while it alone perceived the excellences of Grecian and Roman temples and preserved all that was good in them, has carried the art to its highest summit of beauty and grandeur in such cathedrals as St. Peter's, St. Mark's, and those at Milan, Lincoln, Durham, and Canterbury. The cross-form speaks of the central message of the Bible. The Gothic arch lifts the soul to heaven. Upon the windows and in the sculptured walls Bible scenes were set forth before the Bible was placed in the hands of all the people.

What has the Bible done for painting?

It has given the greatest artists their greatest and most beloved scenes. The world's masterpieces of art are da Vinci's "The Last Supper," Raphael's "Sistine Madonna," and Michelangelo's painted Bible on the walls of the Sistine Chapel. The Madonna, the child Jesus, and the crucifixion, the beginning and ending of the wonderful Life, have been represented in countless forms by all the masters of art.

What has the Bible done for music?

The Psalms are the world's noblest songs,

but the Bible is full of inspired poetry. All that is best in the world's music has its source in the Bible. The greatest musical compositions treat Bible themes: Handel's "Saul," "Deborah," "Samson," and "Messiah," Haydn's "Creation," Mendelssohn's "Elijah" and "St. Paul," the Passion music of Bach.

How has the Bible influenced literature?

English literature began with the Bible, with the Biblical paraphrases and translations of Cædmon, Bede, Alfred, and others. The Bible translations of Wyclif and Tyndale fixed our language, and gave to it the strength and grandeur it possesses. Shakespeare is saturated with Biblical ideas and expressions. Milton is almost all Bible. So is Dante. Addison and Steele founded their thought and style upon the Book. Browning and Tennyson are packed with Scriptural allusions. Sir Walter Scott was a "man of the Book." The books most widely read among men, next to the Bible, are Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" and "The Imitation of Christ," by Thomas à Kempis; and these are the books that are closest to the Bible in spirit and form. Daniel Webster read the Bible through once a year, and established upon it his wonderful oratory.

Ruskin counted his knowledge of the Bible the most valuable part of his education. In short, the Bible has been the source of all that is best and permanent in our literature, while the books of infidels are forgotten in a generation.

How has the Bible promoted education ?

It teaches the most profound and necessary truths, and teaches them not as the exclusive possession of a privileged few, but as the heritage of all men. Thus it has become the incentive and the basis of modern scholarship. Men of the Bible have founded practically all of our colleges and universities. Infidelity plants no schools. The free public-school system is rooted in the teachings of the Bible. In non-Christian lands ignorance is the lot of the people; it is thus in the so-called Christian lands that are under the power of Catholicism, the free circulation of the Bible being forbidden; but in proportion to the common use of the Bible is a regard for universal education. The Bible, restored to the people by the Protestant Reformation, produced the modern mental awakening. It has stimulated the minds of the greatest sages, so that Newton could say, "I count the Scriptures of God to be the most sublime philosophy."

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What has the Bible done for civil government?

The laws of Moses impressed the statesmen and philosophers of Greece, and through them impressed the Romans, who laid the foundations of modern law. The great codifications of the Roman law made by Theodosius and Justinian were largely influenced by Christian thought and practices. King Alfred based his laws upon the Decalogue and Leviticus. Our United States Constitution was largely modeled upon the government of a New England church. Blackstone and Kent exalt the influence of Christianity upon our laws. "Christianity," said Sir Matthew Hale, "is parcel of the common law." Said Webster, "It seems to be a law of our human condition that Christianity and civilization can live and flourish only together." The Hebrew nation was a democracy. Its people enjoyed political equality and freedom. Its laws rested upon the consent of the people, and they made choice of their own rulers. Political progress throughout the world has been born of the Bible.

What has the Bible done for the cause of political liberty?

It was the teachings of Christian missionaries that brought about the recent revolution in

Turkey against the barbarous rule of the old sultan. Christianity was the force that opened to Western civilization and progress the hermit nations of Japan, Korea, and China, and won a modern constitution for Persia. The founders of our own free America were Bible men, and they based their country firmly upon the Word of God. Lands like Germany, Scandinavia, and Great Britain, where the liberties of the people are most freely granted, are the lands where the Bible is best loved and most widely read. Geneva, the fountainhead of European emancipation, has also been the fountainhead of Bible translation. Cromwell and his forces, Knox and his followers, the Huguenots of France, the Waldensians of Italy, were all intensely devoted to the Bible. The principles of democracy are the principles of the Bible, and they flourish wherever the Book is freely circulated and ardently loved.

What conclusion is to be drawn from these facts?

That the Bible is a divinely inspired volume. No other book, however great the genius that made it, has accomplished such results for the world, or an approximation to such results. Homer and Plato did not do it for Greece, or Virgil and Cicero for Rome, or Confucius for

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China, or the Koran for Arabia. Shakespeare could not do it for England or Goethe for Germany. There is something in the Bible that has made it the fountainhead of civilization. What can this be but the Spirit of God?

CHAPTER V

PROOF OF THE BIBLE FROM ITS INTERNAL EVIDENCES



HAT is meant by "internal evidences"?

The character and contents of the writings themselves, as distinguished from the evidence of other writings, buried remains, and the effects of the Bible upon the world. These internal evidences are so many and varied that libraries have been written in illustration of them. I can give here only the merest hints, pointing out the direction in which the most important evidences may be found; and I must confine myself chiefly to the Gospels.

What evidence comes from the record of doubt?

If the books of the Bible were mythical or forged, they would not so often record the doubts and fears and hesitancy of their heroes. We are told how John the Baptist, the herald of the Messiah, lost his faith in prison, and sent

to Jesus to know whether, after all, He was really the Christ. Peter, the first to confess Jesus as the Messiah, that confession being the very rock-foundation of Christ's church, is pictured as denying his Lord twice. We are informed that the brothers of Christ did not believe in Him and tried to stop His preaching. We are told that Jesus was twice rejected by His own fellow townsmen. The three leading apostles fell asleep in Gethsemane. Later, at the arrest, every one of the apostles ran away. Myths and false Gospels are not thus written. Every admission of doubt is an assurance of an honest record.

What evidence comes from the record of wrong-doing?

Myths exalt their heroes, and do not demean them by relating their follies, meannesses, and sins. On the other hand, there is scarcely one of the Bible heroes whose character is not sadly marred. Abraham, the father of the Hebrew race, lies inexcusably, and repeats the offence. Jacob is a trickster. Moses so offends God by his pride and passion that he is not allowed to enter Canaan. Miriam must become a leper to punish her pride. Aaron, the first high priest, makes the golden calf. Eli allows his sons to fall into horrible iniquity.

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Saul is cruel and passionate. David murders Uriah that he may add Bathsheba to his harem. Elijah runs away from Jezebel. John would call down fire upon the Samaritan villages. Paul persecutes the church. The honesty of the Bible biographies is perfectly apparent to an unbiased reader.

What evidence comes from the apparent discrepancies?

There are numerous portions of the Bible narrative that apparently conflict with one another. For example, it is very difficult to make out from the Gospels a wholly consistent order of events on Easter morning. The Gospels differ as to the number of women visiting the tomb, the number of angels they saw, where the angels were, and other details. Studying the four Gospels, scholars cannot agree as to the length of Christ's public ministry, or the year in which He died, or even the day of the week. It seems impossible to determine whether the cleansing of the Temple occurred once or twice. Matthew speaks of two Gadarene demoniacs; Mark and Luke of only one. The genealogies of Jesus in Matthew and Luke do not agree. The lists of the twelve apostles show differences. Four different wordings are given to the inscription on the cross.

These are only specimens of a long list of discrepancies, relied upon by infidels as their leading stock in trade. They are, on the contrary, the strongest sort of proof of honesty in the writers of our Gospels. They show that there was no collusion among them, and that the records were made by the immediate followers of Christ, and not, four centuries afterward, by men who merely set down what had grown into myths. Many of these "discrepancies" have been explained by fuller knowledge, and found to be no discrepancies at all. In the confusion and fear of those days of persecution, just such confusions in written narratives might have been expected. The differences, moreover, do not affect a single doctrine of Christianity, and they are merely such as every trial in a law court shows to be natural and inevitable when honest observers set forth their independent observations of the same event. Indeed, if the four Gospels, for example, were perfectly consistent with one another, that consistency would be a powerful argument against their authenticity.

What evidence comes from familiar details?

Every chapter of the Bible narratives is crammed with familiar details that the most expert literary forger would never think of in-

venting,—little touches that would never have been embalmed in myths. The woman wiping Christ's feet with her hair. John's leaning back upon Jesus' breast. John's outrunning the older Peter, but waiting awed at the tomb while the more impetuous disciple rushes in. Rhoda's running to tell about Peter's knock without first letting him in. Paul's sending for his books and cloak. The scores of easy, familiar, personal messages in Paul's letters. The "we" passages in the Acts that show where Luke joined the party. The linen cloth that had been around the Saviour's head lying apart from His shroud, and evidently retaining the shape of the head it had held. Peter's flinging himself into the lake, leaving the others to pull in the net. Such illustrations could be multiplied many thousands of times by every Bible student, and together they give irresistible impressions of naturalness and authenticity.

What evidence comes from the simple style of the narratives?

They are clear, straightforward stories, such as their assigned authors might be supposed to write. Matthew, the account-keeper, is methodical in his Gospel. Luke, the physician, is orderly. Paul, the scholar, is the more ab-

struse and lofty. There is no attempt at "fine writing," no artificial rhetoric, nothing that is not natural in writings supposed to be composed by fishermen and others of no special literary training.

What evidence comes from a comparison of the style of the Bible with that of records known to be false?

The apocryphal narratives are loaded with pompous rhetoric and cumbered with unnecessary and meaningless details. They are verbose and fanciful. Take for an example the speech over the body of Joseph assigned to Jesus in "The History of Joseph the Carpenter," an apocryphal writing: "The smell or corruption of death shall not have dominion over thee, nor shall a worm ever come forth from thy body. Not a single limb of it shall be broken, nor shall any hair on thy head be changed. Nothing of thy body shall perish, O my father Joseph! but it will remain entire and uncorrupted even until the banquet of the thousand years. And whosoever shall make an offering on the day of thy remembrance, him will I bless and recompense in the congregation of the virgins; and whosoever shall give food to the wretched, the poor, the widows and orphans, from the work of his hands, on the

day on which thy memory shall be celebrated, and in thy name, shall not be in want of good things all the days of his life. And whosoever——,” and so on, at great length. Contrast this with the Sermon on the Mount !

What evidence comes from the omissions of the Bible?

Much is omitted from the Gospels that would be left out naturally if they were written by our Lord's immediate followers, perfectly familiar with the facts, but that certainly would be inserted if the Gospels were the work of fiction, or embodied slowing growing and expanding tradition. For example, the Gospels give us no hint of Christ's personal appearance. Contrast that natural omission with the full description in the apocryphal letter of Lentulus to the Roman Senate: “He is a man of lofty stature, handsome, having a venerable countenance, which the beholder can both love and fear. He has wavy hair, rather crisp, of a bluish tinge, and glossy, flowing down from his shoulders, with a parting in the middle of the head,” and so on at considerable length. The Gospels give only one fact about Christ's boyhood; the apocryphal Gospels are largely concerned with it. The Gospels merely mention most of the twelve apostles, and the New Testament does not tell

us how any of them died except James. Tradition is busy with details of their lives and modes of martyrdom. The Acts and Epistles give us only a few hints regarding the appearance and manner of Paul, and his personal circumstances. Dozens of guesses have been made as to his "thorn in the flesh." We are told that John took the mother of Jesus to his house, but there the account leaves them, much as we should like to know Mary's history, and how John came to be pastor at Ephesus. The Old Testament also is full of these significant omissions. Elijah's history begins at his full manhood. Almost nothing is known of the personal life of Isaiah, greatest of prophets. Very little is told us of Solomon. Of many writers of the books of the Bible we know absolutely nothing but their names. The Bible contains the writings of men who were not concerned with themselves but with their messages. Myth and tradition and fiction revel in personalities.

What evidence comes from the portrait of Christ?

If the four Gospels are not the genuine writings of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, how else can we account for the marvellous picture of Christ? How could a set of forgers paint such a portrait of the God-man that the world

ever since has worshipped Him? Think of the wisdom, the majesty, the love of the Saviour. Think of the consistency of those narratives, with themselves and with one another. What writers of the first four centuries were great enough to imagine it all?—greater than Shakespeare, Dante, Milton, and Goethe combined? How could they remain unknown? How impossible that the parable of the prodigal son could be a forgery, that the conversation of Jesus with the Syro-Phœnician could be a mere tradition, that the talk by the well of Sychar could be the outgrowth of a myth! No one could picture the Christ as our Gospels picture Him save those that were close to Him in the flesh.

What is the conclusion to be drawn from these and similar lines of internal evidence?

The longer one studies the Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles, and the more familiar one becomes with their frankness and simplicity, the more convinced one is that these are genuine accounts. Characters that appear in different books are everywhere consistent. There are myriads of little touches that are far beyond the power of tradition to invent. And, above all, the character and words of Christ give inherent evidence of originality and truth.

CHAPTER VI

PROOF OF THE BIBLE FROM THE FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY



WHAT is prophecy, and what is the argument from it?

Prophecy, in its central meaning, is the proclamation of the will of God; but the will of God often has reference to the future, so that the Old Testament prophets often uttered prophecies of the sort to which we have come to apply the word almost solely,—predictions of coming events. Indeed, all of Jewish history was a prophecy, so intimately was that history associated with the divine will and bound up with the future of the world. The argument from prophecy shows how Christ fulfills perfectly all that the Old Testament prophets foretold of God's dealings with His creatures.

What was the prophecy of the New Covenant?

The Jews were the people of the Covenant. They were bound to God by the bonds of a solemn agreement, often repeated and ratified

during the ages. This covenant is prominent in the lives of Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Solomon. In the solemn presence of Sinai, on the border of Canaan, between Ebal and Gerizim, at the dedication of the Temple, the Covenant was ratified. It was therefore indeed daring in prophets to predict a New Covenant, more spiritual and satisfying than the Old: "I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel; I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it" (Jer. 31: 31-34). This New Covenant prophecy was heartily taken up by the New Testament (or New Covenant) writers, and Christ was declared to be the Mediator of this better Covenant. No one can doubt that Christianity perfectly fulfills the prophecy of the higher, more spiritual relation between God and man, unpopular and heterodox as the prediction must have been when it was first uttered.

What were the prophecies of Christ's kingdom?

In complete antagonism to current ideas of majesty and of regal power, ideas current even in Christ's day and with difficulty suppressed even among Christ's immediate followers, it was foretold that the coming Messiah should

be a gentle ruler, kind to the poor, merciful to the prisoners, just in His judgments, and a hater of war. Isaiah especially is full of such predictions. They have all been abundantly fulfilled in the character and teachings of Christ, and in the revolution that Christianity has made and is making in social life. Charities have been established on a gigantic scale, poor-houses, asylums, old people's homes, hospitals, wisely conducted reformatories, just courts, equitable laws, democratic government; and the substitution of arbitration for war is rapidly hastening the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah and Micah, "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

What are the missionary aspects of prophecy?

The Jews were an exclusive people. They scorned the men of all other nations. It was death for a Gentile to enter the inner courts of the Temple. They held that their own nation was the only one favored by Jehovah, and that God's favor could be procured only by being circumcised and becoming a Jew. Even when in exile, in Egypt or Assyria, we hear of no attempts to convert their captors. The story of Jonah illustrates the spirit with which such a proposal would have been received. Even

among the early Christians there were many that insisted that only circumcised Jews could enter the church, and the first church council was called to consider the question. The prophets therefore spoke and wrote precisely contrary to the temper of their times and race when they uttered such predictions as Joel's : "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh," or Isaiah's : "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." These prophecies, involving the whole earth in the sweep of Jehovah's kingdom, are grandly fulfilled in the missionary universality of Christianity.

What were the prophecies of Christ's divinity?

He was pictured as Jehovah, come to earth to redeem His people. "His name," Isaiah declared, "shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." He was not to be a mere earthly ruler, conqueror of the nations by force of intellect and arms; He was to be the all-wise, all-powerful King of kings and Lord of lords. Christ accepted these prophecies as relating to Himself, His followers gladly admitted the claim, and the authentic record of Christ's life, works, death, and resurrection substantiates it.

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What was the prophecy of Christ's earthly ancestry?

That He should be a descendant of David, and so fulfill to the letter, by the world-wide spread of His Kingdom, the promises of universal dominion made to the Hebrews from the beginning of their history. "There shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit. Unto Him shall the nations seek," said Isaiah, and the other prophets are equally explicit. This prophecy was fulfilled, as any Jew would understand it, by the fact that Joseph, the legal father of Jesus, was a descendant of David (Matt. 1 : 1-17). Many scholars believe that Mary also was of Davidic descent, her father being Heli, and Luke's genealogy (Luke 3 : 23-38) being hers. Mary was told that her child should receive "the throne of his father David," and Christ was held by His disciples to be "the seed of David according to the flesh." In any event, the remarkable prophecy was fulfilled.

What were the prophecies of our Lord's birth?

That, though a Galilean, He should be born in distant Bethlehem, the city of David's birth. That He should be born of a virgin. That He

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should be taken to Egypt. That sorrow for slain children should accompany His birth. All of this was wonderfully fulfilled by the circumstances attending the birth of Jesus.

What was the prophecy of Christ's character ?

That He was to be meek and lowly, a man of sorrows, unpopular, persecuted; and yet He was to be a conqueror, a king, the desired of all the peoples. These contradictory features were precisely fulfilled in Christ. Our Lord's care for the poor and the sick, the prisoner and the outcast, was accurately foretold. His consuming zeal was pictured. There is no conspicuous element of His nature that is lacking from that wonderful portrait drawn up many centuries before He appeared, and at times when such a character was the opposite of the popular ideal.

What were the prophecies of Christ's death ?

That He should come to His city riding an ass's colt. That He, though the very cornerstone of the Temple, should be rejected by the worshippers in the Temple. That as He, the shepherd, should be stricken down, His sheep should be scattered. That He should be betrayed for money. That He should refuse to answer His lying accusers. That He should be

slain with the wicked but buried with the rich. That no bone of Him should be broken. That His body should be pierced. That His garments should not be severed, but divided by lot. That He should by His resurrection make conquest of death for all mankind. The close fulfillment of these predictions in Christ is the greatest glory of prophecy.

What was the prophecy of the atonement ?

Isaiah prophesied the atoning nature of the Messiah's death most clearly in the famous passage : "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. . . . Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin." Other prophets wrote to the same effect, and the central thought of the entire system of Jewish worship was that of an atoning sacrifice. Our Lord quoted these prophecies, applying them to Himself. A reverent study of Christ's life sees the prophecies of the atonement fulfilled in Him, and surely in Him alone.

What was the prophecy of Christ's resurrection ?

Our Lord Himself considered the experiences of Jonah to be a prophetic symbol of His com-

ing death and resurrection. Paul taught that certain passages in the Psalms have reference to the resurrection, especially, "Thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol ; neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption" (Ps. 16 : 10).

What proof is there of Christ's prophetic power?

Prophecy is authoritative teaching as well as foretelling the future, and in the former domain the Saviour was supreme. But He was also a prophet in the second sense of the word. He prophesied that Peter would deny Him and Judas betray Him. He foretold His own death, and the mode of it, and that He should rise again on the third day. He prophesied that, within the lifetime of His hearers, the Temple should be destroyed and Jerusalem fall ; and both of these unexpected events came to pass. Most important of all, though possessing only a handful of followers, fishermen and other lowly folk, and though expecting Himself to die the death of a criminal, yet He repeatedly prophesied the universal dominion of the religion He was founding. Christianity now holds sway over one-third of mankind, including all the most powerful and intelligent nations, and missions are progressing so rapidly that the

present century may easily see the complete fulfillment of our Lord's prediction.

What was Christ's attitude toward prophecy?

The Saviour heartily accepted the fact of prophecy, and declared with emphasis, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." At another time He exclaimed, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!" He continually quoted the prophecies referring to Himself, and asserted, "All things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished."

What is the conclusion from this argument from prophecy?

The life of Jesus Christ was the climax of God's age-long plan for the world, revealed as men were able to understand it, and disclosed in its essential outline centuries before the time of His coming. Christ's life confirms prophecy, and prophecy is a proof of the divine origin of Christ.

CHAPTER VII

OUR BIBLE CONTRASTED WITH THE OTHER SACRED BOOKS OF THE WORLD



WHAT are the principal sacred writings of the world?

The scriptures of Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, Confucianism, and Mohammedanism.

What is the sacred book of the Buddhists?

Buddha himself left no writing, but his sayings and the stories regarding him were written down by his followers, and these, with many voluminous later commentaries, constitute the Buddhist bible. It is a literature quite different in the different lands where Buddhism flourishes.

What are the excellences of the Buddhistic scriptures?

Their insistence upon the gentle virtues of universal charity, peacefulness, modesty, temperance, and patience. These teachings are so admirable that they are often compared favor-

ably with those of Christianity. But they are ethical rather than religious; they are merely moral precepts with no hope of a living, present Father to aid poor humanity in carrying them out.

What are the principal teachings of the Buddhist writings?

They teach four leading doctrines: (1) that misery always accompanies existence; Buddhism is fundamentally pessimistic; (2) that the cause of existence is passion or desire; (3) that therefore the destruction of desire is the way, and the only way, out of existence into non-existence, or Nirvana; (4) that the way to destroy desire and existence is a righteous life according to the Buddhist rules of asceticism. The Buddhist scriptures teach that at death the soul passes into higher or lower forms of existence according as it has lived well or ill, and becomes for millions or billions of years a lump of dirt, a stick, a toad, a slave, a snake, a woman, a lizard, or, on the other hand, a holy man, a great philosopher, a god.

What is to be said of the alleged likenesses between the stories of Christ and of Siddhartha (Gautama), the founder of Buddhism?

They relate largely to the birth, early life,

and miracles of the two. They are concerned chiefly with events that happen naturally to all great leaders of men. Most of the Buddhistic legends in which greatest similarity to the Christian story is noted cannot be proved to have originated earlier than the sixth century after Christ, and may rather be attributed to Christianity than the reverse. The miracles of Christ were sensible and useful ; those ascribed to Buddha were absurd, pointless, and useless.

In what points are the Buddhist scriptures inferior to our Bible ?

Their sad and awful lack is the absence of a personal, loving God. They do not recognize a permanent soul ; what passes at death into another form is only the Karma, or sum of the merits and demerits of the previous soul, thrust most unjustly upon another being. Sin is not an offence against God, but a personal inconvenience. Buddhism knows nothing of salvation and a Saviour. It centres in self, and good deeds are done merely to heap up "merit." Women are dishonored and marriage is scorned. Some passages in the Buddhist scriptures are so vile that they cannot be translated and printed in English. Buddhism is a system of gloomy self-repression seeking extinction ; Christianity is a system of hope and cheer, seeking with the

help of a divine Saviour the abundant life which He brought to the earth.

What are the sacred books of Confucianism?

The volumes compiled—not originated—by Confucius in his old age, with commentaries by Mencius and other sages. About two centuries before Christ a Chinese emperor ordered all books to be burned save the writings of the old sage, Laotze; but the works of Confucius were restored from fragments and from memory, while the great body of antecedent literature from which Confucius had made his compilation was swept away. Thus Confucius came in a marvellous degree to influence the thinking of one-third of the human race.

What are the good points of the Confucian writings?

Their democratic insistence upon the duty of rulers to regard the welfare of their subjects. Their urging of the importance of right examples. The teaching of a form of the Golden Rule, requiring from one's self what one wishes from others. The inculcation of loyalty, faithfulness, and sincerity. Moderation and self-poise are also characteristic teachings of Confucianism.

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In what points are the sacred books of Confucianists inferior to our Bible?

In one immeasurable difference, the absence of God from the writings of Confucius. His is a system of ethics merely. Reverence for the emperor and for one's ancestors takes the place of the worship of the deity. There is no thought of a Father in heaven. In addition, Confucius placed women in an inferior sphere, allowing seven grounds of divorce, and countenancing polygamy. He permitted a father to tyrannize over his child. His code of morals has not prevented the Chinese from falling into a worship of ancestors and of countless natural objects and the most deadening and depressing fear of demons. China is the home of the most elaborate and absurd superstitions, which have chained the nation for centuries; and this fact is a sufficient condemnation of Confucianism.

What are the scriptures of the Moham- medans?

Primarily the Koran, a book a little smaller than the New Testament, containing 114 chapters, chiefly short, put together without logical order. The Koran consists of the authentic sayings and teachings of Mohammed as he him-

self dictated them, written in sonorous and musical Arabic. A large part of the Koran relates Old Testament stories taken from the Talmud, or Jewish Biblical traditions, together with stories about Christ taken from the New Testament apocryphal writings. Probably Mohammed never saw the New Testament, though he makes references to it. In addition, Mohammedans receive a vast body of sayings ascribed to Mohammed by tradition, and these traditions are partly responsible for the hundreds of Moslem sects.

What are the good points of the Mohammedan scriptures?

One is their simplicity: they are summed up in the formula, "There is no God but God, and Mohammed is His Prophet." They oppose idolatry. They teach the great truths of judgment, resurrection, and God's power over human lives. They inculcate temperance, public worship, almsgiving, and fasting. They recognize our Bible, revere the patriarchs and prophets, teach the miraculous birth of Jesus, credit His miracles, hold Him to have been a great prophet, and regard Him as the forerunner of Mohammed. The traditional sayings of Mohammed refer to Christ as the coming Judge of all men, including Mohammed himself.

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In what points is the Koran inferior to our Bible?

Where it gives the narratives found in our Bible, it usually gives them in a very corrupt, garbled form. The salvation offered by the Koran is dependent upon a slavish observance of ceremonies. The Koran must be read in the original Arabic, though, outside of Arabia, only the few educated Moslems understand that language. Long, formal prayers are prescribed, five times a day, with endless repetitions of the same phrases. The minute attention paid to details of these ceremonies makes Moslem religion an exterior matter, quite apart from the heart life. Other defects in the Moslem teachings are the fatalism that has made the cruel Moslem conquests possible, and the sensuous character of the Moslem heaven. Moslems are fanatical, self-satisfied, proud, intolerant, exclusive, and sadly need the humility that Christ taught, and the consciousness of sin that would lead them to seek a divine Saviour.

What are the sacred writings of Hinduism?

The ancient hymns called the Vedas, teaching a simple and almost monotheistic worship of nature. The Bramanas, which are ritualistic enlargements of the Vedas, formed to support

Bramanism in its intricate caste system and its insolent and tyrannical exaltation of the priesthood. The Upanishads, a philosophic unfolding of the Vedas, as the Bramanas are a ritualistic unfolding of them. The Dharma Sastras or Laws of Manu, a complete setting forth of the Hindu religious system. The writings of the Darsanas, or six philosophic sects of the Hindus,—one of them being a worship of the very words of the Vedas, another being an ascetic ritual, and still another, the Vedanta, being absolute pantheism,—making endless gods out of the material universe. Finally, the popular epic poems, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, the latter including the remarkable anthological poem, the Bhagavad Gita. In these two epics the popular heroes are deified.

What are the good characteristics of the sacred writings of Hinduism ?

They are not atheistic, like Buddhism, but theistic; that is one reason why they drove Buddhism out of India, its birthplace. They recognize direct revelations from God, a trinity in deity, the possibility of a divine incarnation in man. They look forward to a Messiah. They are intellectual and subtly philosophic. They have made the Hindus a deeply religious people.

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In what points are the Hindu scriptures inferior to our Bible?

Brahm, the central deity of the Hindus, is represented as cold and distant, asleep for ages at a time. Hinduism recognizes an endless number of gods. It practises the foulest forms of idolatry, including the most shocking obscenities in imitation of like deeds ascribed in their sacred books to their deities. The end of the human soul, as these writings teach, is to be annihilated by absorption into the divine essence. They present the doctrine of transmigration in its most deadening and horrible form. They know nothing of a divine Saviour, and the salvation they present is merely merit obtained by ceaseless, minute, and pointless ceremonial observances. Hinduism has destroyed human brotherhood in India by its cruel caste system, which is the heaviest burden ever laid by human selfishness upon mankind. It has degraded womanhood till the child widows of India are the pity of the world. It has weakened and debased a race that once was a mighty people. Until Christianity stayed its hand, it murdered female infants and burned widows upon the funeral pyres of their dead husbands. Its likenesses to Christianity are only apparent, caused by a misleading translation of terms that convey

to a Hindu nothing similar to our Christian thought.

What of other writings held sacred by various bodies of worshippers?

They are all inferior in influence and power to those that have been mentioned. The Zend-Avesta of the Zoroastrians (almost extinct in their Persian home but surviving as the Parsees of India) is a system of worship of a vast host of angels and demons, contending for the mastery of the world. Taoism, which with Confucianism and Buddhism makes up the trinity of religions to which most Chinese give assent, teaches in its sacred volume, "the Book of Rewards," a tolerably pure system of ethics, but it substitutes for one God a multitude of spirits, all of them unfriendly to man, to be placated by endless superstitions and oppressive observances. To these might be added accounts of such absurdities as the Mormon Bible, but further discussion of the subject is profitless.

What conclusion is to be drawn from this review?

That our Bible is so far superior to the other so-called bibles of the world as not to be compared with any of them. Its purity, its consistency, its lofty ethics, its perfect philosophy, its

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disclosure of God as a loving Father, its quickening of conscience, its elevation of society, its enlargement of vision, above all, its presentation of a divine Saviour, the incarnation of God's forgiving love,—in all of this our Bible gives unique evidence of its supernatural origin.

CHAPTER VIII

WHY WE BELIEVE IN THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE



WHAT is meant by the inspiration of the Bible?

The doctrine teaches that the Bible was written under the guidance of God's Holy Spirit in such a way that it is God's Word, the written expression of God's thought and will. "Inspire" means "breathe in," and an inspired man is one "breathed in" upon by God, so that he thinks God's thoughts and writes God's words.

What was the process by which God's Spirit produced the inspired Bible?

Christians agree as to the *fact* of inspiration, which is the main thing; but they do not agree as to the *mode* of inspiration. This is natural, for it would be impossible for finite minds thoroughly to understand the way in which the infinite God works upon the minds of His creatures.

What are the principal theories of inspiration?

1. The *verbal* theory, that the writers of the Bible were merely the amanuenses of God, writing as He dictated; that therefore every word of the Bible (in the original manuscripts at least) is inspired and authoritative. This theory, of course, does not confuse history with prophecy, or give the acts of Jezebel and the words of Satan any value for us except as warnings. Those that hold this theory regard the Bible as, next to Christ, God's revelation of Himself to men, and consider that in such a matter the Almighty would run no risks, as it were, and take no chances; that, like any human workman, He would see that His completed work was just what He wanted it to be, and would not allow His meaning to be confused or falsified by interference from the human tools He used.

2. The theory that different writers, or the same writer at different times, may receive varying degrees of inspiration. God may in one case merely suggest what is to be written; in another case He may give more definite direction; in another case He may exalt the human spirit into very close communion with Himself, so that the words written are full of His Spirit;

and in still another case He may actually guide the writing of every word. Those that hold this theory consider that the writing of Chronicles required and illustrates a lower degree of inspiration than the writing of the Gospel of John.

3. The theory that the writers of the Bible were left free to exercise their independent human faculties and impulses, but that God directed toward them also His own power and desire, elevating their wills and clarifying their minds to such an extent that they expressed correctly the will of God for mankind. Those that hold this theory acknowledge the admixture of human elements in the Bible, but hold that in all matters essential to the religious purpose of the book God saw to it that He was correctly interpreted and expressed.

4. The theory that God's Holy Spirit, acting upon the hearts of the writers of the Bible, so ennobled them, so lifted them into harmony with Himself, that their writings came to reflect His thoughts and embody His will. Those that hold this theory think less about the words of Scripture and the manner in which they were written, and more about the inspired characters of those that wrote the words; that is, instead of saying that the Holy Spirit used John as His agent in writing the

fourth Gospel, they would say that the Holy Spirit made John what he was, and therefore John wrote the fourth Gospel.

How are we to choose among these four theories of inspiration?

We are not obliged to make choice among them. Each is held by wise, godly, and learned men. Each embodies a truth regarding the Scriptures, and a great truth. Each exhibits one aspect of God's dealings with men. They cannot be wholly reconciled, but then we cannot reconcile man's free will with God's almighty determining power, though we know that both of these exist. Different minds will be attracted to different theories, but the theory to which you are attracted may be the one least needed for your mental and spiritual development. Get all the truth you can from all these theories, and remember that the main thing is the *fact* of inspiration; the exact *manner* of it must ever remain conjectural.

How does the character of the Bible compare with that of other books?

It is unique; no other book is like it. It is the literature of a race. It required more than a thousand years to write it. We know the names of more than forty of its writers.

The places of writing range from Rome to Babylonia. It is made up of all kinds of literature,—dramatic, epic, lyric, histories, biographies, idylls, orations, letters. It is unsystematic and fragmentary. And yet the Bible is “not a library but a book.” From the first chapter of Genesis to the last chapter of the Revelation it is harmonious and consistent, a steady unfolding of divine revelation culminating in Christ. Like Christ Himself, it is a marvellous and unique example of the way in which God can impress Himself upon things human. No other literature, no other book, possesses this character or any approximation to it; and this uniqueness is one strong evidence of the inspiration of the Bible.

In what other particulars is the Bible unique?

Its large element of fulfilled prophecy. Its survival, intact, amid all the vicissitudes of time. The great mass of historical evidence of its genuineness, such as we have for no other ancient book. Its intellectual and spiritual supremacy over the so-called Bibles of other religions. Its adaptation to translation, meeting the needs of all races when translated, as no other book does. Its effect on the world, leading to reforms, progress, material development, the advancement of science, literature,

and art, the promotion of education, civil and religious liberty, all that is involved in our Christian civilization. Its accomplishing of this on mission fields in all parts of the world, wherever it is given a chance. No other book even approaches this record.

What was Christ's teaching regarding the inspiration of the Bible?

He said (John 14 : 26), "The Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you." This promise of inspired memories is Christ's guaranty of the accuracy at least of the Gospels. At another time Christ said (John 10 : 35), "The scripture cannot be broken"; and at still another time, very solemnly, He declared (Matt. 5 : 18), "Verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished." Again, He exclaimed (Luke 24 : 25), "O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken !"

What was John's view of inspiration?

Most earnestly he wrote, in almost the last verses of the New Testament (Rev. 22 : 18, 19),

“I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book : and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city.”

What was Peter's view of inspiration ?

In 2 Pet. 1 : 21 the apostle wrote : “No prophecy ever came by the will of man : but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit.”

What was Paul's view of inspiration ?

In 2 Tim. 3 : 16 he wrote : “Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction.” The Greek original does not mean “Every scripture *that is* inspired of God is profitable,” implying that some scripture is *not* inspired ; but it means, “Every scripture, *being* inspired by God, is also profitable.”

How does belief in the inspiration of the Bible spring from the necessity of the case ?

If we grant that men were formed by a loving, omnipotent Creator, who is grieved when

His children fall into sin and misery and seeks in every way to rescue them, it is impossible to believe that He would not make use of writings as a most effective agency toward that end. It is by books that wisdom and experience are most surely scattered abroad over the earth and transmitted from generation to generation. Human civilization uses books as its chief agent of progress, and certainly God would not neglect this powerful agent in introducing the celestial civilization. Can you conceive of a better way of reaching men with divine truth than with an inspired book? And if that is theoretically the best way, would not God use it?

How is God's revelation of Himself in Christ related to the inspiration of the Bible?

It is impossible to think of the spread of Christianity without the Bible. Through the Bible we know practically all we know about Christ and His teachings. This is not only true of the New Testament, but the Old Testament also is full of Christ from Genesis to Malachi, and shows how Christ was involved in God's age-long designs for the world. When we see how carefully God prepared everything relating to Christ's life and to the growth of Christ's church, it seems impossible

that God would leave to mere chance the writing of the record without which Christ's life in the flesh would soon have become only a forgotten tale. The Bible is a part of the great plan of salvation, and so must be inspired.

What bearing upon the doctrine of inspiration has the feeling of mankind in the matter?

It is evidence of the inspiration of the Bible, though of course not conclusive evidence except for the individual cherishing that feeling. It is true, however, that the Bible is self-evidencing. As Christ said (John 7:17), "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself." Millions of men and women have submitted themselves to the Bible until it has come to have a gladly owned authority over their lives. They have recognized its inspiration because it has inspired them. They have heard God's voice in the Book, and you could not persuade them that it is not God's Book.

Believing the Bible to be inspired, may we yet study it as literature?

Certainly, for the Holy Spirit led the writers of the Bible to make use of literary forms, and to raise many of them to the highest point of

power and beauty. The Bible has nothing to fear but much to gain from reverent literary and historical scrutiny.

What duties flow from a belief in the inspiration of the Bible?

The duty to study it with all our hearts, and the duty to embody its spirit and precepts in our lives. It is God speaking to us. May He not speak to us in vain!

CHAPTER IX

WHY WE BELIEVE IN MIRACLES



WHAT is a miracle ?

It is an event that appears to be at variance with the ordinary course of nature, occurring or produced to help men, to emphasize a religious truth, or to accredit a religious teacher. Christ's walking on the water was in seeming opposition to the law of gravity ; His feeding of the five thousand was in seeming opposition to the laws of natural growth ; His opening of the eyes of the blind was in seeming opposition to the laws of physiology. These miracles were all worked to help men, to prove Christ's deity, and to emphasize truths, as that Christ is the Bread of life and the Light of the world.

How is it that miracles are not violations of the laws of nature ?

Because the laws of nature do not rule the universe to the exclusion of God, nor even to the exclusion of man. It is a law of nature that

objects let fall toward the earth continue to fall, and that their rate of motion increases as they fall; but a man may catch a ball as it thus falls, and so contravene that law of nature. Man's will, plus the powers that God has given him, has for the occasion nullified the law of gravitation. In the same way the Creator of matter and of the laws under which matter moves may use His will and His omnipotence, and in any case suspend or contravene any of the laws that He has created. This is no violation of law; it is merely the entering of a higher law into the realm of a lower law, superseding the latter. There is still a cause for every phenomenon; but in the case of a miracle there is a new and extraordinary cause, and therefore a novel or unique phenomenon.

How do modern scientific theories require miracles?

They presuppose constantly the interference of the order of nature by some force above or outside of nature. Matter could not have created itself. The force in the universe must have had an origin. Matter could not have set itself in motion. Life could not have sprung from lifeless matter. The order and system apparent everywhere in nature could not have arranged themselves by the spontaneous action of

nebulous matter. Sensation, consciousness, rational thought, speech, and the freedom of the will could not have sprung into being as mere outgrowths of matter that was before destitute of these attributes. At every one of these points science has no explanation save that of an outside, supernatural power changing immensely the natural order previously existing,—that is, a miracle on the most stupendous scale. In the words of the most eminent of modern scientists, Lord Kelvin, “Science positively affirms creating and directive power, which she compels us to accept as an article of belief.”

What special reasons warranted the working of the Bible miracles?

The miracles of the Bible are much fewer than most persons think, and they are nearly all connected with four great critical periods in the world's history: the escape from Egypt and conquest of Canaan, the internal conflict with heathenism in the days of Elijah and Elisha, the exile, and the time of Christ. During the immense stretches of time between these dates, no miracles, or practically none, occurred. In other words, Bible miracles differ from those of myths and legends in that they were coincident with great crises, when exceptional needs

called for exceptional aid, even to the interruption of the ordinary course of nature.

What special reasons warranted the working of Christ's miracles?

Men have always been feeling after God, imagining all kinds of deities, but especially imagining gods of power and anger. Men have always bowed beneath a sense of their sins, and have struggled in vain against them. Men have always groaned under the sorrows and sufferings of life. Death has always been a terror and the future has been a black unknown. Here are the four supreme needs of mankind that Christ came to meet: He came to reveal God as a loving Father; to provide an atonement for sin; to provide comfort in sorrow; to give proof of our immortality. These four purposes warranted any interruption of the ordinary course of nature that might be needed fully to authenticate God's representative.

Why must this revelation of God in Christ have been accompanied by miracles?

Because it could not reasonably be accepted without them. The excellence of Christ's teachings cannot of itself prove Christ divine, because infidels admit their excellence, and often study them as the works of a great human

philosopher. The sinlessness of Christ would be proof of His divinity, but that can only be inferred, not proved, from the outward evidences we possess, apart from the miraculous proofs of Christ's divinity. Jesus declared Himself to be God in human form, speaking the words of God, acting by the immediate inspiration and full power of God, and dying upon the cross to expiate the sins of the world. It is quite impossible to imagine any reasonable proof of this supernatural character of Christ and His mission except a proof that is itself supernatural, namely, the miracles.

What stress did Christ lay upon His own miracles?

He pointed to them as evidence of His divinity. "If I do not the works of my Father," He said, "believe me not. But if I do them, though ye believe not me, believe the works" (John 10 : 37, 38). And again, "As the Father raiseth the dead and giveth them life, even so the Son also giveth life to whom he will" (John 5 : 21). Again, "If I by the finger of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you" (Luke 11 : 20). In healing the palsied man He declared that He did it "that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins" (Mark

2 : 10). When John the Baptist, tortured with doubts in his prison, sent to Jesus to be assured that He was the Messiah, Jesus in His reply laid more stress on His miracles than His teaching : " Go and tell John the things which ye hear and see : the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them " (Matt. 11 : 4, 5). Our estimate of the miracles should tally with Christ's.

How does the character of Christ's miracles differ from that of legendary miracles ?

Christ's miracles are natural and simple ; legendary miracles are elaborate, and covered with pompous and unnecessary detail and parade. Christ's miracles spring easily and clearly from the circumstances ; legendary miracles do not seem to be a part of the circumstances. Christ's miracles are worked for adequate and worthy reasons ; legendary miracles are often mere purposeless marvels. Contrast Christ's healing of Malchus's ear, that no charge of violence might be brought against His followers, with the legends of Thyrsus, the Roman martyr. The sword raised against Thyrsus stuck into the wall, while the soldier who raised it was seized with vertigo. The

hot lead meant for Thyrsus rolled upon his torturers, causing them excruciating agony. Christ worked no miracle to save Himself from scourging and the cross. Contrast the simple narrative of the feeding of the five thousand with the story of the nobleman who had lost his way, and asked Jeanne Marie de Maillé to give him a bit of food. She had no food, but gave him a flower which he stuck in his cap. As he went on he began to notice unusual weight in his cap, took it off, and found three loaves of bread growing on the stem of the flower!

What argument for Christ's miracles is drawn from the absence of miracles elsewhere?

The apocryphal accounts of Christ's life are full of miraculous deeds performed when He was a child; the Gospels give merely the perfectly natural and beautiful account of His visit to the Temple at the age of twelve. John the Baptist is a great figure in the Gospels, but no miracles are ascribed to him, though the stirring outline of his life is given. After Christ's ascension the great figure of the New Testament is Paul; but very few miracles were worked by him, and these few are barely mentioned. The apocryphal writings relate many marvels connected with the last supper

and the trial and crucifixion; but the Gospels leave these climatic events bare of miracle. Miracles are ascribed to the Virgin Mary, but not in the New Testament. Many other illustrations might be given. Compare the few and simple miracles of the New Testament with the thronging marvels recorded in Brewer's "Dictionary of Miracles," if you want to see the difference between truth and falsehood.

What evidence for the Gospel miracles is there in Christ's cautions regarding them?

He repeatedly told those whom He had healed to keep it secret; He made no parade of the miraculous, but rather concealed it. Such exhortations, evidently genuine, presuppose the working of miracles. Moreover, at times Jesus warned His hearers against laying too much stress on His miracles. "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign," He said (Matt. 16: 4). If Christ and the Gospel writers had been marvel-mongers, such words would not have been spoken or recorded.

What evidence for Christ's miracles springs from their connection with the gospel story?

Many of them are so intimately interwoven

with events that no one questions that it is impossible fairly to separate the miraculous element from what is admittedly historical. For example, the record of the doubt of John the Baptist plainly belongs to authentic history; a fabrication or a myth would not record the doubts of its hero. But the miracles to which Christ pointed in answer to John's doubt are part of the same account. Christ's controversy with the Pharisees over the Sabbath question is plainly genuine; but its origin was the miraculous cure on the Sabbath of a man with the dropsy. The thronging of the people around Jesus because He had given them an abundance of food is characteristically Oriental; but it presupposes the miracle of the multiplication of loaves and fishes. The account of the persecution of the man born blind is full of touches that assure us of its authenticity; but there is no point to it unless he had been blind and had been miraculously healed. Can any one read the account of the letting of the palsied man down through the roof without recognizing it as a transcript from life? But the man took up his bed and walked. Many more illustrations could be given.

What answer is to be made to the argument that the writers of the Gospels were not learned

men, and that therefore their testimony as to miracles is not to be accepted?

The miracles of Christ were simple occurrences, entirely within the comprehension of even the most ignorant. But the writers of the four Gospels were evidently, even aside from divine illumination, men of unusual keenness of apprehension, to say nothing of their noble personal characters.

What answer is to be made to the theory that the miracles of the Gospels are the outgrowth of later superstitions?

The many evidences of the fact that the four Gospels were written in the first century are all answers to this theory. Also the fact that the Gospel admitted by the critics to be the oldest of all, that of Mark, is in proportion to its length fuller of miracle than any other, while the Gospel admittedly written last of the four, that of John, has fewer miracles than any other.

What is to be said in reply to those that acknowledge the authenticity of the accounts, but ascribe the so-called miracles to natural causes?

If the other two cases of the raising from the dead can be ascribed to a trance, certainly that of Lazarus cannot; and only miraculous knowledge could have told Jesus that these three

were in trances. If one or two persons could be persuaded by hypnotic means that they were eating bread when they were not, certainly five thousand could not. If the fever with which Peter's wife's mother suffered may have been intermittent and have ceased naturally, no such explanation can account for the healing of the ten lepers and of the man born blind. If the woman with the issue of blood might have been healed by auto-suggestion, certainly it was not by auto-suggestion that the storm ceased on the Sea of Galilee or the fig tree was withered or the water was turned into wine. If a few miracles might be ascribed plausibly to natural causes, the attempt to find natural explanations for most of the miracles ends in absurdity.

To what conclusion must we come regarding Christ's miracles?

For the reasons adduced, together with many others for which I have no space and which are not needed, every candid and careful thinker must conclude that miracles can occur, that in the case of Christ they were needed as an authentication of a divine revelation, and that they did occur just as they are set down in the four Gospels.

X

WHY WE BELIEVE IN THE INCARNATION AND THE VIRGIN BIRTH



WHAT is meant by the incarnation?

This supreme doctrine of Christianity teaches that the Son of God, of the substance of the Father, living with the Father from the beginning, became a man, taking upon Himself not only the human body with all its limitations and possible infirmities, but entering also fully into our human trials, being tempted in all points as we are tempted; and that He did this in order to manifest the Father to men, and by His life and sacrificial death to bring men to the Father from whom they had strayed.

What is the New Testament teaching concerning the birth of Jesus from a virgin?

The actual account appears in Matthew and Luke, but this supernatural origin of our Lord

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is presupposed by all the rest of the New Testament, especially by John in the opening chapters of his Gospel, and by Paul in all his theology. The virgin birth is no outgrowth of later thought, but it is a part of the very earliest teaching and fundamental records of Christianity.

Why is the doctrine of the virgin birth a reasonable teaching?

It harmonizes, as no other belief would harmonize, with all that we know of Christ's nature, and the purpose of His coming into the world. To suppose that a birth from Mary and Joseph could be the incarnate Deity is to suppose a marvel vastly greater than the virgin birth. On the contrary, if a person was to be born into the world who should on the one hand be clothed with our humanity and on the other hand be a perfect manifestation of Deity, the process we should naturally imagine, in accordance with all we know of births in God's creation, would be precisely this, that God would bring about a birth from a virgin. From His earthly mother the Son would then inherit our entire humanity, and from His heavenly Father He would inherit God's entire divinity, and the process would be entirely harmonious with the ordinary processes of life.

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What did Christ teach concerning the incarnation and His own divinity?

He declared repeatedly and with all possible plainness that He was God. "I and my Father are one," He said, in effect, over and over. "Before Abraham was, I am." "I proceeded forth from God." "He that seeth me seeth him that sent me." "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." "Father, glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." "Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." "I am in the Father, and the Father in me." "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son." "As the Father raiseth up the dead, even so the Son." "All men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father." Similar emphatic statements are to be found in all the Gospels, repeated over and over in many connections and in a great variety of ways.

What is the teaching of the rest of the New Testament regarding the incarnation and divinity of Jesus?

Everywhere Christ's declaration of His incarnation and divinity is eagerly accepted, and made the basis of faith and action. Paul teaches fully the pre-existence of Jesus, that He

was one with the Father, that He created all things, that He became incarnate in our humanity, that His death reconciled the world to God, that at His ascension He sat upon God's right hand where He now rules the universe, and that in the end of the world He is to be our Judge. Peter accords heartily in his writings with the Pauline view of Christ, and so with unique emphasis does the unknown writer of the letter to the Hebrews. The letter of James is not devoted to theology, but so far as it touches such themes it is of one mind with all the rest of the New Testament.

How does Christ's life prove the doctrine of the incarnation?

By its sinlessness; no other person in the world's history presents Christ's perfection of character,—and this in spite of the severest temptations to pride, revenge, passion, and avarice. Also by its miracles, so wonderful, and so fully attested. Also by its words, unexcelled in wisdom and power. Also by its very claims to divinity, which in any other man would seem the ravings of insanity or the empty bombast of a fool, while in Christ they do not seem incongruous, but even unbelievers hold them as worthy of respectful and often of reverent consideration.

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How do we reconcile the doctrine of the incarnation with the fact that Christ seemed to prefer for Himself the title, "Son of Man," using it somewhat more frequently than other titles?

That very fact indicates that He was so conscious of Deity that He felt it necessary to emphasize His humanity, so that men might not feel Him to be isolated from them. But the title, "Son of Man," was a recognized title of the Messiah, referring to the splendid prediction of the Messiah's sovereignty in Dan. 7: 13, 14. And when Jesus asked Peter, "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" and Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus at once declared that God had revealed to Peter the truth concerning Himself.

How does the doctrine of the incarnation differ from the teaching that all men may become "sons of God"?

This teaching, of which so much is made by so-called "liberals," is of course true, and is emphasized in the New Testament. But the New Testament writers would have been horrified to find Christ's incarnation compared with the union with God which we may gain through

Christ. When Christ comes to dwell in our hearts through faith we do not become incarnations of Deity ; and the term, " little Christs," is offensive to me. Christ suffered once for all, —how often that " once " is repeated in the New Testament ! His life was unique in the atonement it made. Its most characteristic aspects, those that win for it the title " Messiah " or " Christ," cannot be repeated in the lives of His followers. There is a sense, of course, in which we Christians are to show forth the Father as Christ manifested Him ; but it is an infinitely inferior sense. He is the Light of the world, and we are " broken lights " of Him. We " sons of God " are as different from the one Son of God as the image of the sun in a hand-glass differs from the central heat and light and power of the solar system.

How shall we answer the objection that the doctrine of the incarnation removes Christ from human sympathy, and destroys the power of His example ?

By insisting on the fact of Christ's entire humanity. God became man, complete man, man with all our human possibilities of weakness, suffering, and sin. He became conscious, probably gradually, of His supernatural origin and power, but He never used that knowledge

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or power in a way to separate Himself from humanity, or make His life in any particular one that we cannot all of us imitate. To do this was the substance of His great temptation, continually and triumphantly resisted. He could have summoned legions of angels to His aid, as He knew, but He contented Himself with twelve human disciples, and one of them a traitor. He could have called down fire from heaven upon His enemies, but instead He submitted to all indignities and to the most cruel death. He could have caused a palace to spring up from the earth as easily as He multiplied the loaves and fishes ; but He refrained, and had not where to lay His head. He felt the limitations of His humanity. He lived a life of humble prayer. "The Father is greater than I," He declared. Of the judgment-day He asserted that He did not know the time for it, but that the Father did. He even declared that His disciples would work greater miracles than He, after He had returned to the Father, because the "other Strengthened" whom the Father would send in Christ's name and stead would not be subject to our human limitations. The doctrine of the incarnation emphasizes Christ's humanity as much as His divinity. Indeed, unless Christ was completely human there was no incarnation at all.

What should we have missed if Christ had come directly from heaven as a splendid angel ?

We should have missed the revelation of the dignity of our humanity,—that we men are so close to Deity that God can incarnate Himself in a man's body, and that our value in His eyes is so great that He was willing to do it. We should have missed the glorification of infancy and motherhood so greatly needed by the woman-scorning, babe-neglecting ancient world. We should have missed the ennobling of the simple life, the life of poverty and of toil. We should have missed the most convincing possible evidence of God's sympathy with human sorrows and temptations. We should have missed the inspiration of the Great Example, the Ideal Man, the one perfect illustration of what our humanity may attain. And no angel, however splendid, could have given us that light of the glory of God which we see in the face of Jesus Christ.

What is the supreme effect of the incarnation ?

Through the incarnation our Lord became the new Adam of the human race. He implanted in mankind a supernatural principle, lifting it from slavery to the evil past and bringing it into vital union with the Father.

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His own birth was only the first of the New Births which are to redeem the human race. This new birth through union with Christ is meaningless mysticism to the unbeliever, but every faithful follower of Christ bears witness that it is an actual experience, and the central joy and fruitful strength of his life. To those that have thus been born again the doctrine of the incarnation is not only natural, reasonable, and necessary, but unspeakably precious.

CHAPTER XI

WHY WE BELIEVE IN THE ATONEMENT



HAT was Christ's own view of His death?

That it was far more than the triumph of the evil forces of this world, a spectacle to evoke pity for His sufferings, admiration for His courage, emulation of His forgiveness and patience, and hatred of the pride and cruelty that sentenced Him to the cross. Christ, as all four Gospels show, taught that His death had supernatural power to free men from the entanglements of an evil past and lift them into a new fellowship with God. He came to earth, He declared, to give His life as a ransom. He was to lay down His life for His sheep. The bread which He brought from heaven was His flesh, to be given for the life of the world. Whoever in grateful affection should eat His flesh and drink His blood should have eternal life. Especially in giving to His followers that priceless symbol, the Lord's Supper, He made its meaning perfectly clear. The wine was to betoken His blood of the New

Covenant, shed on behalf of many unto the remission of their sins. Whatever may be our thought regarding Christ's death, there can be only one understanding of Christ's thought of it,—that it was a sacrifice for the sins of the world.

What preparation for the atonement did God make in history?

He showed His great desire that the atonement should be received and understood by leading up to it with the most elaborate and long-continued chain of events in all the processes of His providence. The entire system of Jewish religious ceremonies, with the practice thereof from the beginning to the days of Christ, was formed and perpetuated in anticipation of Christ's atonement, and to prepare men to understand it and accept it. The Lamb, indeed, was slain from the foundation of the world. Wherever, even in heathen lands, a sacrifice was offered, it taught men a little of the lesson of the cross. All the symbolism of the Tabernacle and Temple, the Most Holy Place, the Mercy Seat, the altar of incense, the altar of burnt offerings, and the consecrated priesthood, was for the first time fully interpreted when our Lord died upon Calvary.

How shall we answer the objection that it

would have been unjust and immoral for God to be angry with His Son, and punish Him for the sins which He had never committed?

By pointing out that this is an absurd caricature of the doctrine of the atonement, a teaching not to be found in the Bible and not set forth by the church. "The Father loveth the Son," said Christ; and if in the climax of horrors on the cross there was a fear that God had forsaken Him, it soon passed away, and it was into the hands of a loving Father that the Son yielded His spirit when He died.

How shall we answer the objection that God could not take our sins and lay them upon Christ, and take Christ's righteousness and lay it upon us; and that this artificial exchange would be unjust even if it were possible?

By showing that this is not at all the doctrine of the atonement taught by the Bible and the church. God is not thought of as apart from Christ in the atonement, but as one with Him, here as well as everywhere else. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." The death on the cross shows us, not a stern judge insisting upon a penalty but allowing another than the culprit to substitute for him, but the Judge Himself taking the culprit's place. In other words, whatever was accom-

plished in the atonement was not effected by playing off one person of the Trinity against another, and juggling with impossible transfers of guilt and penalty. The Trinity is one God; and whatever expiation was made was a reality, and not a legal fiction.

How shall we answer the objection that the doctrine of the atonement supposes a clumsy, roundabout artifice, and that God might better have given directly to men, without the intervention of Jesus, the supernatural aid they need to reunite them to Himself?

By reminding the objector, in the first place, that God bestows all His gifts by intermediaries, and it is only through an almost endless chain of persons, materials, and laws that we can trace our daily blessings to the hands of the Creator. And further by bidding the objector notice that by the incarnation in Jesus the most direct visible manifestation of God in all history has been made, while this manifestation is now daily completed by the gift of the Holy Spirit, than which no more direct communication between God and man could possibly be imagined.

Why is not our penitence for sin a sufficient atonement for it, and reconciliation with God?

It would be, if it were absolutely sincere,

reaching to the depths of our being ; but every repentant sinner knows how poor a thing his repentance is, how after all he longs to repeat the sin, and how great is his need for a perfection of his repentance and for an entrance into the divine purity. The more truly a man is sorry for his wrong-doing, the less will he dream of urging that sorrow as a reason for God's forgiveness. Christ alone has offered the perfect sorrow for sin, and upon that offering we gladly lay hold, making it our own.

What, then, is the doctrine of the atonement ?

It teaches the divine purity, that God is forever and unalterably the enemy of sin. Who would wish Him otherwise ? Who could conceive Him otherwise ?

It teaches the divine wisdom, that God perceives the empty folly of a forgiveness on His part not preceded by repentance on our part ; and that He perceives also how weak sin has made us, and how unable to break away from sin into a perfect repentance.

It teaches the divine sympathy, reaching out into our wretchedness, comprehending our temptations, trembling with our fear, shrinking with our dread, torn with our remorse, and weighed down by our burdens ; a sympathy so perfect, surpassing even that of the most loving earthly

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father and mother with a wayward child, that it unites God with the beings He has created—actually, and in no mere figure of speech, laying their sins upon Him, and all the weight of their woe.

Finally, it teaches that this union of God with His creatures acts not only upon God, to oppress Him with their burdens, but also in the other direction upon men, establishing a connection through which the character and power of God flow out upon all that will receive Him, inspiring in them His own hatred of sin, giving them His own power to overcome temptation, and leading them day by day into His own purity. “Having identified Himself with us, He identifies us with Himself.” That the divine sympathy should thus act is only carrying out ideally in the infinite sphere of God’s nature those imperfect interactions of parent and child which are to be perceived on every hand among men.

How does the origin of the word, “atonement,” illustrate the doctrine?

It originated from “at” and “one.” The atonement is the “at-one-ment,” bringing God and man into a oneness of life—a oneness of purity, power, and happiness. This is the central thought of the doctrine; the thought of a

penalty paid for sin and the satisfaction of the divine justice, while there, is a secondary and subordinate phase of the teaching, and should be so regarded in our discussion of it.

How does the atonement meet a universal need?

Conscience tells us that we are sinners. It reminds us of the many times when we have harmed or saddened those around us, marred God's image in us, done despite to our high destiny, and grieved the loving heart of our Father in heaven. *However deeply and truly we may repent, conscience allows us no peace in the memory of what we have done.* We may be at peace with our present, but not with our past. *Conscience requires of us perfect living to-day, with no strength or time or goodness remaining over whereby to atone for the evil of yesterday.*

Such being the case with us all, the atonement puts our conscience at rest by showing us the Father whom we have wronged taking up Himself that impossible burden of our past sins, matching them with His infinite sorrow, and casting them behind His back forever. Our conscience may well be at peace now, since the Creator of the very sense of justice is satisfied. Our soul is at harmony now with its past as well as with its present. The historical fact of our

sins has not been annihilated, the memory of them has not been destroyed, many of the sad results of them may abide in shattered health and sunken fortunes ; but the SINS are gone, and gone forever. They have been annulled by the only being that could annul them, and in the only way that would satisfy even the demands of our human conscience. Thus the atonement has perfectly met the deepest universal need of mankind.

How are we to enter into the atonement ?

By simply accepting it. Christ makes no conditions. "Whosoever will." We enter into this union precisely as we enter into any other personal relationship. You can know absolutely nothing of a human love if you stand apart from it, criticise it coldly, philosophize about it, or merely say, "Here am I ; let it come and take me." Christ knocks at your door in the atonement ; He will not batter down the door, nor will He knock forever : you must let Him in.

CHAPTER XII

WHY WE BELIEVE IN THE TRINITY



WHAT is the doctrine of the Trinity?

It is the teaching that God has existed from eternity as three self-conscious persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and that these three are diverse modes of existence of one indivisible spiritual substance, so that there is only one God, manifesting Himself as these three persons. No Unitarian holds more firmly to the unity of God than Trinitarians; but Trinitarians add this belief as to the triune nature of that unity.

What did Christ teach about the Trinity?

We have already seen what He taught about His own divinity, that He was equal to the Father and of one substance with Him to such a degree that all who had seen Him had seen the Father. Yet He prayed to the Father constantly, at times felt the forces of sin drawing

Him away from the Father, and by every means made manifest the fact that He possessed a personality distinct from that of the Father. Our Lord's witness to the divinity and separate personality of the Holy Spirit is equally distinct. It is to be found in all four Gospels, and not merely in the famous passages in John. Christ uses regarding the Holy Spirit all the pronouns of personality. He combines in one sentence the three persons of the Trinity, as when He declares (John): "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth." And again: "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father." And again: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew). Christ refers to the Holy Spirit as a workman whose operations He well understands, stern to convict of sin, strong to establish righteousness, wise to unfold truth, jealous of the honor of Christ, instructing His followers what to say, quickening them from death and bringing them into the eternal life. It is hard to see how any one can believe in Christ and love Him, and yet fail to accept the Holy Spirit, to whose existence and work our Lord gave such loving and unmistakable testimony.

What does the rest of the Bible teach about the Trinity?

This is a comparatively unimportant question, since we have Christ's authority for the doctrine; but it is a matter of interest to know that it is found throughout the Bible, dim at first and growing ever clearer with the process of revelation, until its fullest philosophical unfolding is given in the marvellous writings of Paul.

What do the earliest Christian writings outside the Bible show about this doctrine?

That it was not the product of later ages, but was taught by the apostolic church just as we find it in the Gospels. Thus Clement of Rome wrote, about A. D. 96, "Have we not one God, and one Christ, and one Spirit of grace which was poured out on us?" And he also wrote, "As God lives, and the Lord Jesus Christ lives, and the Holy Ghost, the faith and the hope of the elect." The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, about A. D. 100, contains the words, "Baptize ye in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, in living water." The Apostles' Creed, originating at about the same time, presupposes the doctrine of the Trinity. Justin Martyr (A. D. 150) wrote, "In the name of God the Father and

Lord of the universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost, they then receive the washing with water.”

What is to be said in answer to the statement that it is impossible to believe in a being who is at the same time one and three ?

In the first place, that it is manifestly impossible for a finite mind to understand fully the nature, attributes, and operations of an infinite God, so that a doctrine wholly comprehensible would be, by that very fact, inadequate and false. In the second place, that the doctrine of the Trinity is so closely interwoven with the inspired record that we must accept it or reject the Bible, with all our hopes of salvation and immortality. And in the third place, that the doctrine of the Trinity (as stated by its friends and not as misstated by its foes) involves no affront to our reason, but is perfectly consonant with it.

What are some of these misstatements of the doctrine ?

First, the misstatement that the Deity is conceived to be three in the same sense that He is one. On the contrary, in essence He is one, and only one. In manifestation as personalities He is three.

Second, the misstatement that the three divine Persons are wholly like human persons. They are like human persons in their acting independently, relying upon one another, loving one another, talking with one another, counselling one another, aiding one another, representing one another. They are wholly unlike human persons in that they are not mutually exclusive, but include and interpenetrate one another, each possessing and using the whole substance of the Godhead. This truth is revealed to us, and it is essential for the unity of God; but it constitutes the mystery in the doctrine of the Trinity, *and the only mystery.*

Third, the misstatement that the doctrine of the Trinity supposes three First Principles or Causes. It does nothing of the kind. Everywhere consistently the Father is represented as the First Cause. He begets the Son eternally. From Him also proceeds eternally the Holy Spirit. And even if this were not so, there is only one God according to the doctrine of the Trinity, for Father, Son, and Spirit have absolute unity of will and perfect harmony in action.

What are some analogies that help us to understand the doctrine of the Trinity?

Every man is conscious that he himself is a

unit, and yet he knows himself as a material body and an immaterial mind or spirit. His hand, his foot, are himself, and his thoughts are himself, and yet often he is conscious of a self quite apart from his body or his thought. Sometimes he is clearly conscious, as was Paul, of a lower self warring with a higher self. Sometimes disease, or an unusual soul or mind structure, disassociates the human personality, and we have scientific records of many a person who was at one time one character, with one set of habits, modes of thought, and varieties of experience, and at another time a quite different person, the former personality wholly forgotten, entering into a new series of habits and thoughts and experiences. Some have been known who have thus moved back and forth among three different personalities, with three entirely distinct memories and life histories.

There are many illustrations in nature of unity in essence coupled with great variety in manifestation, such as the carbon that may be coal or diamond, the aluminum that may be clay or ruby, the lime that may be chalk or pearl; such also as the energy that may be actinic rays, or heat rays, or light rays. Indeed, so definitely has the unity of nature been disclosed to us of recent years that the transmutation of metals is no longer the empty

dream of the alchemist, but is taken up as a sober possibility by the most renowned savants. Illustrations such as these, however, are farther from the point than those taken from our own human experience, which shows us so plainly our own unity of essence coupled with complexity of personality that the wonder is no longer that there should be a Trinity in the Godhead, but that the nature of the infinite Creator and Upholder of all things, present everywhere and conscious of every event, should be *only* threefold, and not rather an infinite number of personalities, each with His own sufficient sphere of operations.

What, on the other hand, would be the difficulty of believing in a God with only one personality?

The difficulty of coming into loving fellowship with Him. We love Him because He is a God of love, so revealed to us and so readily comprehended by us. But if God is love, He must have some equal to love, and must have had that equal before the creation of our pygmy race. What gigantic conceit to suppose that man, the tiny ant, the dust of creation, is adequate to supply the love needs of an infinite God! And how impossible to regard the Deity as the embodiment of love if, during the end-

less ages before creation, He was only a single conscious person, "playing an endless game of solitaire"!

Moreover, as the existence of the Son eternally with the Father assures us of a God of love, so the existence with those two of the Holy Spirit discloses the ideal family and state, the perfect society. A one-person Deity could not be a social Deity, and would therefore lead an imperfect life. He could love only Himself, serve only Himself. He would be incapable of the highest existence, which is social and not isolated. In these days of social thinking and social applications of religion this argument should have especial weight with all earnest men and women.

How does this doctrine of the Trinity take up into itself half-views of truth?

It accepts the truth of the unity of God insisted upon by the Unitarian and the Mohammedan, and clothes it with warmth and motion and likeness to our humanity, which is made in the image of God.

It accepts the truth of the deist, who insists upon a supreme Maker of all things, sitting upon a distant throne with the reins of law in His hands; and shows that this Maker and Lawgiver is the eternal Father, eternally up-

holding His justice and authority, but in mercy and in love.

It accepts the truth of the pantheist, who sees in all things and forces and events an omnipresent but coldly impersonal Deity; and it shows that this Deity is the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father, a person who is the source and the animating vigor of all beauty and truth and power in the universe over which the Father reigns.

And it accepts the truth of the polytheist, who encloses his deity in clay and wood and stone, making the dimly apprehended Godhead visible in fire and tree and dumb beast as well as in the clumsy idols, the work of his own hands; for it shows us the infinite Father entering human clay, embodying Himself in earthly limitations, so that men can see and hear and their hands can handle the Word of life.

Thus, in the deepest analysis, it is this truth of the Trinity which renders Christianity the ultimate religion, meeting the needs of all types of thought, and fulfilling in its revelation the dim adumbrations of all the crude, anticipatory gropings after God.

What should be our personal relation to this doctrine of the Trinity?

We should not allow it to confuse us. We

have an entire right to think of God in terms of the Father, or of Christ, or of the Spirit, as best meets our present need. The Father is in His world everywhere. Christ has never left or forsaken His followers. We may pray to Christ, or to the Spirit, or to the Father; or to God without thought of His personalities.

But also we should not allow ourselves to miss Christ's purpose for the world in obtaining from the Father the presence here of the Holy Spirit, to guide us, to comfort us, to inspire us, to be in every Christian all that Christ could be if He dwelt in our house and walked ever at our side. Here, in our hearts, if we will, is the glorious Being whom Christ, with the Father, loves supremely; the Being for whose honor Christ is supremely jealous, blasphemy against whom is the one unpardonable sin; the Being who can represent the Deity even better than Christ could, because unfettered by the trammels of the flesh; the Being who is eager, outreaching love, strengthening us with all power and wisdom. We know Christ well. Through Him we have come to know the Father. It is our saddest loss if we do not also through Christ come to know this blessed Spirit, through whom it is our God's good pleasure to dwell with men.

CHAPTER XIII

WHY WE BELIEVE IN THE RESURRECTION



Why is it especially important to prove Christ's resurrection?

Because He laid so much emphasis upon it. Because the apostles made it the basis of their teaching. Because upon the proof of it depends the proof—and the only proof—of human immortality.

How can we answer the argument that Christ may have swooned upon the cross and not really have died at all?

It is wholly unlikely that He, so weak that He could not carry the cross, could have survived the long agony of crucifixion. The coming of blood and water from the spear-wound in His side indicated, so physicians say, a ruptured heart. And if this theory were true, what became of Christ? When did He really die? If He lived it must have been in hiding, and He and His disciples must have been carrying on an acted lie, something it is impossible to conceive in connection with our Lord. Nor would the apostles, in that case, have gone

forth and risked their lives in preaching the truth of the resurrection.

How can we answer the Jewish theory that Christ's body was removed from the tomb by His disciples, and that therefore the tomb was found empty?

By pointing to the Roman guard, for whom it would have been death to sleep at their post. And especially by pointing to the noble characters of the disciples. Would John, or Peter, or James have connived at such a fraud? They gave their lives in defence of truth, and in allegiance to Him whom they called "the Truth."

How can we answer the theory that Christ's body was stolen from the tomb by His enemies?

They would have brought forward the body, as soon as the Christians began to talk of the resurrection, and thus have convicted the Christians of falsehood; and we should have had a record of their doing so. Indeed, such a proof would have nipped Christianity in the bud.

How can we answer the theory that the disciples only imagined they saw the risen Lord?

They were not expecting to see Him, as the

record shows, but were surprised and incredulous. They would not have recorded their doubt, such as that of Thomas, and of the two at Emmaus, and of all the apostles (Luke 24: 11), unless the doubt had been a reality, for it was not at all to their credit. There was no time to work themselves up to the state of ecstasy that sees visions, for Christ rose on the third day. They could not have been self-hypnotized into such a belief, for at one time the risen Christ was seen by more than five hundred at once. All the circumstances point to the bodily resurrection of Christ,—the linen cloths lying like a chrysalis, the head-cloths apart from the rest and rolled as if the head were still in them; the showing of hands and feet; the eating of food in the upper room; the offer to Thomas to place his hand on the spear-print; the fire on the shore of the lake and the distribution of the bread and fish to the hungry disciples.

How do the apostles bear witness to the resurrection of Christ?

A study of the records of the early church, especially of the Acts, shows that "Jesus and the resurrection" (Acts 17: 18) was the substance of the Christian message at that time.

Their testimony started from that crowning miracle, and was based upon it. They could not have been mistaken in this matter. They would not have based their entire life upon it without sufficient investigation and proof. They had ample opportunities for investigation and everything at stake, with absolutely no selfish inducements to prejudice them in favor of acceptance. The truth of the resurrection was forced upon them, and their acceptance might well be conclusive with us, if we had no other argument.

What proof of the resurrection from the seeming discrepancies in the narratives, and their confusion?

It is quite impossible to make out an exact order of events for Easter morning, or to be sure of the way in which Christ rose, the angels gave His message, or the various visitors arrived at the tomb. These, however, are all minor matters, and if in minor particulars the five accounts (including Paul's) had exactly agreed, that agreement would have condemned them. For it was early morning. The disciples were scattered over the city. They were worn with watching and with grief. They were not acting in concert. They were completely dazed by the unexpected event. Every

judge or lawyer will tell you how difficult it is for even trained observers to agree on small points. The different leading actors in the battle of Waterloo fix for the beginning of the battle times a number of hours apart; yet no one doubts that the battle occurred. The very confusion in the accounts of the resurrection, so far as concerns minor matters, is entirely natural; and while false Gospels would have avoided it, genuine Gospels, independently written, could hardly have helped falling into it.

What proof of the resurrection from the little details of the accounts?

These narratives, brief and simple as they are, abound in graphic touches that appeal to us at once as coming from eye-witnesses. These are such as Mary's thinking that Christ was the gardener; His forbidding her to touch Him; John's outrunning Peter to the tomb, but hesitating there in awe while the more impulsive Peter rushes in first after all; the breaking of bread at Emmaus; the episode of Thomas's doubt, and of Peter's swimming to the shore to meet his Lord by the lake, and John's following after Christ as He walks away with Peter,—all so characteristic of these disciples. What legend would have invented

these touches? What false chronicler would have thought to introduce them?

How do mythical accounts of the resurrection confirm the Gospel accounts?

By the remarkable contrast. The legendary accounts of later times are good examples of myths. For example, take the following false account of the resurrection as written in the so-called "Gospel of Peter," written in the second century and discovered (or at least a fragment of it) in the winter of 1886-1887: "In the night before the Lord's Day, the soldiers being on guard two and two about, there arose a great voice in heaven; and they saw the heavens opened, and two men descending thence with great light and approaching the tomb. And that stone which had been placed at the door rolled away of itself to one side, and the tomb was laid open, and both the young men went in. On seeing this, the sentinels woke the centurion and the elders (for they also were on the watch); and while they were relating what they had seen, they saw again coming out of the tomb three men, the two supporting the one, and, following them, a cross. And of the two the head reached the heaven, but that of him whom they led overpassed the heaven. And they

heard a voice out of heaven saying, 'Hast thou preached obedience to them that sleep?' And from the cross came answer, 'Yes.'"

Notice the absence of non-essential miracle in the true accounts, and see how this false account bristles with miraculous elements that are grotesque and exaggerated. In the true account the miraculous element is simple, unforced, springing easily and naturally from the circumstances, and plainly inevitable. In this false account the miraculous element is unrelated to character and unexplained by any of the necessities of the case. No one can reasonably regard the Gospel accounts of the resurrection as mythical if he studies the undoubted myths of that great event.

What proof of the resurrection from the first appearance to women?

Women were looked down upon in those days. Christianity has raised them to such a height of honor that it is difficult to understand the tremendous improbability that any false account of the resurrection would represent the risen Messiah as showing Himself first to a group of women, and especially showing Himself first alone to such a woman as Mary Magdalene. Any fabricator of a Gospel, or any legendary account, would have made

Christ, coming from the grave, appear first to the Sanhedrim in session, or to Pilate or Herod, or at least to John or Peter or James, the leading apostles. But to a handful of women!—the fact, though we see its beauty and fitness, is one that never was born of the imagination of those days.

What proof of the resurrection from the number of appearances of Christ?

There were ten or eleven of these appearances, not counting that to Paul on the Damascus road. They were to women and men, to solitary persons, as Mary Magdalene, Peter, and James, to the two of Emmaus, to the ten disciples, to the eleven, to the seven by the lake, to more than five hundred. They were in many places and under many circumstances: near the tomb, in the upper room, on the highway, by the Sea of Galilee, on a mountain in Galilee, on the Mount of Olives. It is impossible to explain away so many appearances.

What proof of the resurrection in the cessation of appearances?

If it had all been a myth and superstition, it would have grown instead of diminishing with the lapse of time; but the appearances

of the risen Saviour, numerous at first, diminish rapidly during the following days, and after forty days they cease altogether with the ascension. Myths would increase in number and complexity with the growth of imagination and the passage of time.

What proof of the resurrection from the change wrought in the disciples?

Before the resurrection, according to their own accounts, the disciples were timid and distrustful. At the arrest they all forsook Jesus. Peter denied Him. After the resurrection they preached Christ so boldly that three thousand converts were won in a day. By a sight of the risen Christ Paul was transformed from a bitter persecutor into an ardent apostle. Paul possessed the most lawyerlike of minds. Peter and John and James, Matthew and Mark and Luke, were men of exceptional ability. It is impossible to account for their changed attitude unless Christ really rose from the dead.

What conclusion do we draw from these conclusive proofs of the resurrection?

The resurrection of Christ is the best attested fact of history. The proof of it proves Christ's prophetic power, for He foretold it.

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It confirms the miracles, since none was so great as this; and if this occurred, surely every one of them might easily occur. It proves the divinity of Christ, since surely no one but the Creator of life could have this power over death.

CHAPTER XIV

WHY WE BELIEVE THAT THE GOSPELS WERE WRITTEN BY MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, AND JOHN



WHAT are the reasons given by those that believe that Matthew did not write the first Gospel?

The fact that Papias (A. D. 130) and other ancient writers state that Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew (Aramaic), while our Gospel is in Greek.

The fact that Matthew seems to have made use of Mark's Gospel, which is not what we should have expected from an eye-witness and apostle.

The alleged absence from the Gospel of the graphic touches that would have been introduced by an eye-witness.

How may these arguments be answered?

Matthew may easily have written a Greek translation of his Hebrew Gospel. There is no doubt that most, if not all, of the ancient writers that spoke of Matthew's writing in Hebrew actually used our Greek Matthew.

The Hebrew Gospel, being understood by few, would be far less likely than the Greek Gospel to be preserved along with the other Greek writings of the New Testament.

As to the portions common to Matthew and Mark, it is quite reasonable to suppose that the two writers worked upon them together, combining their memories.

As to the more formal and rather impersonal character of the Gospel, we must remember that it is an argument as to Christ's Messiahship, and does not pretend to be a biography of Christ or a history of the acts of our Lord and His disciples.

What are the positive reasons for believing that Matthew wrote the first Gospel?

The universal belief of antiquity. Matthew was an obscure apostle. It is very unlikely that so important a book would have been attributed to this little-known apostle unless he actually wrote it.

The keeping of an account is just what we might expect from a tax-gatherer. He may well have been more expert with his pen than any of the fishermen around him.

One of the most striking indications of Matthew's authorship is the modest way in which he speaks of himself,—only a single verse given

to his conversion! Then, though he mentions the feast which Christ attended soon afterward and reports what Christ said there, he does not say that it is a feast which he himself gave in his own house. Luke and Mark both tell us this, and Luke adds that it was "a great feast." This evident reticence of Matthew (and was it also a sense of his unworthiness as a reformed publican?) would abundantly account for the absence of personal reminiscences from his Gospel.

It is significant, too, that Matthew's Gospel is the one that reports most of Christ's merciful words about publicans, and tells most about our Lord's association with that despised class. It is significant also that Matthew did *not* report the visit of Jesus to the house of that "chief publican," Zacchæus, and that Luke did.

In any event, it is well to remember that all scholars believe that the precious nucleus of the first Gospel, the sayings of Christ, comes from the pen of Matthew, through translation or otherwise; and also that the Gospel as we have it was written within forty years after the crucifixion.

What is the testimony of Papias (A. D. 130) about the authorship of the second Gospel?

It is clear and conclusive. He says: "Mark,

having become Peter's interpreter [or secretary], wrote accurately but not in order whatsoever things he [Peter] remembered—namely, the things which had been said or done by Christ. For he [Mark] neither heard the Lord nor followed Him. But afterward, as I said, he followed Peter, who used to frame his instructions to meet his [immediate] needs, and did not, as it were, attempt to frame an orderly account of the Lord's words. So that Mark made no mistake, when he thus wrote certain things as he [Peter] remembered them. For he made one thing his care, not to omit to record anything that he had heard, or to set down anything false among them." This testimony is confirmed by the other ancient writers, and is believed by practically all modern scholars.

How does the second Gospel itself indicate this origin?

It is a simple, plain account, with no argumentative purpose such as Matthew and John keep in view. It is full of Peter's energy and fire. It bears everywhere the marks of an eye-witness, and in very many places a comparison of Mark's account with those of the other evangelists will show numerous little touches that prove the keenness of Peter's perception and the fidelity of his memory. It records Christ's own

Aramaic words in a number of places, and its occasional use of Latin words confirms the tradition that Mark wrote the Gospel when he and Peter were in Rome. Peter, however well he could talk, would not be likely, being a fisherman well along in years, to write easily; and Mark, being a young man of good family, would make an excellent amanuensis and reporter.

What does the Muratorian Canon say about Luke?

This ancient account of the New Testament, written about 170 A. D., has these words: "The third book of the Gospel, 'according to Luke,' Luke, the physician, composed after the ascension of Christ, when Paul had taken him with him as the companion of his journeying, in his own name from hearsay (he had not himself seen the Lord in the flesh), and as best he could, beginning with the birth of John." This is the first mention of Luke as the author of the third Gospel. All other mentions and traditions agree with this, and Luke's authorship is generally admitted by modern scholars.

What other reasons are there for believing that Luke wrote the Gospel?

It has been proved, by a comparison of language and thought, that the writer of the Acts

wrote the Gospel also, and for the same person, Theophilus. The "we" passages in the Acts show that the author was a companion of Paul. Luke the physician was Paul's most constant companion; and at the last (2 Tim. 4 : 11) was his only companion. It is natural that a physician should be a writer. The wide scope of Luke's travels shows itself in the scope of the Gospel, its references to the history of Syria and Rome, and its large outlook upon the Gentile world. The many references in the Gospel to the salvation of the lost take in the whole world, and not Palestine alone. Luke's Gospel and Paul's first letter to the Corinthians contain the only references to Christ's appearance to Peter alone after the resurrection. Especially noteworthy are the medical touches given throughout the Gospel, the use of technical physicians' terms, and the noting of little points that only a physician would note, particularly in connection with the miracles of healing. Thus also it is no accident that Luke's Gospel gives the fullest account of the birth of Christ, and that it says most about women and expresses the deepest consideration for them.

Where and when, probably, did Luke get his material?

He had several opportunities of first-hand

gathering of information of which we know, and probably many of which we do not know, in those days when the original disciples were scattered everywhere by persecution. His most extended period for the gaining of material in Palestine would be the two years of Paul's imprisonment at Cæsarea, during which Luke seems to have been in attendance upon him.

What are the reasons given by those that believe that John the Apostle did not write the fourth Gospel?

Principally the following: That a familiar companion of Jesus would not have the profound reverence for Him as Deity that is shown everywhere in the fourth Gospel. That the view of Christ is developed further than that of the other three Gospels. That the speeches of Jesus in the fourth Gospel are in the writer's own style. That the fourth Gospel represents Christ's ministry as lasting three years, while the other Gospels tell of only one year; that it describes several visits to Jerusalem and one tour in Perea which the other Gospels say nothing about; that it represents the crucifixion as taking place before the Passover, while the other Gospels place it after the Passover.

How are these arguments answered?

The other Gospels are as emphatic as John's in affirming the deity of Jesus, though they say comparatively little about it, since their purpose was historical, or, as in the case of Matthew, to discuss the fulfillment of prophecy. Since the fourth Gospel was written twenty or thirty years after the others, it is reasonable to find in it a clearer and more profound view of Christ. But, after all, John's presentation of Christ has no clearer exhibition of His divine nature than the writings of Paul and Peter two decades earlier. As to the report of Christ's sayings, if we grant that John wrote the Gospel, certainly we must admit that he had unrivalled opportunities of hearing Christ, and we may well have entire confidence in his report. Is it not, besides, far more reasonable to suppose that the master mind of Christ molded John's style than to suppose that John's style colored the reported sayings of his Lord? As to the length of Christ's ministry, the first three Gospels do not say how long it was. John had a home in Jerusalem, to which he took Mary after the crucifixion. He seems to have been acquainted with persons in the high priest's household. His business may well have brought him to Jerusalem occasionally, and he

may have been the only disciple with Jesus on these Judæan visits. As to the time of the crucifixion, many think that our Lord, knowing that He was to die on the next day, celebrated the Passover on Thursday instead of Friday evening. Thus what the other evangelists call the Passover, because it was *their* Passover, John properly speaks of as *before* the Passover (of the Jews).

What are the positive reasons for believing in John's authorship of the fourth Gospel?

The unanimous and emphatic testimony of the ancient world. The evidence here is greater than for the authorship of any other book of the Bible. It begins with the very earliest of the Christian writers, and extends in an uninterrupted flow of quotations, allusions, and direct acknowledgment of John's authorship.

The proved identity of authorship with the Epistles attributed to John—Epistles which fit in perfectly with what we know of John's life as bishop of Ephesus and his exile on Patmos. A similar argument applies to the Revelation.

The traditional purpose of John in writing his Gospel was to supplement the other three. At any rate, it does markedly supplement them, and thus falls in with the tradition that it was

written by John in his great old age, perhaps thirty years after the first three Gospels were published. Very little in John's Gospel is found in the others at all. Where John repeats, it is with a purpose connected with the general design of his book. For instance, he relates the feeding of the five thousand, but in order to introduce the discourse on the Bread of life, which the other evangelists had not reported. But John relates six miracles not related by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, especially the raising of Lazarus, whom, on account of the hatred of the Jews, it was probably not safe to mention earlier, during his lifetime. All through his Gospel John takes for granted a host of particulars of the greatest importance, such as the appointment of the Twelve, Christ's baptism and ascension, our Lord's birth at Bethlehem and of the tribe of Judah, and the institution of baptism and of the Lord's supper. John refers to these matters only incidentally, as knowing that his readers have them already from authoritative sources—the other three Gospels.

The writer's mention of John the Baptist as simply "John," as John the apostle alone could. The other evangelists add "the Baptist" to prevent the confusion.

The fact that, though the fourth Gospel

records the words of such little-known apostles as Philip, Andrew, Thomas, and Judas not Iscariot, it never mentions by name the great and honored apostle John, whom the other evangelists picture as so close to Christ. But the writer of the Gospel speaks of himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and introduces this disciple in such a way, over and over, as to leave no doubt that John is meant.

The fact that the author of the fourth Gospel was evidently a Jew, laying stress on the Jewish feasts, showing close familiarity with Jewish customs, and picturing Christ as deeply solicitous for the Jewish nation, while at the same time the writer makes such references to the Jews as to indicate that he was no longer living among them, but among the Gentiles.

The fact that the fourth Gospel takes no cognizance of the important Gnostic heresies early in the second century, but freely plays into their hands, affording them material easily twisted into support of their absurd notions. This shows that the Gospel was not a product of the second century or later.

The thousands of minute particulars which only an eye-witness could have gleaned.

The way in which, in the last chapter, the writer treats the current belief that John would live till Christ's second coming is perfectly in

harmony with the theory that the book was written in John's extreme age.

The spiritual sympathy of the writer with Jesus Christ, the intense feeling that pulses through every chapter, the burning zeal that is only restrained by the wisdom of experience—all of this points irresistibly to John as the writer. And if, indeed, the fourth Gospel was not written by John the apostle, who among the sons of men could have written it?

What are we to conclude from this study?

That we may read the four Gospels with absolute confidence, knowing that two of the authors were intimate friends of Jesus, a third the secretary of another intimate friend, while the fourth, an educated man and a friend of Paul, enjoyed exceptional opportunities for learning all the facts.

CHAPTER XV

THE EVIDENCE OF PAUL



HAT facts made Paul's conversion to Christianity very unlikely?

He was a man of exalted station and influence among the Jews, and of fine education, who would naturally despise the humble and unlettered followers of Jesus. He had been trained in the strict sect of the Pharisees, who were Christ's bitter enemies. The seeing and hearing of Christ might have removed his prejudices, but he had never seen or heard Him. He became the most bigoted and powerful opponent of Christianity, persecuting, as he said, "this Way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women." No man on earth would seem more unlikely than Paul to be converted to Christianity, still less to become its most ardent and successful advocate.

How may we be sure of the supernatural character of Paul's vision of Christ on the way to Damascus?

We have three detailed accounts of it, by a

careful historian, Paul's close companion; two of these are in Paul's own words. The accounts do not describe a trance and a dream, but a sudden startling appearance accompanied by sound, seen and heard by all the company, and followed by a blindness from which Paul was only recovered (and that but partially) by supernatural healing. Paul may have had misgivings of conscience, especially after hearing Stephen's defence and witnessing his death; but he was in the very height of his mad frenzy against the Christians. "I verily thought with myself," he said afterward, "that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth"; and he wrote to Timothy that his persecutions were made "ignorantly, in unbelief." There is no reason, therefore, for thinking that this vision of the glorified Christ was the outgrowth of Paul's own mind. It was totally unexpected and unprepared for. And it was so real that henceforth Paul counted himself among those that had actually seen the risen Lord.

How does Paul's conversion prove the Gospel account?

It entirely transformed his character and his life. It changed him from a bitter persecutor to a humble, loving, patient, forgiving Chris-

tian. It broadened his bigoted Pharisaism till he became the apostle to the Gentiles. It convinced his lawyerlike, analytical mind so positively of the reality of Christ's resurrection and deity that henceforth we see no shadow of doubt in his life, but only the most passionate zeal for the spread of the Gospel. This zeal caused Paul to break utterly from his former friends and associates, his home and relatives and comfortable fortune, and cast in his lot with the once-despised Christians, who made no rejoicing over him, but admitted him to their circle reluctantly and suspiciously. It is unbelievable that anything but truth and the most complete truth in the story of Christ could have wrought this wonderful transformation. This occurred, it must be remembered, within four years of the crucifixion, before myths or legends could grow up, and while all the facts were fresh. The Gospels had not yet been written; but even if they had never been written, this single event of the conversion of Paul would suffice to prove the deity of Christ.

How do Paul's miracles prove the Gospels?

In his Epistles, that all scholars accept as genuine, Paul claims to have wrought miracles.

No one believes that he would make such a claim without good ground for it. Luke, Paul's companion, details in the Acts some of those miracles. Christ had told His apostles that they should work miracles, and Paul speaks of his own miracles as "signs of an apostle." If the miracles of the apostles are granted, the miracles and the divine power and nature of Christ follow of necessity.

How does Paul's career prove the truth of Christianity?

It shows in a conspicuous way, and right at the outset of Christian history, that divine Providence was in charge of the new enterprise. Paul was plainly guided by the Holy Spirit. This was shown by his preservation in the midst of a thousand perils, his sudden recovery from stoning, the earthquake at the Philippi prison, and many similar deliverances. Paul was supernaturally guided into Europe, there to plant Christianity in the most receptive soil. Paul was manifestly helped by God to win over powerful opponents, to speak effectively, and to compose the most eloquent and profoundly thoughtful religious treatises ever written. It is inconceivable that all this could spring from any source except the authentic Gospel story to which Paul credited it.

What is Paul's witness to Christ?

Paul's writings constitute the earliest testimony to the deity of Jesus Christ; and in convincing power they have never been excelled, except by the Gospel of John. Paul was a learned student of the Old Testament prophecies, and beheld them all fulfilled in Christ. He was familiar with the ancient sacrifices performed in the Temple, and he saw in Christ both the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world and the eternal High Priest, the divine Mediator between God and man. Paul beheld the truth of the atonement more clearly than any other New Testament writer, and has shown it in matchless beauty and power to the world. There is no phase of the deity of Jesus Christ that may not be illustrated from the writings of this convinced contemporary of Jesus' earthly life.

What is Paul's testimony as to the resurrection?

In the unquestioned Epistle to the Galatians Paul tells of his intercourse with Peter, James, and John, the three chief apostles. From them he would surely have learned about the resurrection of Christ. In another undoubtedly authentic Epistle, the first to the Corinthians,

Paul gives a list of the appearances of Christ after His resurrection. This list, made out on the best possible authority and before the Gospels were written, agrees substantially with the Gospel accounts, differing from them just enough to confirm our faith in it as an independent and genuine record. The testimony as to the resurrection was sufficient not only to convince Paul, who surely carried out his own advice to "prove all things," but also to make the resurrection the starting-point in Paul's preaching on theology, and the frequent themes of his letters. "If Christ hath not been raised," he wrote, "your faith is vain ; ye are yet in your sins. *But now hath Christ been raised from the dead*, the first fruits of them that are asleep."

What is Paul's testimony as to the Bible ?

It is strong and unfaltering in its belief that the Bible is divinely inspired. In Paul's last Epistle he writes to Timothy: "Every Scripture inspired of God [*i. e.*, "*being* inspired of God," as the Greek shows] is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction." He calls the Scriptures "the oracles of God." He uses the Scriptures (remember that he had only the Old Testament) in such a way as to show his belief in their

prophecies, and his reverence for their divine authority.

What conclusion is to be drawn from Paul's life and writings?

Christianity could not have found, among all the men that have ever lived, a more effective advocate than Paul, or one whose opinion regarding its truth deserves to carry greater weight. It is often charged, by infidels and the so-called "liberal" thinkers, that Paul even created Christian theology by his powerful writings. This is not true; every point in his theology is harmonious with the thought of the other New Testament writers. It is true, however, that Paul's masterly mind was used by the Holy Spirit to formulate the world's most complete and authoritative expression of theology; and it is a theology that is winning the world to Christ.

CHAPTER XVI

THE EVIDENCE OF THE MARTYRS AND THE EARLY CHURCH



WHAT is the evidence of the Christian martyrs?

First, the Christians were bitterly persecuted by the Jews in Palestine and elsewhere. Then, as the new religion spread to Rome, and the Christians refused to worship the emperors as gods and to support the heathen temples, the most bitter persecutions were inaugurated by the emperors. Nero burned Rome that he might rebuild it in marble, and laid the outrage at the doors of the innocent Christians. To ward off the anger of the people he burned the Christians alive in great numbers, and even carried his persecutions as far as Portugal. Emperor after emperor repeated the iniquity, the chief outbreaks of frenzied bigotry occurring in the reigns of Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, Decius, Valerian, Aurelian, and Diocletian,—three centuries of torture and bloodshed. All authorities admit the stanchness of the Christians in these trials,

though they had all things worldly to gain by a recantation. Men have been known to suffer torments for a superstition, but not through three long centuries. Every martyr, of all the hundreds of thousands that perished, is a new and convincing chapter of Christian evidences.

What is the evidence as to the character of the early Christians?

Pliny testifies to the ideals of honesty and purity which the Christians entertained. Lucian testifies to their despising worldly goods and holding all things in common. Julian testifies to the generosity and charitableness of the Christians. Aristides testifies to the reliability of the Christians, their reverence for parents, their freedom from idolatry, their soberness and piety. There is much more evidence of the kind, especially as to their firmness in resisting persecution and their fidelity to the faith—their “obstinacy,” as their enemies called it.

What progress was made by the church in the early centuries?

Tacitus, the Roman historian, states that Nero, in 64 A. D., tortured and killed “a great number” of Christians. In the time of Trajan, 111 A. D., the younger Pliny reported to the

emperor that there were so many Christians in his province of Pontus and Bithynia that the heathen altars were almost deserted and there was no market for the animals for sacrifice. This rapid progress continued, in spite of violent persecutions, until the great Roman emperor, Constantine, became a Christian, and, in 313 A. D., proclaimed toleration. Soon the old Greek and Latin heathenism vanished. As Rome conquered barbarian nations, like the Gauls, the Germans, and the English, they in turn adopted Christianity. This swift winning of the world so soon after the advent of Christianity, when the most thorough investigations were possible, strongly confirms its authenticity

How does the rapid progress of Christianity compare with that of other religions ?

The rapid spread of Mohammedanism was due to the license it gave to many attractive sins, and especially to its use of force, whole nations being subjugated by its armies, made reckless by the fatalistic teachings of Mohammed: "You will not die, though surrounded by a thousand perils, till your time has come to die; and then you will die, though you are in the midst of profound peace." Buddhism won its hold upon India because it was a great reform

movement, and offered a vast improvement upon the corrupt Hinduism that preceded it. Buddhism gained its opportunity in China and Japan by conforming to Confucianism and Shintoism, thus simply adding itself to them. But Christianity conquered the Roman Empire with none of these aids,—without yielding to the sinful desires and practices of heathenism, without the use of force, without entering national politics, and without conformity to idolatry and superstition.

How does the rite of baptism confirm Christianity?

Christian baptism was a new thing in the world. The Jews seem to have baptized the converts from paganism to Judaism. John the Baptist baptized Jews. Christian baptism is open to all, and always has been. It was established for all the world by our Lord's last words (Matt. 28 : 19, 20), and its maintenance in its original simplicity and catholicity is evidence of the continuity of our religion.

How does the ordinance of the Lord's Supper prove Christianity true?

It is to be traced through all the early centuries, partly in the accounts of Christian writers, partly in the sneers of the enemies of

Christianity, who declared that all sorts of horrible orgies were made a part of the ceremony. It was celebrated in the form prescribed in the New Testament, as it is to-day. It was observed usually very early in the morning, before daybreak, and often daily; always on Sunday. The permanence of this institution is a Christian evidence of no slight value.

How is the observance of Sunday an evidence of the truth of Christianity?

The change from the observance of the Jewish Sabbath or seventh day to the Christian Sabbath or first day was made gradually, at first the Christians observing both days. The day on which our Lord rose from the dead, however, finally came to supplant altogether the sad day when Christ lay in the grave. The Bible does not record the change in distinct terms, but indicates by several references to "the Lord's day," giving it as "the first day of the week," that the change was made, and by the authority and with the practice of the apostles. From that time on there is a chain of testimony to the observance of Sunday, reaching from the days of Paul and Luke (the Acts) through John (the Revelation), "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles"

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(A. D. 100), Bishop Ignatius (A. D. 110), Justin Martyr (A. D. 135), etc., to the Emperor Constantine, who in A. D. 321 forbade labor on Sunday. When we remember how ancient and revered an institution was the Jewish Sabbath, we see that a very real and very extraordinary cause must have operated to bring it into disuse and substitute another day for it. The Lord's Day is a standing proof of the truth of the Gospels.

What other Christian institutions have been continuous from the first century?

Deacons have existed from the establishment of the order soon after the ascension, and they still have the duties assigned them at first. All of the leading Christian denominations perpetuate important features of the primitive churches, to which they trace their histories,—the episcopacy, presbyters, the authority of the local congregations. Thus the divisions of Christendom have at least an evidential value.

What conclusion must we draw from all these facts?

That the Christian church is an institution with a continuous history from the days of its great Founder. That a large number of primi-

tive customs, ceremonies, offices, and terms have come down to us unchanged from apostolic times. That this institution immediately proved its power over the hearts and lives of men, and has continued to do so through all the centuries since. That this unique historical phenomenon is to be accounted for only by the explanation given in the New Testament. The living Church is a proof of the divine Life that established it.

CHAPTER XVII

THE EVIDENCE OF MODERN MISSIONS



O W do mission lands prove the falsity of other religions than Christianity?

Hinduism is no better than India, nor Mohammedanism than Turkey, nor Buddhism than Tibet, nor Confucianism than China. Philosophical lecturers may enunciate plausible doctrines and relate beautiful poetic fables from these religions, but the ugly facts of heathenism give the lie to their claims. These religions countenance human slavery, infanticide, the neglect of parents, the burning of widows. They are lustful and cruel. They breed superstitions the most grotesque. They foster the most bitter spirit of caste. They are stagnant, non-progressive. They are ignorant, conceited, exclusive. They rear the most selfish and greedy hierarchies. They are inhuman toward women and children, the weak and the aged. They are the ready tools of the ambitious and the powerful oppressors of the poor. And wherever they show anything bet-

ter than these characteristics it is because they have met the onrushing forces of Christianity, and have been forced by the instinct of self-preservation into the semblance of reform.

What does the introduction of Christianity do for a country?

What it has done and is doing for China. There it has elevated women so that schools for female education are springing up everywhere. It is doing away with footbinding. It is abolishing infanticide. It is replacing the foolish "education" of the olden times with modern schools and colleges. It is establishing newspapers. It is building railroads and telegraph and telephone lines. It is establishing post-offices. It is abolishing the use of opium. It is taking away the conceit of ignorance and isolation. It is founding a constitutional monarchy, with all the instrumentalities of representative government. It is driving out the barbarities of superstitious "medicine" and putting in its place the modern physician, surgeon, and hospital. It is caring for the blind, the poor, and the orphan. It is establishing just courts, humane punishments, and decent prisons. All of these wonderful changes that are going on before our eyes in the world's most populous empire are the direct fruit of

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Christianity. They are precisely like what Christianity has done and is doing in India, Burma, Siam, Japan, Korea, Persia, Turkey, Africa, the islands, and everywhere else where it has had a chance. And by its fruits ye shall know it.

How do missionaries regard the Bible?

They are men and women of the Book. They were made missionaries by imbibing its spirit and obeying its precepts. It is their missionary text-book, their constant comfort and inspiration. That picture of Walter Lowrie, calmly reading his Bible in the midst of an attack by Chinese pirates, and continuing to read it till they threw him into the sea, is a picture of all missionaries. And thus the first work of missions in all lands has been to translate the Bible into the native tongues, often into languages that have never before been reduced to writing, so that now the Bible exists in five hundred of the world's languages and dialects.

How does the Bible prove itself on mission fields?

A Chinese villager bought a Bible, and got to reading it. During the next three years, with no visit from a missionary or any other Christian teacher, the leaven spread until a

church was organized consisting of some of the leading citizens, and a surprised missionary was summoned to give his approval. This account could be duplicated over and over from missionary annals. Many a time merely a torn scrap of a Gospel has converted a soul. Bible colporters everywhere prove to be the best missionary agents. The sacred books of other religions do not possess this wonderful vitalizing and convincing power. That our Bible does possess it and continually exercise it is evidence of its unique character and its supernatural inspiration.

How do missionary experiences prove the truth of the Bible?

The Bible is full of special providences, proving God's care for His saints; so is missionary history. Read the accounts of the thousands of deliverances experienced by John G. Paton, by James Chalmers, by Moffat and Livingstone, by Allen Gardiner and Adoniram Judson, and by hundreds and thousands of the heroes of the cross besides, and you will find the experiences of the Bible characters duplicated over and over, and the Bible promises marvellously confirmed. To be sure, some of these missionaries became martyrs, when God's time arrived; but so did Paul and Peter and Christ

Himself. Even in their deaths they bore witness to the supernatural upholding of their religion.

How do the native Christians prove the truth of Christianity?

In the same way as the early martyrs. During the horrible massacres in Turkey in 1894-6 more than 40,000 Armenian Christians were slain, and tens of thousands more were tortured in all the inhuman ways the fiendish Turks and Kurds could devise. They bore it all rather than deny Christ. During the Boxer massacres in China in 1899-1900 fully 30,000 native Christians met a horrible death with the most sublime fortitude. In Madagascar, in 1835, the native Christians were slain with all imaginable cruelty,—by poison, by hurling from cliffs, by burning, stoning, boiling,—but when the missionaries came back, after a quarter of a century of these persecutions, they found four times as many Christians as they had left in the entire island. There is not a mission field, at home or abroad, that has not similar records of heroic fidelity. This is not to be compared to Moslem fanaticism, based upon ignorance and superstition, for Christian missionaries drive out superstition and establish schools wherever they go. There is only one

possible reason, and that is loyalty to divine truth, and to Him who was the Truth incarnate and remains the Living Truth forever.

How do the triumphs of modern missions prove the Bible?

In India, after long and disappointing work in the "Lone Star" Telugu mission, 2,222 tested native converts were baptized in a single day and 9,000 had been received by the end of six months. Such Pentecosts have come over and over, in Hawaii, in Africa, in China, in Japan, in Australia, in America, in England and Wales, to reward God's faithful witnesses. Missions have fittingly been called "the new Acts of the Apostles." The revivals in the home land and on the mission fields have worked genuine miracles of regeneration, transforming lives in such a way as to prove beyond question the presence of God in the Christian church. These are just such scenes as the Bible reports and just such results as it promises.

How does Christianity now rank with the other religions of the world?

There are about 500,000,000 Christians in the world—a number exceeding, and in most cases far exceeding, those of the other great religions.

Estimates of Buddhists range from 100,000,000 to 147,000,000. There are about 176,000,000 Mohammedans in the world, 256,000,000 Confucianists, 190,000,000 Hindus. But the true comparison is vastly more favorable to Christianity, for every one of the strongest, wealthiest, most progressive and influential of the nations is Christian. Of the only non-Christian nation counted among the great powers, Japan, it may truly be said that it was Christian missions that placed her there. All this is not, cannot be, accidental. There is a direct connection between national greatness and Christianity, and this connection is an evidence of the favor of God and the truth of our religion.

What is to be the future of Christianity?

There can be no doubt that Christianity is to become the one religion of the world. Christians now number one-third of the world's population, and govern one-third more, including four-fifths of the world's area. Through their wealth and political influence they virtually control much of the remainder. Christianity is spreading far more rapidly than any other religion. At its present rate of increase it is not at all too much to expect that the large majority of the world's population will become Christian during the present century.

What type of Christianity is thus rapidly increasing?

The type that I have been describing in these chapters. The so-called "liberal" sects that do not believe in the Bible except as they believe in Emerson and Carlyle, that scout the supernatural and hold Christ to be only such a sage as Socrates and such a reformer as Buddha—these are not missionary churches, and their numbers are not increasing. The great missionary ingatherings, the winning of "nations in a day," are made by the churches that revere the Bible as the supernaturally inspired and unique Word of God, and worship Christ as a manifestation of God in the flesh, the atoning Saviour of all mankind.

What is the conclusion of this argument from missions?

The Bible is by far the most popular book in the world. More than ten million copies are sold every year. The Christian church is by far the most popular and successful and beloved institution in the world. No other institution can command such loyalty, such service, such resources in men and money. Christianity, backed by the best brains and truest hearts of men, will continue in its triumphant course till

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it has won all the world to its banner. And this would be true even if every Christian now in the world should suddenly die, because there would still remain the two great agencies of our religion, the inspired Scriptures, and the inspiring, convicting, converting Spirit of the Living God.

CHAPTER XVIII

WHY EVERY BELIEVER IN CHRIST SHOULD JOIN THE CHURCH



THESE studies have set forth the teachings of the Bible about Christ, and have shown why we should believe them. What does Christ expect of those that believe in Him?

That they will confess His name before men. One of the most solemn of Christ's utterances is: "Every one who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 10 : 32, 33).

What if a non-confessor should say, "Though I am not confessing Christ, at least I am not denying Him"?

Such a man would be deluding himself. Christ considers a failure to confess Him as equivalent to a denial of Him; as He Himself said, "He that is not with me is against me" (Matt. 12 : 30). In time of war, whoever re-

fuses open allegiance to his country is rightly counted among her enemies ; and the world is the scene of a gigantic war between Christ and the forces of evil. Even in time of peace, those that withhold their votes from a party virtually vote against it. Look around you at the men who are not openly confessing Christ ; do not you, and all others, regard them as denying Christ ?

What is meant by " confessing Christ " ?

Two things : (1) a definite, public statement of faith in Christ as your Saviour and Lord and a promise to serve Him ; (2) a life of trusting, glad, and faithful obedience to Christ's commands. These involve joining some branch of Christ's church.

*Why do they involve joining the church ?
Cannot one be a confessing Christian outside the church ?*

It is hard to see how one could. Will he call together a town meeting to hear his statement of belief in Christ and promise to serve Him ? Will he print the statement in the town paper ? What more simple and natural and effective way of confessing Christ before men could one devise for himself than the way already devised, the quiet, modest, humble statement made at

one of the regular assemblies of Christian believers? As a matter of fact, do those that talk about the possibility of being a Christian outside the church ever make a public profession of allegiance to Christ?

And as to the second half of the Christian confession, the steady service of Christ, our Lord showed in all His life and activity that He wishes His followers to live and work in close coöperation. What could an out-of-the-church Christian devise to take the place of the church prayer-meeting, the Sunday-school, the Sunday worship, the young people's societies, the offerings, the church committees with their many activities, the mission boards, the hundreds of blessed outgrowths of the corporate life of the church and denomination? If he joins in these activities, he is meanly taking advantage of the church after all, though he will not support it by his membership and by sharing the responsibilities of its conduct. If he remains isolated, his solitary service is lame and ineffective at every point.

What if there are points in the church creed that you do not understand?

Make sure that those points *are* in the church creed. Most creeds are exceedingly simple, and the points that puzzle you are very likely

in the theology taught in the divinity schools rather than in the brief statement made by those that join the church.

If, however, there is such a knotty point in the creed of the church of your choice, set yourself at work to untangle the knot. Get the best help you can. Your minister will be glad to throw light on the question; so will many other wise men. Pray over it. Read helpful books. Above all, read your Bible. You will not long remain in doubt, if you set about your study with all your heart.

What if one objects to some feature of a church creed?

If, after study of a creed, you feel that you understand it but still disagree with some important point in it, state your disagreement frankly to the pastor, and, if he thinks wise, to the church examining committee. They may assure you that your objections do not constitute a valid reason for your remaining out of the church, and may be willing so to arrange the reception service (by vote of the church) that you can join without doing violence to your conscience in the least. If this is not feasible, there are many other denominations, so many that every one can find a church embodying his beliefs.

Believers Should Join the Church 161

What if one feels that one is not good enough to join the church?

That is the most absurd and deceptive of pleas! Every one knows, or ought to know, that Christ's church is made up of those that confess themselves to be sinners, weak and helpless, needing at every step the companionship of their Teacher, the aid of their Comforter, the merciful pardon of their Saviour. It is those that remain out of the church that virtually say: "We are strong enough to stand alone. We are good enough not to need a Saviour. We are able to live rightly without the inspiration and fellowship of a church."

What if one is afraid of becoming a discredit to the church?

If the church and Christ are ready to take that risk, that is their affair, and not yours! Our Lord accepted Peter among the Twelve though He knew that Peter would deny Him, because He knew also that Peter had rock-material in him. You may be a poor Republican, but you join the Republican party. You may not pass in your examinations, but you enter college. You may not make the best of husbands or wives, but you get married. In every relation of life you perceive that the only possible progress is made by accepting alliances

with the honest purpose to be true to them, even though there is an attendant possibility of failure. Is not this the sensible course with regard to the church ?

What if one looks at the poor characters of some church-members, and says that he does not wish to be classed with such persons, and can certainly be better outside the church than they are in it ?

You are not joining tricky Mr. A. or slanderous Mrs. B. when you join the church : you are joining Christ. If Christ bade His church take care lest in uprooting the tares they uproot also the wheat, and advised that often it is best to let the two grow together till the harvest, that is Christ's affair, and not yours. The persons you dislike might be far worse than they are if they were outside the church ; or, it may be the church's duty to cast them out. In any case, you are not mending matters by staying outside the church, merely criticising church-members, while all the time you are shirking your own imperative duty.

What if one feels that he is not wanted in the church ?

You are wanted by Christ, and it is His

church! You are probably wronging the church, and mistaking the coldness of a few for the apathy of the whole. However that may be, it has nothing to do with the matter. Joining the church is a solemn transaction that concerns you and your Lord alone. You know that He wants you to confess Him before men. Do not allow the faithlessness of any man or of all men to make you faithless to Christ. One of the reasons why He wants you in His church may well be to create in it a different atmosphere.

What if no one speaks to you about it?

Then speak to some one about it! But as a matter of fact, Some One has spoken to you about it, and the most important One, the only One worth your waiting for, the great Head of the Church Himself.

What if you feel that you cannot afford to pay your share of the church expenses and make contributions to the many church organizations and enterprises?

Church-membership imposes upon you absolutely no obligation, financial or otherwise, that is not yours just as much outside the church as in it. God, who gave you all you

possess, has a right to control the use of it all. You are just as much bound now to pay your share of the expenses attending all good enterprises as you would be if you joined the church. The church will acquaint you with many causes that need your help, and will continually spur your conscience in the matter of giving; but your conscience and your money and your duty will all be in your own hands, just as they are now. What you cannot afford is to be untrue to them.

What if one is too timid to join the church?

Do you know what joining the church meant in the early days, and what it still means on many missions fields? Think of the loss of friends and possessions, the sneers and taunts, the imprisonments and tortures, the loneliness and exile, the sickness and death! And you are afraid to meet a dozen sympathizing, friendly, cordial church officers and tell them of your love for Christ; and then afraid to stand up before one or two hundred of your neighbors and friends and in that loving and glad presence simply bow your head in affirmation of the church vows! Is this your return for Christ's agonies upon the cross? Can you not crucify your baseless fears, for His dear sake?

Believers Should Join the Church 165

What if you intend to join the church, but wish to wait for some one else?

Do not do it! That person may be waiting for you. At any rate, you are keeping Christ waiting, which is more to be considered than the companionship in this step of any one on earth. Your influence over your friend will count far more for Christ if you are in Christ's church than if you remain out of it. You will also have the help of your fellow church-members in winning your friend, together with the all-powerful aid of the Holy Spirit, who cannot help you until you begin a life of sincere obedience.

What if one intends to join the church at some time, but not just now?

Brother! Sister! This night thy soul may be required of thee! Now is always the only accepted time; now is always the only day of salvation. You will never be readier to hear Christ's voice than to-day. Every day's delay will harden your heart to His loving appeal. Every day's delay means twenty-four hours more of duty neglected, twenty-four hours less of privilege enjoyed. With the certainty of death, the possibility that death may be at hand, and the perfect knowledge that your

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Saviour wishes you to confess Him at once, can you afford to put it off a single hour?

What if one is too old, and has put it off too long?

You have not put it off longer than the thief on the cross! You have not put it off longer than the eleventh-hour laborer! And remember that the thief reached Paradise as soon as Christ did, and the eleventh-hour laborer was paid as much as the first-hour laborer. If you are old, there is every reason why you should confess Christ at once: you have all that back time to make up! There is never a "too long" on Christ's side, but there may be on yours. Oh, yield to Christ what remains of your life, and seek to pack it fuller of loving service than a few years ever were packed before!

What if one is young, and feels that there is plenty of time yet?

You do not know that there is plenty of time yet. You do not know that there is a single day. You can easily recall some young companion who also thought that there was plenty of time, but was suddenly summoned to the presence of his neglected Saviour. And even if you were sure of a long life, is it not contemptible in the extreme, while Christ has

given His life for you and is daily loading you with blessings, to be willing to dedicate to Him only the latter portion of your life, only the sere and yellow leaf?

What, after all, is the one decisive reason for joining the church?

That Christ wants you to! You cannot get away from this reason. You may think up dozens of objections, these I have answered and a lot more that I have not been able to guess; and my answers may not satisfy you. But every objection is perfectly met by the one great truth that your divine Lord, your living Saviour, wants you to confess Him before men and join His working brotherhood of believers. You know that this is true. You know that every day's delay is a grief to His loving heart. You know that if only a tenth part of the arguments in these chapters are true, Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and your only Saviour. Will you not at this very moment, while you are reading these words, say to Him in your heart of hearts that you trust Him, you love Him, you place your life in His hands, and will own Him and serve Him before all men and through all ages? God grant it. Amen.

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