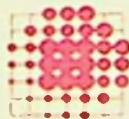


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# EARNEST WORDS FOR HONEST SCEPTICS.

Church of God General Conference, McEwen, Pa. <http://www.cogsworld.org>

EARNEST WORDS  
FOR  
HONEST SCEPTICS.

BY

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'144 Self-contradictions of the Bible.'"*

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## P R E F A C E.



WE herewith present a few thoughts for the consideration of those who, having become unsettled in faith, are willing to read both sides of a question, feeling that truth has nothing to fear from investigation.

As our title indicates, we have written only for the *honest* sceptic; and we are glad to believe that there are many such. We neither seek nor hope to reach *wilful* unbelievers; such as refuse to look and live, as are joined to their idols, we can only let alone. But, we repeat, there are honest and noble-hearted souls who have been driven afar from God's Word by theories which they have been taught, and which they have come to suppose, that it advocates,—it is to these we have tried to present in the following pages, in briefest manner, a few of the arguments in favour of Christianity.

It would be impossible within the limits of such a work to cover one-half the ground of this all-important theme, even if we possessed the ability

to do so: we have not attempted it. There are already in existence many bulky works on this subject, containing elaborate arguments. But our desire in writing this book has been, to present to the honest mind, in behalf of truth, a few thoughts that may be quickly read and easily considered.

We are indebted to Thayer Patterson and others for suggestions, and references to Historical authorities, for which we return hearty thanks.

With the earnest hope and prayer that this little work may shed light into some doubting desolate heart, it is committed to the public by

Church of God General Conference: McDonough, GA, <https://coggc.org/>

THE AUTHOR.

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# Earnest Words for Honest Sceptics.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE ORIGIN OF THE BIBLE.

OPPOSITION TO IT MORE FREQUENTLY BASED UPON SUPPOSITION, THAN KNOWLEDGE OF ITS TEACHINGS.—CREDULITY OF SCEPTICS UPON OTHER THEMES.—IF IT IS NOT GOD'S WORD, ITS EXISTENCE CANNOT BE ACCOUNTED FOR.—ANTIQUITY OF THE BOOK.—REASON FOR THE ZEAL OF EARLY CHRISTIANS.



**THAT** there are those who honestly reject the Bible as a revelation from Heaven is undoubtedly true, and this is the class that we invite to a closer examination of the sacred oracles.

It would appear inconsistent with the dignity of man and the object of religion to argue that men are forced to believe that which in no way harmonizes with their convictions. But we know that the array of evidence in behalf of the Scriptures is overwhelming. We believe that any man who will candidly investigate its claims will award to the Bible the position it assumes. It does not claim to be a teacher of science; but when we can demonstrate a scientific truth, we always find that it conflicts in no way with Revelation.

It does not claim to be a charm or an amulet, which by its mere presence accomplishes its purpose. Carried in a man's pocket to the field of battle, it will no more avert a ball than any other book of the same size. Neither the paper, ink, nor type used in its manufacture are sacred. But it claims to be a revelation from God to His creatures, leading them from the wilderness of sin and the death-state into a kingdom of purity and the glad sunshine of eternal life. In order that its object may be effected, it must be carefully *studied*, its laws obeyed, and its principles of truth and righteousness engraven upon the hearts and acted out in the *lives* of men. Much of the opposition to God's word arises from the *wrong interpretation* that men have placed upon it, rather than from any fault that can be found with its teachings. Theories have been originated and promulgated *outside* of the Book for which it has been held responsible.

Its meaning has been perverted and its language misapplied a thousand times; but the Bible is no more to blame for this than is the Constitution of the United States for the absurd statements of opposing politicians. Neither is it responsible for the bigotry and fanaticism that sometimes obtain among those who profess to be guided by it. These are the outgrowths of human frailty and of peculiar temperaments. They are not, and cannot be, the result of the study of this book, which appeals so directly to man's reason and conscience. Hence justice requires that its claims may be decided upon its *own merits*, independent of creeds, fanatics, or bigots.

We have often noticed the credulity of sceptics upon other things. There is no theory of science or philosophy, however wild or fanciful it may be, that is not quickly indorsed by many of them, especially if it seems in any way to contradict God's word. But we do not appeal to their credulity; we do not ask them to take anything for granted, or to believe without positive evidence. The friends of the Bible ask no favours. We do not shrink from any investigation, however close it may be. We have not fastened our faith upon an anchor that has no moorings. Our hope of a future life is not a myth to be swept away by the hand of worldly wisdom, or covered with the webs of a false philosophy. The existence of a supreme Being is almost universally acknowledged. Men may call Him by whatever name they will, but they must admit that there is a Power which has created the universe and placed man upon the earth. This being the case, it is reasonable to suppose that such a Creator should make some revelation of Himself,—should give to man some idea of His will concerning him. It is also evident that man *needs* such a revelation. He needs a law higher than that of his own nature. He needs some rule of guidance that he himself cannot furnish. We claim that the Bible supplies that want, and was given to man for that purpose.

If this is not God's word, given to man for his elevation and redemption, its very existence can never be satisfactorily accounted for.

It has been charged that it is the work of design-

ing priests; but if this be true, why is priestcraft so untiring in its efforts to keep it from the people? It must be admitted, that in proportion as it has been received and studied by the masses, bigotry has fallen, and freedom of thought and of conscience has obtained. The Bible is one united voice against priestly arrogance; and strange indeed it is if they have written out their own condemnation and given it to the world, knowing that their overthrow and shame must result from its warnings.

During the storm of persecution that swept over England in the reign of Henry VIII.,—when such men as Hilton, Potmore, and Bayfield were cast into prison or burned at the stake; when all the Testaments that could be found in the kingdom were collected and carried to St. Paul's churchyard, where they were publicly burned, the spectators retired from the scene, declaring one to another that "*the teaching of the priests and of the Scriptures must be in contradiction to each other, since the priests destroy them.*" Thus the flames of persecution flashed the light of truth into the hearts and homes of the people. It is evident, then, that the Bible is not the work of priests,—it cannot be the work of fools or fanatics; and the question comes home to us,—Who wrote the books of the Bible? The book is a great fact in the world's history, known alike to the great and the lowly, to the scientist and the unlearned labourer. Its fame is universal; and here, in the New World, afar from the home of its birth, its influence is as powerful as in its native soil. It has been translated into more than a hundred languages,

and carried to every corner of the globe. What other book has ever been so generally read, so much loved, or so widely circulated? What other book has ever exerted such an influence upon men as to transform those who are dishonest and vile into characters of purity and truth? Even the sceptic is constrained to inquire, What manner of book is this, that even the winds and waves of human passion obey its voice?

If the books of the Bible were not written by their professed authors, they are the boldest and greatest forgeries that the world ever saw. \*

They did not pre-exist, they were written in the midst of contemporaries, and if they were forgeries they must have been detected then.

The antiquity of the book is established beyond a doubt. It is older than the art of printing; for it was the first book printed. Copies of it exist, even now, that were written long before the dark ages. Celsus wrote the first book that ever assailed Christianity, about the year 176; and in that work he *quotes from or refers to* about eighty passages in the New Testament, and also says, "It is but recently, as it were yesterday, since we punished Christ"; and further,

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\* Porphyry declared, that the predictions of the prophets, up to a certain date, had been so exactly fulfilled that *they must have been written after the events took place*; and took the position that all which had not *then* been fulfilled were *false predictions*. Whatever comfort this idea *might* have afforded modern infidels, has been demolished by the *literal fulfilment* of many of Daniel's prophecies *since* Porphyry's day. Thus primitive sceptics unconsciously left their testimony to the infallibility of Divine revelation.



“It is but a few years since He delivered this doctrine who is reckoned by the Christians to be the Son of God.”

Matthew, Mark, and Luke wrote the books that bear their names, surrounded by a generation of eye witnesses to the facts which they record. Would they write such a startling narrative as the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ in the face of that generation, if it were not true? Would the early Christians attach themselves to a myth and follow it faithfully, forsaking all else? If by so doing they could win power, fame, or gold, it might not be surprising; but will any body of people attach themselves to a system which they *know* to be false, and follow a man whom they *know* to be an impostor, when their only reward is poverty and disgrace? Men and women do not embrace a principle which they *know* to be false, when their devotion to it must lead through years of trial and suffering, and perhaps terminate in martyrdom.

One man or one woman might be a monomaniac, but not a whole people. Neither was it one class of people alone, but all classes and grades, from the simple-hearted fishermen of Galilee to the learned and eloquent Paul who was educated in the deepest lore of polished Athens. It is useless to claim that the early Christians were deceived; for under the then existing circumstances this was *impossible*. They *knew* in whom they believed. They witnessed the miracles of Jesus; they saw Him crucified and laid away in the tomb; they saw the Roman seal placed upon the sepulchre, and the Roman guard stationed around it.

Some of them saw the angels that had broken the tomb on the morning of the third day. They saw their risen Lord, and *knew* Him as we should know any dear friend who had been absent from us only three days; they saw Him and heard His voice; they felt His hands and wounded side; they ate and drank and conversed with Him for forty days after His resurrection; they saw Him received into the heavens out of their sight, and heard the voice of the angels deliver the promise that He should come again in like manner.

When we consider that these things were all *definitely foretold* in the books of the prophets, written so long before, we cannot wonder that the early Christians could hold their faith through floods of persecution, and follow their Lord even to martyrdom. The word has been confirmed by miracles; and when a witness has solemnly testified to the truth of his statement, no judge requires that he shall keep the stand and constantly testify to the same thing. The dispensation of miracles has closed, and the Book is left apparently alone in the world to fight its own battles with unbelief. But "He who seeth the end from the beginning" has decreed, that His people shall never be deprived of His written word until faith is swallowed up in victory. For ages it has been exposed to the fire of the keenest investigation,—a fire which has consumed with contempt the mythology of Homer, the fables of the Shaster and the Koran, besides many a popular theory of science and philosophy. More than this, its enemies have waged a physical war against it,—priests have burned it, and rulers destroyed it;

while its believers were driven by fire and sword to the dens and caves of the earth for protection.

The years have passed on with measured tread, and of its enemies one generation after another has fallen into the dust. Malice and bigotry have combined their forces to wrest from its orbit the only star whose light flashes across the ocean of eternity. Kingdoms have fallen and thrones have crumbled; kings have perished and crowns been crushed; but still *the Old Book lives on*, with its undying principles of truth and righteousness,—with the unabated hope and trust that it brings to the heart of man. Strange that it could not be crowded out of existence during the wars and revolutions of eighteen centuries. Kings and priests, popes and princes, have united their power in vain; we have still the “Pillar of Cloud by day” leading God’s little ones through the wilderness of time. And when the night of persecution closes around us, its promises gleam more brightly in the darkness, until it becomes the “Pillar of Fire,” whose guiding cannot be mistaken; and so shall it continue until our weary feet shall reach the land of promised rest.





## CHAPTER II.

### SACRED BOOKS OF OTHER NATIONS.

THE ZENDAVESTA.—THE KORAN.—THE TALMUD AND TARGUMS.  
—THE VEDAS AND SHASTERS.



It has been claimed that the Zendavesta of the Persians, the Koran of Mohammed, the Talmud and Targums of the Jews, and the Vedas and Shasters of the Hindoo are as worthy of credence, and teach as high a morality as the books of the Bible.

There is a class of minds that seem prepared to indorse that which is afar off and little known; but we are convinced that if the public were more familiar with these so-called revelations, that such reckless comparisons would seldom or never be made. Of these, the most obscure and the least known is the Zendavesta of the Geubers, or fire-worshippers, among the Persians.

It appears from history, that during the long servitude of Persia under the Macedonian and Parthian yoke, the religion of the Parsees, or Guebers, had become partially confounded with that of other nations. The language of the Zendavesta was so obscure that even the magi, or priests, could not understand its requirements or doctrines.

Artaxerxes finally summoned the magi from all parts of his dominion to a common meeting or synod, that they might decide upon what the articles of faith were which had been promulgated by Zoroaster in the pages of the Zendavesta. They came together in such numbers that their debates could be productive only of confusion; therefore the synod was reduced by successive operations to seven magi the most respected for their learning and piety.

One of these, Erdraviraph, a young prelate, received from the hands of his brethren *three cups* of soporiferous wine. He drank them off, and instantly fell into a long and profound sleep. As soon as he awoke, he related to the king and the believing multitude his journey to heaven and his intimate conference with the Deity. *Every doubt was silenced by this supernatural evidence, and the articles of the faith of Zoroaster were fixed with equal authority and precision.\**

What would the sceptic say, and *justly too*, if the authenticity of the Christian Scriptures rested upon the dream of a man in a drunken stupor?

The first and original Being in whom or by whom the universe exists, is denominated, in the writings of Zoroaster, "Time without Bounds"; but, says Gibbon, "It must be confessed that this infinite substance seems rather a *metaphysical abstraction* of mind than a real object endowed with *self-consciousness* or possessed of *moral perfections*. From either the blind or

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\* Hyde de Religione veterum Pers., c. 21.

the intelligent operation of this infinite time, which bears but too near an affinity with the chaos of the Greeks, two secondary but active principles were from all eternity produced. These were Ormusd, or Yazdan, the principle of good; and Ahriman, the principle or angel of evil. The wise benevolence of Ormusd formed man capable of virtue, and provided abundantly for his happiness; but the malice of Ahriman has long since pierced *Ormusd's egg*, or violated the harmony of his works; hence the presence of good and evil. Ahriman was represented by darkness, and Ormusd by light; hence they worshipped light. Says Herodotus: 'They adore the sun, the moon, earth, fire, water, and winds, which may be termed their original deities. They so venerated the rivers, that no one was allowed to spit in them, or wash his hands in their waves.' "

The saint, in the Magian religion, is obliged to beget children, to plant useful trees, to destroy noxious animals, to convey water to the dry lands of Persia, and to work out his salvation by pursuing the labours of agriculture. Says Gibbon, the infidel historian, "We may quote from the Zendavesta a wise and benevolent maxim which compensates for *many an absurdity*: "He who sows the ground with diligence and care, acquires a greater stock of religious merit than he could gain by the repetition of ten thousand prayers."

According to the historian, the fact that it recommends the people to agriculture is the greatest merit of the Zendavesta. Where, we would ask in

all candour, is there any word of inspiration in these doctrines or precepts? Where is there any principle or motive power for the elevation of man? The supreme god of the Persians is described as a "metaphysical abstraction nearly approaching to the chaos of the Greeks." The God of the Bible holdeth the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meteth out heaven with a span. He is the one supreme and ever-present Intelligence of the universe, who sways earth's nations as He will, and breaks through kings in the day of His power.

#### THE KORAN.

"There is one God, and Mahomet is His prophet." This is the central idea of the Koran, and was the war-cry of the faithful. Mahomet, by his birth and family connections, had every possible advantage to aid him in enforcing his claims. He was a member (grandson) of the most powerful family in Mecca, where he commenced his career. His wife's uncle was one of the most prominent persons in the place. His cousin was the celebrated caliph and the Abu Becr the first of the Koreish in wealth and influence. The prophet was also connected with five other prominent families of Mecca. As soon as he had made proselytes enough to form a military band, he enforced his faith at the point of the sword; so that wherever the banner of the crescent moved, the number of his followers was rapidly increased. His soldiers fought not only with valour but desperation, for "the sword," says Mahomet, "is the key of heaven and of hell; a drop of blood shed

in the cause of God, a night spent in arms, is of more avail than two months of fasting or prayer; whosoever falls in battle, his sins are forgiven; at the day of judgment his wounds shall be resplendent as vermillion, and odoriferous as musk; and the loss of his limbs shall be supplied by the wings of angels and cherubim."

The Moslems believed, or affirmed, that trees went forth to meet the prophet, that he was saluted by the stones, that water gushed from his fingers, that a beam groaned to him, and that a shoulder of mutton informed him of its being poisoned. They claimed that his resistless sword split asunder the orb of the moon; the obedient planet stooped from her station in the sky, accomplished the seven revolutions around the Caaba, saluted Mahomet in the Arabian tongue, and suddenly contracting her dimensions, entered at the collar and issued forth through the sleeve of his shirt.\*

In reference to the destiny of man, they believed that when a corpse is laid in the grave he was received by an angel, who gave him notice of the coming of two examiners, black livid angels of terrible appearance, named Manker and Nakir. These order the dead man to sit upright, and then examine him concerning his faith in the unity of God and the mission of Mahomet. If he answer rightly, they suffer the body to rest in peace; but if not, they beat him on the temples with iron maces till he roars

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\* See Gibbon, vol. v., pp. 112, 113.



out for anguish so loud that he is heard by all from east to west, *except* men and genii. Then they press the earth on the corpse, which is gnawed and stung until the resurrection by ninety-nine dragons with seven heads each. On the day of judgment they will come forth in different shapes according to their deserts. Some will appear in the form of apes, others in the shape of swine; some will appear with their heads reversed and their feet distorted; others, deaf and dumb and blind; some will gnaw their tongues, which will hang out of their mouths like dogs; and others will smell more than corrupted meat. In these respective shapes they are to be turned into hell, where their torments are graphically described as the most terrible the imagination can conceive. The "faithful," on the contrary, when they come forth from the sepulchres, shall find ready prepared for them white-winged camels, with saddles of gold.

The first entertainment of the blessed on their admission to paradise will be a grand banquet. The bread will be a loaf as large as the whole earth, which God will reach to them with His hand; for meat they will have the ox Balom and the fish Nun, the lobes of whose livers will suffice seventy thousand men; and, to quote the exact language of the Koran, "The flesh of birds of the kind which they shall desire, and with fruits of the sorts which they shall choose. And there shall accompany them fair damsels, having large black eyes resembling pearls hidden in their shells. Youths, which shall continue in their bloom for ever, shall go around to attend them, with goblets and beakers

and cups of flowing wine; their heads shall not ache, nor their reason be disturbed by drinking the same." \*

The very meanest in paradise will have eighty thousand servants, seventy-two wives of the girls of paradise, and a tent erected for him of pearls, jacinths, and emeralds, of a very large extent. The magnificence of the garments and furniture promised by the Koran accords with their diet. They are to be clad in the richest silks and brocades, chiefly of green, which will burst forth from the fruits of paradise, and will also be supplied by the leaves of the tree Tuba. They will use silken carpets, and their beds will be piles of green velvet embroidered with gold. These descriptions are almost endless, and sometimes contradictory; but all inconvenience in this respect is obviated by the statement that, where one passage contradicts another, we are always to believe the last. Says Gibbon: "The European infidel will peruse with impatience the *endless incoherent rhapsody* of fable and precept and declamation, which seldom excites a sentiment or an idea,—which sometimes crawls in the dust, and is sometimes lost in the clouds. The divine attributes exalt the fancy of the Arabian 'missionary'; but his loftiest strains must yield to the sublime simplicity of the book of Job, composed in a remote age, in the same country, and in the same language."

This is the voluntary comment of the infidel his-

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\* Al Koran, chap. lvi., revealed at Mecca.

torian ; and we believe that every honest sceptic will indorse his opinion.

#### THE TALMUDS AND TARGUMS.

The Jewish Targums are simply translations of the books of the Old Testament into the Chaldee tongue, accompanied by such notes and explanations as the rabbis thought proper to add.

After the ancient Hebrew ceased to be a living language, when the law was publicly read, the priests and Levites were obliged to adopt some expedient in order to make it intelligible ; hence it is probable that they kept up a running paraphrase in the Chaldee tongue. At first these were given orally, but subsequently they were reduced to writing.

The word Targum is derived from a quadrilateral root, and signifies *interpretation*, or *version*.

At present we know of eleven, three of which comprehend the five books of Moses. 1. The Targum of Onkelos. 2. That of the pseudo Jonathan. 3. The Jerusalem Targum. 4. That of Jonathan Ben Uzziel on the Prophets. 5. That of Joseph on the Hagiographa (Job, Psalms, and Proverbs). 6. A Targum on the five Megilloth, viz., the books of Ruth, Esther, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, and Jeremiah. 7. A Targum on first and second Chronicles. 8, 9, and 10. Three on the book of Esther. 11. The Jerusalem Targum on the Prophets.

The Talmuds are two in number : the Mishna, and the Gemara. These are the works which embody the civil and canonical law of the Jewish people. Whatever

is obligatory on them besides the law is recorded in this work. Hence the contents of the Talmud are of a diversified character, relating not merely to religion, but to philosophy, medicine, history, jurisprudence, and the various branches of practical duty. The Jews have been accustomed to divide their law into *written* and *unwritten*: the former being contained in the five books of Moses; the latter having been handed down orally, until circumstances compelled them to commit it to writing. They contain the Jewish *traditions*, and some of the Jews set a value on them above that of the law; hence we find in the *Massaceth Sopherim* the saying: "The Biblical text is like water, and the Mishna like wine." Again, "The words of the scribes are lovely above the words of the law." This language is that of a Jewish infidel, and corresponds perfectly with the words of Jesus: "*Making the word of God of none effect through their traditions.*" Mark vii. 13.

The Talmud is a fine illustration of the success men have when they depart from the word of God and undertake to make a law unto themselves. It abounds with miraculous stories and with sentiments derogatory to the majesty of God. Some of the questions proposed are only ludicrous, but others are profane and impious. The following extracts will justify our remarks: "A rabbin was once in the midst of the ocean, and seeing a bird standing up to its thighs in the water, he said to his companions, 'We will bathe here.' But a voice from heaven said, 'Do not so; for seven years ago a person let an axe fall from his hand

into this water, and it has not yet reached the deep bottom.' ”

Again, “Is it right to kill a flea on the Sabbath?”

“We were once carried,” says a rabbin, “in a great ship, and the ship went three days and three nights between the two fins, of one fish. But perhaps the ship sailed very slowly. The rabbi Demi says, A rider shot an arrow, and the ship flew faster than the arrow, and yet it took so long time to pass between the two fins of this fish.”

#### THE SHASTERS AND VEDAS.

These are the sacred books of the Hindoos. The Shasters discourse learnedly of the creation of all things by their supreme being, called Brahm. As the process may prove interesting to those who so highly esteem the Shaster, we will briefly describe it. It appears that Brahm produced an egg in which the elementary principles of creation might be deposited and nurtured into maturity; after which (we quote): “All the primary atoms, qualities, and principles—the seeds of future worlds—that had been evolved from the substance of Brahm, were now collected together and deposited in the newly produced egg. And into it, along with them, entered the self-existent himself, under the assumed form of Brahma; and then he sat vivifying, expanding, and combining the elements, during four thousand three hundred millions of solar years! During this amazing period the wondrous egg floated like a bubble on the water, increasing constantly in size. At length the supreme,

who dwelt therein, burst the shell of the stupendous egg and issued forth under a new form, with a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, and a thousand arms. Along with him issued another form, huge and measureless, which speedily matured into the present glorious universe." The incoherencies and ludicrous statements of these writings are almost interminable; those who are interested will find an account of them in the pages of Duff's *India*.

The term Veda is a generic name for their four oldest sacred books, viz., Rig, Yajust, Saman, and Atharvan, which were considered as being directly revealed by Brahma. These are divided into four parts or vedas. By a certain class of infidels in both Europe and America they have been appealed to as standard works of undoubted authority. Many who declared that the Bible was too unreasonable to believe, have endorsed the Vedas *without ever having read a single word of them*. These veracious chronicles claim to reach back through *maha yugs* of 4,320,000 years of mortals. A thousand of these *maha yugs*, or 4,320,000,000 of years, make a *kalpa*, or one day of the life of Brahma, while his night is of the same duration; and his life consists of a hundred such days and nights. Among the facts (?) recorded by these books, are the records of seven great continents of the world, separated by seven rivers and seven chains of mountains four hundred thousand miles high (reaching only to the moon). Of their kings one had a hundred sons, another ten thousand, another sixty thousand, who were born in a pumpkin, nourished in pans of milk,

reduced to ashes by the curse of a sage, and restored to life by the waters of the Ganges. The moon, they tell us, is fifty thousand leagues higher than the sun; it shines by its own light, and animates our body. The night is formed by the descent of the sun behind the Someyra mountains, situated in the middle of the globe, and many thousand miles high. Our earth is asserted to be flat and triangular, composed of seven storeys, each of which has its own degree of beauty, its inhabitants, and its sea. The first storey is made of *honey*, the second is of *sugar*, the third of *butter*, the fourth of *wine*; and the whole mass is carried upon the heads of innumerable elephants, which in shaking themselves cause the earthquakes. Among the boasted astronomical discoveries which *confirm* these extraordinary "*facts*," we find accounts of deluges, in which the waters not only rose above the tops of earth's mountains, but above the seven inferior and three superior worlds, *reaching even to the Polar star*.

We leave these "facts" with scientific sceptics, who are respectfully requested to reconcile the Shasters and Vedas with "nature, science, and reason," before they again declare that these books are more worthy of respect than the writings of the prophets and apostles.

In view of the foregoing extracts from the so-called sacred books, is it possible for any one to maintain for a moment their equality with the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures? The most charitable conclusion that we can come to in reference to those who make

these absurd comparisons, is, that they are entirely ignorant of the contents of the books they eulogize; and perhaps it would be only just to infer that their knowledge of the Scriptures is but little more extensive. Every one who has examined these so-called sacred books, has found their conceptions of a God, of human responsibility, and of a future state, to be the most vague and unsatisfactory. Whether we investigate their intrinsic merits or the result of their influence, the conclusion is alike unmistakable, that they have no power to elevate or to civilize mankind.

The Persians have held their Zendavesta from generation to generation, and what has it done for them? They are to-day enveloped in the same dark cloud of superstition that settled around them ages ago.

The warlike spirit of the Mohammedans pushed their conquests in triumph, until they had filled the programme marked out for them by John the Revelator; and their history is the exact fulfilment of Rev. ix. 1-11. From A.D. 781 to 805 they enjoyed a brilliant success. But decay was then written upon their banners; and since that date we find the terrible power of the Saracens rapidly declining. At length, in the year 841, the reigning Caliph hired a band of 50,000 Turcomans from beyond the Oxus, to be the support of the Caliphate at Bagdad; but these revolted against, insulted, humiliated, and deposed the Caliph, and became a powerful accelerating cause of their sovereign's downfall.

The Mosque of Omar still stands, and there are yet



many Mohammedans that cling to their creed; but the horns of the Crescent have hopelessly waned.

The Jews have for ages held the traditions of the Talmud, "making the word of God of none effect." They have rejected and crucified their King; and to-day the sons of Jacob are "a curse, and an astonishment, and a hissing, and a reproach, among all the nations whither I have driven them: *because they have not hearkened to my words, saith the Lord.*" Jer. xxix. 18, 19. This prophecy was delivered by the weeping prophet centuries before the scattering of the Jews; and it is even now being fulfilled in the presence of every nation and people.

What have the Vedas and Shasters done for the Hindoos? Do they not still worship cats and monkeys, and holy bulls, and bits of sticks and stones from the banks of the Ganges? Their infants are still sacrificed to the crocodiles in that "sacred" stream: and still the car of Juggernaut rolls on its blood-stained wheels, unmindful of the great cry of human woe. And it is only where the *Bible* has penetrated these jungles, that women are not still burned upon the dead bodies of their husbands.

*What has the Bible done for mankind? Why is it that Christian countries stand always at the head and front of civilization?*

The land of Bibles is the home of science and the foster-parent of art. It is the birthplace of pure patriotism and the refuge of the oppressed.

Our hope, as a nation, is in clinging to the pure principles there taught, and flashing our faith, like a

shining light, in the face of the heathen worlds. Give us then voices from the pulpit whose fearless power can be heard and felt amid the whirlpool of crime and the tempest of human passion, whose tones can reach the depths of infamy and the towers of wrong in high places.

Inculcate all over the land the blessings of a pure morality and the power of a fearless Christianity. With an open Bible that is read and believed by the multitude, the hosts of barbarism dare not cope. If we are faithful to the given Word, the sunlight of God's blessings will crown us with triumph; and no relic of the dark ages will be found in our midst. No French Revolution, with its crimson horrors, will lie in our pathway. No tyrant can sway the sceptre over a free and enlightened people. Then indeed the thrones of wrong must crumble, and the crowns of tyrants must fade before the glory-lit morn that awaits us.





## CHAPTER III.

### SCIENCE AND THE BIBLE.

ALL TRUTH HARMONIOUS.—SCIENCE, WHEN UNDERSTOOD, AGREES PERFECTLY WITH REVELATION.—LIGHT WITHOUT SUNSHINE.—CHEMISTRY A WITNESS FOR TRUTH.—AGE OF THE PHYSICAL EARTH.



It has long been claimed by the infidel world that Science is at war with the Bible. They assume that Science, or rather their definition of it, *must be true*; therefore the Bible is false. This is an easy method of reasoning; but it lacks one very important element, *viz., proof*. We claim that all knowledge is truth; but in order to become knowledge, facts must be understood and demonstrated. We cannot accept every wild theory and absurd speculation that is given to the world, when often their only shield from ridicule is the fact that the ideas are so completely buried in words that their absurdity is not at once apparent. We gladly accept any new truth that may be evolved; for truth is one grand eternal whole. It is not a house divided against itself. One fact in the world's history endorses all the rest. The volume of Nature and the books of Revelation are the productions of the same Great Author. They do not and cannot contradict

each other. To our limited conceptions there may sometimes appear a discrepancy; but when a supposition is *demonstrated*, we can see its perfect harmony with all truth. It is seldom indeed that the true scientist claims that science is opposed to the Bible. But there are pretenders and conceited quacks in this as well as all other classes, and they are always the loudest and the most positive in their statements. The truly learned *know* that Science, when *understood*, agrees perfectly with Revelation. Where, we ask in all candour, is the *leader* in the scientific world who advocates the cause of the sceptic? Who ever heard of a Galileo, Kepler, Boyle, Newton, Herschel, Rosse, Hugh Miller, or Agassiz, leading a crusade against Christianity? \* Professor Tyndall has been widely accused of scepticism; but although his views of theology may be peculiar, he has read too deeply of nature's secrets to be an Atheist. This fact is evident from his recent lecture delivered at Manchester. He had been making some beautiful experiments showing the structural power of molecular forces when he referred

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\* Sir David Brewster and over one hundred and fifty of the principal scientific men of Great Britain have signed a declaration of their belief in the agreement of Science and Revelation. After expressing their regret that some have perverted scientific researches into occasion for casting doubt upon the truth and authenticity of the Scriptures, they say, "We conceive that it is impossible for the Word of God, as written in the book of nature, and God's Word written in Holy Scripture, to contradict one another, however much they may *appear* to differ." They refer to the fact that physical science is not at present completed, but only in a condition of progress, and "confidently believe that a time will come when the two records will be *seen* to agree in every particular."

parenthetically to the revelations of science as calculated to awaken our surprise. "We are surrounded," he said, "by wonders and mysteries everywhere. I have sometimes,—not sometimes, but often,—in the spring-time watched the advance of the sprouting leaves and of the grass and of the flowers, and observed the general joy of opening life in nature, and I have asked myself this question, '*Can it be that there is no Being or thing in nature that knows more about these things than I do? Do I in my ignorance represent the highest knowledge of these things existing in the universe?*' Ladies and gentlemen, the man who puts that question fairly to himself, *if he be not a shallow man, if he be a man capable of being penetrated by profound thought, will never answer the question by professing that creed of atheism which has been so lightly attributed to me.*"

In the days when the earth was supposed to be a flat surface, a few of the "wise ones" ridiculed Job for speaking of himself as standing on the circle of the earth, and laughed at Isaiah's allusion to the "circle of the sea." Yet we are at no loss to-day to know who was right, the Bible writers or their critics.

Voltaire claimed that the Bible taught the sky to be a solid sphere, in which the stars were fixed; and a certain class of sceptics have echoed this cry ever since, without ever making the least effort to ascertain whether the statement be true or false.

Every man who reads his Bible, knows the charge to be not only false but absurd; that every allusion in the Scriptures to this matter conveys a very different

idea. It is spoken of as being "stretched out like a curtain," "spread abroad like a tent," "folded up as a vesture," and the clouds are spoken of as "the curtains of His pavilion."

The Hebrew word in Gen. i., which has been translated "firmament," is *requio*, and signifies "*reach, region, stretching, or expansion.*" The verb or root from which the word is formed is *requo*, and signifies *to spread, to make broad.*

We give a few examples of its use in the following passages, the words by which the Hebrew word *requo* is expressed being placed in italics:—

"When I did beat them small as the dust of the earth, . . . and *did spread* them abroad!"

"Thus saith the Lord, He that created the heavens, and *stretched* them out," "He that *spread forth* the earth," "Let them *make them broad*, . . . and they were *made broad.*"

The same idea is expressed by Humboldt when he says, "The pure ether *spread* (during the scorching heat of the south wind) as a melted mirror over the parched desert." It is useless to give a list of lexicographers, since Science herself, even in the 19th century, has been unable to find a more expressive term for the sky than the one Moses used so long ago, viz., *expanse.*

Thousands of years before the cycles of the Ptolemaic astronomy were demonstrated, the Bible writers were recording those allusions to the stars, clouds, and rain from which Galileo derived the first hints of the causes of barometrical phenomena.

The origin of rain, its proportion to evaporation, and the mode of its distribution by condensation, could not be better expressed to-day than it was by Job, when he said, "He maketh small the drops of water; they pour down rain according to the vapour thereof, which the clouds do drop and distil upon man abundantly."

More than two thousand years before the theory of the trade winds was discovered, the sacred writers declared that "The wind goeth towards the south, and turneth about to the north, *and the wind returneth again according to his circuits.*"

Many centuries before Newton, Galileo, and Copernicus were born, Isaiah was writing about the "orbit of the earth," and its insignificance in the eyes of God, and Job was speaking of the inclination of its axis and its equilibrium in space, "He spreadeth out the north over the empty space and hangeth the earth upon nothing."

These allusions could not be understood until science was sufficiently advanced to demonstrate them; and there are many others which we cannot fully comprehend even now, but they are invaluable hints to the scientist that will yet lead to more perfect knowledge.

There is but one plausible objection that can be urged to the Bible account of creation, and that is the claim that God is represented as creating light before the sun, which the infidel supposes to be impossible; and also that the sun and moon were created only two days before Adam. In the Hebrew tongue there is a

great difference between the word *create* and the word *make*. "In the *beginning* God *created* the heavens and the earth," and at a subsequent period the sun and moon were *made lights*, or, literally translated, were made or *appointed light-bearers* to the earth.

These planets may have existed for countless ages before that period, without impeaching in any way the Mosaic record.

The earth was probably enshrouded in the dense vapours that accompanied the process of her formation and shut out from her surface the rays of other planets. By the eruption of a single volcano on the island of Sumbawa, in 1815, the air was filled with smoke and ashes from Java to Celebes, darkening an area of more than two hundred thousand square miles; and the darkness was so profound in Java, three hundred miles distant from the volcano, that nothing equal to it was ever witnessed in the darkest night.\* If this be the result of a single eruption, we can easily imagine that similar discharges on a larger scale from thousands of primal volcanoes would cover the earth with a pall of darkness.

God wrought alone in those grand periods; but every chasm and mountain cave bears witness to the terrible convulsions that swept over earth in her creative morn.

The infidel practically avers, in the face of both science and revelation, that the uncreated Source of all light *could not* illumine the unfinished earth, while her

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\* Lyell's "Principles of Geology," p. 465.



smoke and fog, her clouds and vapours, shut out the rays of the sun. But the only thing that he can truly allege against the Bible statement is, *his ignorance of God's process*. His argument is simply this: God could not cause light without sunshine, because *I know not how it could be done*. Science declares that the primeval rocks lay long in a molten state, and minerals were then formed and fused; but the sceptic would have us believe that while vast beds of rocks and minerals were melted in God's great crucible, they gave forth *no light*. He is willing to admit that burning mountains stood like sentinels along the vast expanse, and that electricity was one of the strongest agents used in the process, and yet contends that there could be *no light without sunshine*.

The ocean itself may have been made to blaze with a light and glory unspeakable; such things have happened since, and why not then? "Captain Bonnycastle, coming up the Gulf of St. Lawrence on the night of the 7th of September, 1826, was aroused by the mate in great alarm. An *instantaneous and intensely vivid light*, resembling the aurora, shot out of the hitherto dark and gloomy sea, *which was so brilliant that it lighted everything distinctly even to the mast-head*. The light spread over the whole sea between the two shores of the Gulf, and the scene is described as a blazing sheet of awful and most brilliant light. Immense numbers of large fish were seen darting about, as if in consternation. *The top-sail and mizen-boom were lighted by the glare as if gas-lights had been burning directly below them*, and until just before day-

break the most minute objects were distinctly visible.\*

Surely He who flashes His lightnings across the storm-cloud and illumines the midnight darkness with volcanic fires, can light up the earth if He will, even while withholding the sunshine from her surface.

Thomas Paine declared that "science contradicted the Bible," because the Old Book says, that "one star differeth from another star in glory;" and Paine asserted that they did not differ in glory or brilliancy, *but only in their distance from us*. His followers gladly picked up the idea, and prated wisely (?) about the *ignorance of Bible writers in the light of modern science*. Poor Paine! the earth rolled on in her orbit, and the stars swept through their cycles, unmindful of his existence. In this 19th century even the little children know that one star not only "differeth from another star in glory," but many of the stars differ greatly in their own brilliancy at different times.

Chemistry, also, has been accused of infidelity, and men have declared *that matter was eternal*, and needed no Creator. They have never stopped to inquire how small the benefit they could thus attain, or of what avail dead matter would be without a Supreme Intelligence and a life-giving Power. But as we become better acquainted with this science, we find that she too declares that she will tell the truth upon this question. Science has demonstrated that there are in nature comparatively few simple substances or elementary principles, and that everything in the sub-

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\* "Connection of Physical Sciences," p. 288.

stance or on the surface of the globe is a combination of some of these; and we do not lack evidence to prove that these elementary substances *themselves* had a beginning. The atoms comprising each of them are endowed with properties that attract or repel those of others, so as to produce the endless combinations of nature. These properties in the molecules of these elements are *fixed* and *definite*. Says Prout, in his famous "Treatise on Chemistry":—"I assert, without fear of contradiction, that the *molecular constitution of matter is decidedly artificial.*" And Sir John Herschell declares, that "every molecule or atom of matter *has all the characteristics of a manufactured article.*" Thus every particle of matter in the universe testifies to the absurdity of that theory which would substitute an eternal nature for an eternal God.

Says Professor Morris: "Geology brings from the depths testimonies strong as the rocks, that the whole system of visible things had a beginning." Dr. John Harris stated, that "every step in our descent through the solid crust of the globe *is suggestive of a beginning and speaks of derivation.* Each rock points downward to its source, and we can trace the lineal extraction of each successive stratum." Hugh Miller, in speaking of the more ancient mineral organizations, says, "Each of the extinct groups we find *had a beginning and an end*; there is not in the wide domain of physical science a more certain fact; and every species of the groups which now exist had, like all their predecessors on the scene, their beginning also. *The infinite series of the Atheists of former times can have*

no place in modern science; all organic existences, recent or extinct, vegetable or animal, have had their beginning: *There was a time when they were not.*" Thus we shall ever see that true science and true religion have the same common origin in the bosom of God. But science alone is necessarily incomplete. She may explain the present processes of nature and avail herself of their power for the benefit of man; but without the light of the written Word, she is as powerless to solve the problems of creation as ignorance herself. The origin of earth and her children is an enigma to the scientist as impenetrable as to the most unlearned. No other theory is tenable save the simple story of Genesis. If we were to admit the Darwinian theory, the difficulty of accounting for man's origin outside of God's power would be in no way lessened. The wisdom of a Creator would be as much required to evolve humanity from a long series of inferior beings, as to form man from the dust of the earth and to breathe into his nostrils the breath of life. Says Professor Tyndall: "Whether he" (Darwin) "does or does not introduce his 'primordial form' by a creative act I do not know; but the question will inevitably be asked, *How came the form there?* With regard to the diminution of the number of created forms, one does not see that much advantage is gained by it. The anthropomorphism which it seemed the object of Mr. Darwin to set aside, is as firmly associated with the creation of a few forms as with the creation of a multitude. We need clearness and thoroughness here. Two courses, and two only, are possible. Either let us open our doors

freely to the conception of creative acts, or, abandoning them, let us radically change our notions of matter." \*

Here is a candid admission that unaided science has as yet made no progress in solving the great problems of creation. If she ignores the light of revelation, she gropes her way like a child in the darkness, ignorant alike of the object of her search and of the pitfalls that lie in her way. Professor Tyndall further confesses the absolute inability of science to solve the mysteries that are revealed by God alone, in the following words: "In fact, the whole process of evolution *is the manifestation of a Power absolutely inscrutable to the intellect of man. As little in our day as in the days of Job can man by searching find this Power out. Considered fundamentally, it is by the operation of an insoluble mystery that life is evolved, species differentiated, and mind unfolded from the prepotent elements in the immeasurable past.*" Not only are these statements undeniably true, but the problems of the future are as impenetrable to the boasted "light of science" as are the labyrinths of the past. The destiny of the earth and of the human race is revealed in God's Word *alone*; and if she ignores this revelation, Science is tossed upon the wild seas of speculation and false philosophy without a chart or a compass. Those minds which claim to be far in advance of revelation are prepared to accept the wildest theories concerning

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\* See the opening Address of Professor Tyndall, as President of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, before that body, August 19th, 1874. .

the future. At a recent meeting of the American Scientific Association, one of the most eminent living students of solar physics read a paper upon the sun. That body, he argued, is a gigantic bubble, whose crust is gradually thickening and its size diminishing. There is a constant loss of heat which will end in its extinction as a producer of light and warmth. It will grow smaller and more compressed and surrounded by this crust, until it will be so hidden and muffled as to be practically excluded from the economy of the universe. The result will be intense cold and darkness, a cessation of all animal life, and an immediate return to original chaos. He was followed by General J. G. Barnard, who described the interior of the earth as a molten fluid, and the tenure of its existence as being therefore exceedingly uncertain. Any greatly disturbing influence,—as the breaking out of a volcano, a change of its surface that would render it brittle, or the impact of a heavy meteor or comet,—being liable at any moment to immolate it, leading humanity to a whirling death amid the horrors of unlimited space.

At the same meeting a paper on the "Dissipation of Energy," was read by an eminent scientist, declaring that "since the days of the ancients it has been known that all motion is gradually developed by friction and must finally cease unless maintained by external power." The heat-power of the sun, which he regarded as the motive power of the earth, is being exhausted by the prodigious lavishness of its expenditure. He therefore supposed that satellites will finally fall into planets, planets into suns, and suns into

a common centre, after which "darkness, silence, and death will reign."

Professor Hough followed with a prediction of perpetual drought, the land being unwatered and consequently sterile, universal famine must ensue, and the world be entirely depopulated by starvation.

The new President of the Association, Dr. Le Conte, read a paper on the enormous increase and destructiveness of injurious insects, claiming that they would eventually become so numerous that mankind would be eaten by them.

Thus was presented at a single meeting of scientists a few of the many wild and contradictory theories into which men will drift when they ignore the plain truths of God's Word. Sceptics have sought with more zeal than knowledge among the rocks and minerals for the evidence that the earth is more than six thousand years old; and they announce triumphantly that our old Hebrew traditions cannot stand before the unmistakable evidence of the rocks.

But in demonstrating this theory they have met with serious obstacles; for geology is not and cannot be chronology. It does not deal in figures, but in the most indefinite periods and cycles. Hence even the most learned among its exponents can only give us the benefit of their *conjectures*; and what makes the matter still more vague is, that they cannot agree in their suppositions. Some geologists claim to know with a degree of certainty that the ages of the Plutonic rocks extend back into a period far beyond the Creation; but Mr. Lyell, in speaking of the difficulty of ascertaining

this point, says : "The same tests (that are applied to volcanic and fossiliferous formations) *entirely fail*, or are only applicable in a modified degree, when we endeavour to fix the chronology of a rock which has crystallized from a state of fusion in the bowels of the earth. In that case we are reduced to the tests of relative position, intrusion, alteration of the rocks in contact, included fragments, and mineral character, *but all these may yield at best a somewhat ambiguous result.*"\* Thus the great scientist seems to admit that he does not and cannot know with any degree of certainty the age of our planet, or of the primitive rocks in her foundations.

Says Hugh Miller, in his "Footprints," page 313, in speaking of geology : "It furnishes us with *no clue* by which to unravel the unapproachable mysteries of creation. These mysteries belong to the wondrous Creator, and to Him alone. We attempt to theorize upon them, to reduce them to law, and all nature rises up against us in our presumption." Again he says : "A stray splinter of cone-bearing wood, a fish's skull or tooth, the vertebra of a reptile, the humerus of a bird, the jaw of a quadruped—all or any of these things, weak and insignificant as they may seem, become in such a quarrel too strong for us and our theory. The puny fragment, in the grasp of truth, forms as irresistible a weapon as the dry bone did in that of Samson of old, and our slaughtered sophisms lie piled up 'heaps upon heaps' before it!"

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\* See Lyell's "Elements," page 564.



This is the testimony of a man who was a geologist—who knew whereof he affirmed, and was willing to state his honest convictions. How can we then receive as *chronological* evidence the prattlings of an infant science, when its best advocates admit that a splinter of wood or the wing-bone of a bird is weapon enough to overturn its theories?

Here is our globe, with its layers of rock one above another. Some of these strata contain fragments of other rocks; or perhaps they contain bones, shells, or petrified fishes, or the tracks of birds made when the rocks were soft. Here are the materials already in the building—here is the finished earth; now, how long was the process of erection? Surely it is a very abstruse problem in mathematics, when *no time* or *quantity* is known.

We may well look at this wondrous little globe of ours and conjecture that many ages were required for its completion; but to tell *how many of them* is quite another thing. Where is the mathematician who, by knowing the quantity of material in any block of buildings, can demonstrate how much time was required for its construction? It depends altogether upon who built it and how fast they worked. If they were built in the middle ages, some of the new business blocks in our cities would have required a generation of time; but with the aid of steam, telegraph lines, and modern contractors they have gone up as if by magic.

Geologists have *no means of knowing* the length of time employed in the creation of the earth. If the

primitive rocks were formed during long successive ages, and each stratum above them in a series of subsequent periods, the process of creation may have occupied indefinite cycles of time; but if, as Lyell declares, the four great classes of rocks have all been produced *cotemporaneously*\* a comparatively short time would be sufficient for the work.

It is assumed, however, that God chose to make the earth by the slowest agencies and weakest forces in the universe. Almost all the geological computations of time are made upon the supposition that only the same agents were at work then that we see now, and that they only wrought with the same degree of force and with precisely the same results as now. But this is *not proof*, it is only *supposition*; and is it not at least equally fair to suppose that the same Power that rends the mountains with His earthquakes and shatters the rocks with His lightnings, can hasten, if He chooses, the process He is conducting?

If sceptics had read *carefully* the first chapter of Genesis before commencing their long and laborious work of proving that the Bible had lied in its chronology, it might have saved them both trouble and labour.

Strange as it may seem to them even now, *the Bible nowhere says that the earth is only six thousand years old.* "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." This is the grand opening sentence wherein God makes Himself known to His creatures. It is

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\* See "Elements of Geology," page 33.

the golden gate between the portals of Eternity past and those of coming Time. When that "beginning" was, He has nowhere stated. This is an independent sentence, having no connection with the following verse. Millions of ages may have intervened without in any way impeaching the sacred record.\*

"And the earth *was* without form, and void." *How long?* It is not necessary for man's redemption that he should ever know. There may have expired time enough to fulfil the wildest dreams of the geologist and still have remained ages to spare; for God had the whole of eternity past wherein to do His work.

And God said, "*Let there be light: and there was light.*" The light here spoken of may have been created then; or it may have existed for millions of years and still its rays been shut out from the chaotic earth, until that glory-lit sentence fell from Jehovah's lips.

"And the evening and the morning were the first day." Surely the night before that morning had been long and dark, but how long we have no means of knowing. Many eminent Biblical scholars claim that the six days spoken of in Genesis were six grand cycles or periods of time, and the idea of crowding them into days of twenty-four hours each has no scriptural authority, neither has man any right to thus

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\* This is no new interpretation suggested by modern geology, to harmonize its theories with Holy Writ. The text was thus understood by Justin Martyr, Basil, Origen, Patrick, Jennings, and others who wrote before geology was known as a science; and *they arrived at these conclusions solely upon Biblical grounds.*

limit the time of Him with whom "a thousand years are as one day."

Human history was then unborn, and no chronology existed, save that of the Infinite. God wrought alone in those grand periods: but whatever may have been the time consumed in the process, the earth herself bears witness in every hill and mountain cave that she was not left in the hands of chance, nor was her creation conducted without an intelligent purpose. From the beginning, our globe was designed for the habitation of man, and all the changes through which it passed were conducive to this grand purpose. Every volcano that poured out its liquid fire in the morning of time—every hurricane that tossed the billows of the primeval ocean—every flash of lightning that rent the clouds or quivered through the rocky strata—every earthquake that in after periods shook its mountains or rent its vales, wrought together as God's agents in His work.

Let the geologist then explore, as far as possible, the rocky strata of earth's foundations. Let him bring to the surface all the evidence he can there find of the ages that have gone before, we will follow his footsteps with unfaltering faith and accept from his hands whatever truth he may there find, for these are only proofs of God's eternal power.

The telescope may bring to our eyes the light that flashed from other worlds on the morning of earth's existence, or the rays of those more distant suns that have travelled for millions of years to reach our planet; but these are only jewels in the crown of Him who is

Himself the “Sun of Righteousness.” But scientists can never penetrate, much less explore, the mysteries of that morning, which is known alone to the Infinite Mind, and revealed to man only in that sublime sentence, “*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*”

Church of God General Conference: McDonough, GA, <https://coggc.org/>





## CHAPTER IV.

### THE NEED OF THE BIBLE.

THE LIGHT OF NATURE INSUFFICIENT.—MORALS OF THE ANCIENTS  
AND OF THE GODS OF MYTHOLOGY.—THE LAWS OF LYCURGUS.  
—THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.—THE NEED OF REVELATION  
VIRTUALLY CONFESSED BY ALL NATIONS.



It has been claimed that we have no need of the Bible; that "reason" and "the light of nature" are all that man requires for his elevation and civilization. But the history of the past declares in unmistakable terms, that without a revelation from God, we not only have no *tangible hope* of a future life, but we have *no code of morals sufficient for the present*. The boasted "light of nature" has illumined the path of man ever since the world was young, and what has been the result? In every land where the Bible has not penetrated, superstition still holds the people in chains of bondage, which no power outside of God's truth can ever break. Even in this 19th century they worship the sun, moon, and stars, the elements, animals, and reptiles. A part of the inhabitants of Sumatra believe that tigers are endowed with the spirits of dead men, and that in a remote portion of the island they inhabit huts which are thatched with human hair. The natural

reason of man has no power to prevent the brutality that everywhere reigns in Western and Central Africa; among some of whose tribes no person is allowed to marry until he can show the skull of a man whom he has killed. The light of nature has apparently no influence in Borneo, where they not only kill and eat prisoners and criminals, but even their relatives, regarding it as a pious ceremony. Says Buchanan in his *Researches*: "When a man becomes aged and infirm, those who are nearest and dearest to him deprive him of life and devour him in solemn banquet." It may be claimed, however, that these tribes are unlearned, that they are not enlightened by education or civilized by the influence of letters. This is all very true; but the natural reason of man, even when supplemented by art and science, has wrought apparently no better results. Egypt was the very cradle of science—the world received from her the rudiments of philosophy; but yet her people, in the absence of Divine revelation, worshipped the ibis, the cat, the crocodile, and hundreds of similar gods.

Even the philosophers of Greece and Rome were not far in advance of the Egyptians. Man is a religious animal, he must worship something; and in the absence of any knowledge of the true God, he will find other deities of either fact or imagination. It will be remembered that the Areopagus of Athens, the most polished court of ancient times, banished Stilpo for denying that the statue of Minerva was a real god. Zenocrates believed the air was filled with powerful evil spirits, who took pleasure in seeing

sufferings and lamentations, and having been gratified with such exhibitions, would do no further mischief. "The majority of philosophers," says Porphyry, "acknowledge no other gods than those commonly called planets and constellations. They believe that the acts of our will and the motions of our bodies depend upon those of the stars to which they were subjected."

Plutarch tells us that Democritus believed that Deity was a fiery storm; Epicurus, that all gods had human forms; and Anaximander affirmed the stars to be the eternal gods. Socrates, Plato, Pythagoras, and even the polished Cicero, believed in inferior divinities; and their teachings and practice accorded with the wild superstition of the times. These men were the *oracles of the ancient philosophy*—the representatives of all the culture and learning of the age, and yet how far their loftiest conceptions of Deity fell short of the God of the Bible!

The light of nature, of science, and of art failed as utterly in moral influence as it did in revealing a God to His creatures. The mythology of the "Iliad," being borne down to us in the language of a Homer, is by far the most attractive of all the features of heathenism. And yet these gods themselves, though enthroned on Olympus and entwined with all the glories of the poet's imagination, are represented as drunken and immoral characters. In the very first book of the "Iliad," we are informed that Juno, the wife of Jupiter and the queen of heaven, became jealous, and in an assembly of the gods she angrily demands of him,—



“What favourite goddess, then, that care divides  
Which Jove in prudence from his consort hides?”

Jove haughtily replies, and the indignant queen makes her charges more specific, until all the solemn conclave has joined in the quarrel, and it is only stayed by Vulcan, who passes goblets of wine among the disputants, which soon takes effect.

“Vulcan with awkward grace his office plies,  
Till unextinguished laughter shakes the skies.”

And the scene continues until the participants are prepared only for drunken slumber.

“Then to their starry domes the gods depart,  
The shining monuments of Vulcan’s art;  
Jove on his couch reclined his awful head,  
And Juno slumbered on the golden bed.”

These were the gods which were worshipped by the polished Greeks; and as the stream can never rise higher than its fountain, so man can never hope to surpass or even equal the object of his worship. What then can we expect would be the state of morals in this home of art, of music, and of song? Says Quintilian, in speaking of the philosophers, “The most notorious vices are screened under the name.” Zeno the stoic and Diogenes the cynic *sanctioned* the vilest immoralities, of which Socrates also was more than suspected. Cato was not only guilty of crime himself, but openly *commended* it in others; and Plato was but little better. Even the polished Pliny, with Seneca, Brutus, Cassius, and Demosthenes, applauded suicide, as being truly heroic. The Stoics affirmed that

lying was profitable, and that truth was honourable only when advantageous. We are aware that these facts will be met with the old objection against the Bible, viz., that it records the bad acts of men, some of whom even were the servants of God. But this fact, so far from indicating that the Scriptures are immoral, *proves* conclusively that they were written by *honest, faithful* men. Nothing but strict integrity and a strong sense of duty will induce men to voluntarily record the faults of either themselves or their friends. These records are far from encouraging vice ; they are designed to deter men from sin, by showing its enormity and inevitable results.

It must also be borne in mind, that while some of the children of God have done wickedly, they have not sought to hide their guilt nor to justify their conduct, but have humbly confessed their sins, and sought pardon for them.\* How different is this from the character of those who not only sin with a high hand but *openly avow that their conduct is right in itself and worthy of imitation by others*. Lord Herbert, a prominent modern infidel, says, that the indulgence of lust and anger are no more to be blamed than the thirst which is occasioned by dropsy. Lord Bolingbroke stated that *self-love* is the principle of morality. Hobbes, the celebrated "moral philanthropist," claims that every man has a right to *all things*, and may lawfully get them *if he can*. Hume declared that

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\* See David's confession and prayer in the Fifty-first Psalm ; also Daniel's, in Dan. ix. 3-19.

abominable crimes *must* be practised, if men would obtain all the advantages of life. Both Voltaire and Helvetius *advocated* the vilest impurities.

The strongest sceptic must admit there is a vast difference between the character of a man who *falls* into sin, and regrets it, who confesses and seeks pardon therefor; and that of him who not only justifies his own crimes, but advises others to follow in his footsteps.

So far as the laws of the ancients were concerned, they were not, and of course could not be, any better than the general state of public morals. At Sparta, and under the laws of Lycurgus, boys were whipped to death in honour of Diana, and young girls in Arcadia to appease Bacchus. In their divinations they murdered infants for the express purpose of raking their entrails, to gain an insight into futurity. This is witnessed by Herodotus, Cicero, and Tacitus.

The laws which Lycurgus gave to Sparta have been much lauded; and yet Rollin declares, that modesty and decency were *entirely neglected*; and they, among other abominations, required the practice of infanticide. When a child was born, it was taken to a committee for examination; if they pronounced it well formed and likely to be strong and healthy, it was given to the nurse, otherwise it was thrown into a mountain chasm or exposed to wild beasts.\*

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\* The historian himself observes, after a recapitulation of the laws of Lycurgus, "When we compare these indecent and licentious institutions of the wisest legislator that ever profane antiquity could boast,

In Scandinavia they held festivals in which, in a time of war, nine prisoners, or in a time of peace, nine slaves were sacrificed. It will be remembered that Aune, king of Sweden, offered up to Odin *his nine sons* in order that his own life might be prolonged.

At Rome, human sacrifices were offered every year in the early days of the Republic, and it was occasionally done even down to the time of Julius Cæsar. According to Seneca, Augustus once ordered *three hundred* knights and senators to be sacrificed at the altar on the ides of March. Xerxes buried alive nine young men and nine maidens on his march to Greece; and his wife commanded fourteen children of noble Persian birth to be sacrificed to the deity that reigned beneath the earth. These are only a few out of the many terrible facts upon record. Every historian knows that the pages of the past are crimson with the stain of human cruelty which has been practised in the name of both law and religion.

The history of every nation witnesses that the Bible is the only perfect code of laws ever given to man; and the nearer that any system of jurisprudence approaches to the Divine standard, the better is the condition of both rulers and people. Every intelligent sceptic must bear witness that it is only in Bible lands that laws are either just or humane.

It is therefore evident from the whole history of the

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with the sanctity and purity of the evangelical precepts, what a noble idea does it give us of the dignity and excellence of the Christian religion." See Rollin, Art. 7.

past, that neither the "light of nature" nor the wisdom of the world are a sufficient guide for man. The condition of unchristian nations demonstrates conclusively that man is utterly incapable of self-government unless he is enlightened and controlled by a higher code of laws than his own. We need not appeal to the ancients nor to heathen tribes for the evidence, that without the Bible the world has no code of morals. We have only to look back into the last century and see the condition of France. France was civilized, polished, and refined—so much so that she declared that she needed no God but Reason, and no law save human legislation. Look at her consistency in the desperate position that she assumed. Her legislature solemnly declared, "There is no God;" and the very next day they worshipped a common actress as the goddess of Reason. The infidel philosophers one day wrote on the churchyard gates, that "Death is an eternal sleep," and proclaimed *liberty of conscience to all*; but within forty-eight hours of that time, those who dared assert that liberty were placed upon the rack or the guillotine. We need not recount the horrors of the French Revolution, when the best blood of the empire flowed through the streets of Paris, and the Reign of Terror continued as long as the reign of infidel madness; but the terrible fact remains in the annals of the past, and it is a blood-stained seal to the truth of Revelation.

The universal testimony of mankind, in all ages, acknowledges their need of some revelation from a superior being. Either by word or act, both philoso-

phers and pagans admit the same truth. Conscious of their own ignorance, they have adopted supposed methods of communicating with their deities by means of oracles, omens, and divinations.

Says Cicero: "What colony has Greece sent out without a reference to the Pythian, the Dodonian, or Ammon oracle? What war did she ever undertake without first consulting her gods?"

It is also well known that all the celebrated law-givers of antiquity, such as Zoroaster, Solon, and Lycurgus, pretended that they had intercourse with their gods and acted under their guidance. Cicero affirms: "I know of no nation, however civilized, or learned, or fierce, or barbarous, which does not think that future things may be signified and predicted to us." Even in our own age many of those who declare that reason and the light of nature are all-sufficient, often profess to be enlightened by the spirits of dead men; we find them in dark circles "seeking unto them that have familiar spirits and unto wizards that peep and that mutter," \* and we feel like asking with the prophet, "Should not a people seek unto their God? To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them."

It is evident, then, that man *needs* a revelation from God, and that the leading minds of all past ages have asserted the fact.

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\* If the Bible is not the Word of Him who seeth the end from the beginning, how happens it that *these doings in the 19th century were so definitely foretold more than two thousand years ago?*

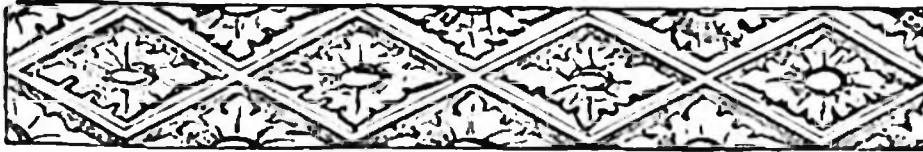
God Himself saw the greatness of our need, and into this world of wrong and fraud, of cruelty, obscenity, and carnage, He sent a code of morals absolutely pure, and a system of laws which are at once both just and merciful.

For eighteen hundred years the Gospel banner has floated across the cloud, with a promise of hope to all that wander, and a promise of mercy for them that sin.

*“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself,”—*

This one simple sentence is a grand compendium of both law and morals. All the volumes of jurisprudence that man has compiled sink into insignificance before it. Human legislation, unless founded upon it, must reach in vain for its sublime height. It compasses in its simple power every intelligence and every interest. It reaches down to man in his lowest depths; and upwards even to the great heart of the pitying Father.





## CHAPTER V.

### THE TESTIMONY OF THE ROCKS.

EGYPTIAN CHRONOLOGY.—THE STONES OF DENDERA AND ESNEH.  
—INSCRIPTIONS ON THE ROCKS OF MOUNT SINAI AND IN  
THE WILDERNESS.—ASSYRIAN RECORD OF THE FLOOD.—  
LAYARD'S TESTIMONY CONCERNING NINEVEH.—INSCRIPTIONS  
IN EGYPTIAN TEMPLES.—GIANT CITIES OF BASHAN.—STONES  
IN THE LAND OF MOAB.—EGYPTIAN LAW.—MANUSCRIPT IN  
THE PYRAMIDS.



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**N** every age of the world the rocks have been used as a simile of firmness and safety. Hence says Job: "Oh that my words were now written . . . that they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever." While parchments might be lost or destroyed, whatever was engraven upon the rocks was considered safe and permanent. Hence the ancients, whether Jews or Gentiles, Christians or heathens, sometimes resorted to these for the record of their most important events. The children of Israel, in their wanderings, recorded their history upon the high rocks of the wilderness; and the Egyptians wrote upon rocky tablets the names and generations of their kings.

When these facts became known to the modern world, the sceptic caught eagerly at the idea that here



at last might be something which would contradict God's word. It came to be a common statement among infidels, that, "Ten thousand years before Adam was born, the priests of Egypt were carving astronomical signs on the Pyramids."

The "proof" that they offered of this was the Egyptian chronology, the histories of the reigning princes, and especially the hieroglyphics themselves.

It has been ascertained, however, that they reckoned by *lunar* years, or months, which will make quite a difference with their chronology; and, moreover, the dynasties of their kings, as drawn from their records, were, of course, supposed to be *successive*, many of whom, however, prove to be *contemporaries*. Herodotus mentions *twelve* Egyptian kings who were reigning at the same time.

So far as their own chronology was concerned, it was strangely contradictory, some of them computing about thirteen thousand years *more* than others, from the first of their dynasties to the reign of Alexander the Great. Surely, he must be very anxious to obtain evidence who will accept it from witnesses who cannot agree by thirteen thousand years as to the date which they claim to prove.

But the hieroglyphics themselves: here was an argument which, of all others, the infidel would consider fatal to Christianity. Napoleon and his savants cut out of the ceiling of a temple at Dendera a stone which was covered with uncouth astronomical, astrological, and hieroglyphic figures, which was carried to the National Library at Paris. It was there placed on exhibition;

and there was usually some one present to inform visitors that "This remarkable stone proved the whole Bible to be a series of lies." This was evidently a very satisfactory conclusion; and it did not seem to trouble those French philosophers at all, that no two of the wisest of them could agree by thousands of years as to the real age of the stone. They were not acquainted with Egyptian astronomy, and not one of them could read the hieroglyphics that might solve the mystery. Everything about the stone was exceedingly dark to them, except the one central idea that it proved the Bible account of the creation of man to be false. On this point, and this only, their opinions and statements were unanimous. A pamphlet was published by a professor of the University at Breslau, entitled, "The invincible Proof that the Earth is at least ten times Older than is taught by the Bible."

Many such publications followed; and for forty years or more, infidel newspapers and magazines gloried in this great refutation of God's Word.

But men began to study Egyptian astronomy, and our own archæologist, Dr. Young, and MM. Letroune and Champollion, of France, learned to read the hieroglyphics; and lo! upon the stone from the temple of Dendera were found the names, surnames, and titles of the Emperors Tiberius, Claudius, Nero, and Domitian.

The Roman title *autocrat* was engraved upon the zodiac itself, thereby declaring its antiquity to be not quite two thousand years!

The temple at Esneh had been stated to be thou-

sands of years older than that of Dendera; but as soon as its characters were interpreted, the names of Claudius and Antoninus Pius were found thereon.

Thus the bulwarks of infidelity must ever fall in the light of true science, as well as true revelation.

Astronomy has also been employed to ascertain the dates of events recorded on Egyptian monuments as having happened to one of the Pharaohs when such a star was in a certain position. Mr. Poole has spent years in gathering such inscriptions, and in calculating the dates thus furnished. The Astronomer Royal at Greenwich, Mr. Airy, has reviewed the calculations, and found them correct. The result, as these truly scientific men declare, is that the astronomical chronology engraved upon the Egyptian monuments sustains the Bible record.\*

The learned Adrian Balbo well remarks, that "No monument, either astronomical or historical, has yet been able to prove the books of Moses false; but with them, on the contrary, agree in the most remarkable manner the results obtained by the most learned philologists."

Geology itself, which the infidel has zealously claimed as one of his own witnesses, assures us in these later years that the alleged vast antiquity of the Egyptian monuments is impossible, as it cannot be

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\* It must be remembered that these are not their *calculations of chronology*, which have been found both erroneous and contradictory; but simply the record of the position of certain stars at the time when important events took place. For a further examination of this subject, please see Poole's "*Horæ Egyptiacæ*."

more than five thousand years since the soil of Egypt first appeared above water as a muddy morass.\*

When Jesus said that, "If these should hold their peace, the very stones would cry out," He did not mean that the stones would become vocal; but that the rocks themselves would testify to the truth,—that their secrets would be revealed, as they are being revealed in these last days, to confirm the Word of God.

The history of the children of Israel has always been sneered at by the sceptic as utterly unworthy of credence; but the research of the nineteenth century has revealed the fact that the rocky heights of the wilderness where they wandered bear many an ancient inscription.

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Scientific men have sought out and copied their mysterious symbols, and our best philologists have translated their meaning, and find that they corroborate in a remarkable manner the Bible history of that people.

And Sinai herself bears in rocky pass and mountain gorge the records of her fiery baptism and God-given law. Says Dr. Beke, in his letter to the *London Times*, written during his travels, "As the climbing part of my expedition necessarily devolves upon my young companion Mr. Milne, he on the following morning ascended the mountain. . . . On the road they passed a stone in which some inscriptions appear to have been cut; but are now all defaced, with the exception of the words, 'O God,' in Cufic or old Arabic

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\* Henri, "L'Egypte Pharonique."

characters. . . . On the ridge to the left side of the gorge is a pile of large, rounded boulders of granite, consisting of four stones of the material of the mountain, three standing up, facing the north, and one at the back to the south; and on all of them are cut inscriptions. The stones, which are much weather-worn, are externally of a dark brown colour, against which the inscriptions make themselves visible, from their being of a somewhat lighter colour. The lines of these 'Sinaitic inscriptions' are about three-quarters of an inch broad and very shallow, being (now) not more than one-eighth of an inch deep."

Men have denied over and over again that the ancient world was ever swallowed up by a flood; but science has shown us the wave-washed tops of the mountains, where the waters left their imprint upon the very stones. And the land of antiquities has at last given to us an old Assyrian record of the Flood written in the rocks only a few generations since the days of Noah.

"On the eastern shore of the River Tigris, opposite the modern city of Mosul, is a tract of country covered by immense mounds, the largest of which, occupying nearly one hundred acres, and rising in height from seventy to ninety feet, is called by the Arabs, *Koyunjik*. These mounds are the ruins of the ancient and magnificent city of Nineveh, which has been for ages so utterly desolate that its very ruins were forgotten and unknown to the world at large.

"From this largest mound, in the year 1858, Austin Henry Layard, since a Member of the British Parlia-

ment, dug out and shipped to England those strange and massive sculptured lions with eagle's wings, those gigantic human-headed bulls, and other monsters which so startle the visitors at the British Museum, and which shed such light upon the strange imagery of the visions of the prophet Daniel.

“In the course of his excavations, Mr. Layard discovered a series of small rooms, which he termed “chambers of record,” from their being filled with little tablets of dried or baked clay, measuring from half an inch to nine inches in length, covered with fine writing in the letters of ancient Assyria.

“These mysterious tablets were removed to the British Museum, where, for the last seventeen years, men learned in the languages and literature of the East have been engaged in studying, deciphering, and translating them. Among these antiquarians was Mr. George Smith, who is pronounced by Sir George Rawlinson to be the greatest Assyrian scholar of the age.

“When these tablets had been cleared of the encrusted mud and dust of ages, and translated into English, they were found to contain allusions to facts recorded in the sacred Scriptures, and to relate to events familiar to Biblical students; and to confirm many of the statements of the Hebrew Scriptures.

“In 1872, Mr. Smith, who had for five years been connected with the department of Oriental antiquities in the British Museum, while prosecuting his researches, had the pleasure to find among these old relics a tablet containing the Chaldean account of the Deluge. His first discovery was a fragment containing about half

of the record. Eagerly searching for more, he was rewarded by discovering other portions of the same story, an account and translation of which he gave in a lecture before the Biblical Archæological Society in London, Dec. 3rd, 1872.

“The public interest awakened by these disclosures was so great, that the proprietors of the London *Daily Telegraph* offered to advance a thousand guineas, to defray the expense of an expedition to Nineveh, on condition that Mr. Smith would go there and explore the ruins with a view to further discoveries of these important records. This offer was accepted, and Mr. Smith started for the East, January 20th, 1873, being absent six months, and returning to England July 19th. Church of God General Conference; McDonough, GA, <https://coggc.org/> The results of this journey were so encouraging that the trustees of the British Museum appropriated one thousand pounds to continue the researches; and on the 25th of November, 1873, Mr. Smith started again for Nineveh, returning to London June 9th, 1874.

“During these researches he discovered some three thousand tablets and fragments of tablets containing inscriptions,—most of which were found in the buried rooms around the ‘chambers of record,’—besides numerous sculptures and relics in various parts of the ruins. On his return to England he published a volume, entitled ‘Assyrian Discoveries,’\* which contains translations of some of these tablets, and among

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\*“Assyrian Discoveries.” By George Smith, 8vo, pp. 461. London: Sampson Low & Co. New York: Scribner, Armstrong & Co.

them the account of the Deluge, as complete as he could make it, indicating defects in the plates by lines of periods, and conjectural translations by points of interrogation."

These inscriptions not only describe the Deluge and the Ark; but even the dove and her olive-branch have found a place therein. The narration is not identical with that of the Bible; there is enough difference between the two to establish the fact that the accounts are entirely independent of each other. And the difference is no greater than must be expected, coming as they do through such different channels; while the points of agreement are so numerous and striking that they demand our closest attention and highest respect. The Biblical account was recorded by an inland people, who were not familiar with nautical terms, and hence the medium of safety is called by them an Ark, or chest; while in the Assyrian account, which is given by a maritime people, it is called a ship. Other differences on minor points may be noticed; but the proof is incontestable, that four thousand years or more ago the Babylonians had written records of a flood like that recorded in the Book of Genesis. The leading ideas of these stone-written tablets may be classified as follows: 1. That the inhabitants of the world became very wicked. 2. That a deluge was threatened as a Divine judgment for their sins. 3. That one holy man was commanded to build a ship, that he might escape this flood. 4. That the sinner and all life were to be destroyed. 5. That the seed of all life was to be taken into the ship for preservation. 6. That the state of



the world was such that the building of this ship would bring much derision upon him who did it. 7. That by an express Divine command the ark was built. 8. That unto this vessel the patriarch was commanded to gather great store of grain, provisions, and valuables. 9. That his household were also to enter the ark for safety. 10. That the Divine Ruler would gather the beasts of the field, that they also might be enclosed in the ship. 11. That the vessel was pitched without and within with pitch, or bitumen. 12. That offerings for sacrifice were placed in the vessel. 13. That this man and his household and the animals did enter within the ship. 14. That the door was shut. 15. That a terrible rain burst upon the world. 16. That the deluge overswept and desolated the earth. 17. That the human race was drowned and turned to corruption, and their bodies floated like reeds upon the sea. 18. That the flood destroyed all, like an earthquake. 19. That God caused the waters to assuage or dry up. 20. That the patriarch opened the window of the ship and looked out. 21. That the ship rested upon a mountain. 22. That he sent out birds from the ark. 23. That some of the birds returned, and others did not. 24. That the returning bird was a dove. 25. That the other was a raven. 26. That the patriarch turned forth the beasts to the four winds in the earth. 27. That he then builded an altar. 28. That this altar was upon a peak of the mountain. 29. That offerings were prepared by sevens. 30. That great brightness and glory were exhibited in connection with these offerings. 31. That the patriarch was favoured by the Deity. 32.

That he was assured that, whatever calamities were to come, from lions, and leopards, and famine, and pestilence, no deluge should ever come upon the world again. 33. That at last the Divine Being, when His judgment was accomplished, purified the country and established a covenant with His people.

There is a large class of sceptics who are continually calling for *facts*; and here are facts clear enough and strong enough to demand their attention for some time. We earnestly invite them to an examination of the tablets of Nineveh containing an account of the Deluge. They were deposited in the library of a Babylonish king who lived more than twenty-five hundred years ago (having been then copied from records of still greater antiquity), and they have been buried in the dust and ruins of ancient Nineveh for two thousand years; they have been neither revised nor corrected, and they stand to-day in the British museum, silently giving their powerful testimony in behalf of truth.

All students are familiar with the story of the Deluge as related by Berosus, a Chaldean priest who lived about three hundred years before Christ, and whose account wonderfully confirms the Bible record; but the Assyrian tablets give another distinct and entirely independent story of the Flood, and their antiquity is much greater.

Wise (?) critics, with Voltaire at their head, decided long ago that Nineveh, the metropolis of the ancients, could never have been so large as stated in the Old Testament. Poor Voltaire has gone down to the shades

of death with these reckless assertions upon his lips; but the earth has been opened, and her very stones refute his blasphemous assumption. Nineveh herself has shaken off the dust of ages, and brings to-day her unimpeachable testimony. Layard states that the discoveries made by the digging up of the ruins bear witness to Jonah's statement concerning the size of the ancient city.

In the ruins of the old Egyptian temples have been found pictures and hieroglyphics revealing the servitude of the sons of Abraham and inscriptions confirming the books of Moses.

Bunsen testifies to this fact as well as Hengstenberg; and in later times their statements are confirmed by the celebrated Egyptologist, George Ebers of Leipsic.

It has often been supposed that Moses was guilty of exaggeration when he wrote in reference to the conquest of Bashan: "We took all his cities at that time . . . *threescore cities*, all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. All these cities were fenced with high walls, gates, and bars; besides unwalled towns a great many." Bishop Colenso, among others, ridiculed this apparently absurd statement.

But, says J. L. Porter, A.M., in his *Five Years in Damascus*: "Mysterious and incredible as it seemed, *with mine own eyes I have seen that it is literally true*. The walled cities in full number, with their ponderous gates and bars, are there to-day, and the unwalled towns as well; standing testimonies to the accuracy of Moses, and monumental protests against the poetic interpretations of modern rationalists." The same

author says that, "Although Bashan must be named among the most interesting and picturesque of the provinces of Palestine, yet it remains comparatively unknown. While Western Palestine is traversed by the tourist every year, the travellers who have succeeded in exploring Bashan scarcely number half a dozen. The land is in the hand of the infidel and the enemy; the state of the country is altogether unsettled; and the Bedouin marauder still holds his hand against every man. But this very isolation immensely enhances the charm of the region. Both the land and the people remain thoroughly Oriental, just as they were in the days of Job and Abraham.

"And another peculiarity is very striking, and becomes intensely interesting. While the ancient cities and even the villages of Western Palestine have been almost annihilated, and the monuments subsequently reared by the wealth and the genius of Imperial Rome are fast mouldering to decay, the state of the country of Bashan is totally different. Here the land is literally crowded with towns and villages, deserted, the most of them, it is true, but not ruined. Many of the houses are standing to-day as perfect as if finished only yesterday, the doors and even the window shutters being in their places. And if any one in amazement shall ask again, 'How can these things be?' the answer is ready to hand. These are the gigantic cities which 'the sons of giants' built more than three thousand years ago. They were built for eternity! The walls are from five to eight feet thick, and made of large blocks of basalt:

the roofs are formed of slabs like planks, hewn out of the quarry, and reaching from wall to wall; and the doors and the window shutters are of stone, hung upon pivots projecting from above and below."

Infidels have also questioned the truthfulness of the books of Samuel and of Kings; but the stones in the land of Moab have cried out against them. A tablet of rock has been discovered, bearing an inscription concerning Mesha, the king of Moab.

The German philologists, Ichlottman, Noeldeck, and others, have translated the record, and lo! the inscription verifies in a striking manner the statements of Bible writers concerning king Mesha and the history of his reign.

During a recent visit, Prof. Owen, an English savant, discovered the tables of the old Egyptian law. These tables contain thirty commandments, and among the thirty are *seven* of the ten commandments of the old *Mosaic Decalogue*. The Egyptian law is founded upon these; the other precepts referring to matters of minor importance, such as the removal of a neighbour's landmarks, etc.

A recent exploring party among the pyramids discovered in the rocky depths, beyond the "king's chamber," a manuscript, which was sealed up in a cavity of rock. On being brought to Europe and translated, it was found to be almost identical with the five books of Moses. But the story of the Pyramids has not half been told. Treasures of knowledge are concealed in their rocky depths which science must yet unveil before our wondering eyes. They

contain evidence of truth which is as firm as their own foundations ; for God's Word declares that " In that day there shall be an altar to the Lord in the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord. *And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt.*"

Beneath the plain where the Arab has roamed and pitched his tent for ages, records have been found which were placed there twenty-five hundred years ago. This is a testimony which was "graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever," and which, being placed side by side with the pages of Holy Writ, they are found to-day to answer one to the other as doth a man's face in the glass.

And the end is not yet. Science is only *beginning* her investigations. This is the morning of discovery, and the first faint light has illumined the rocky caverns of earth ; but they shall yet stand revealed in the glorious noontide of truth, for every rock-bound page bears witness to the immutability of God's Word.

The children of Israel sleep in the wilderness, but their testimony lives in the rocks that tower above their heads. The cloud of fire and glory no longer rests upon Sinai's brow, but it stands in the wilderness to-day, an unimpeachable witness for truth.

The glory of Assyria lies as low as her fallen kings ; but the truth of God is still engraven upon her very foundations. The waves of time have beaten down the temples of ancient Egypt, but have left still legible her stone-cut records.

The land of Bashan is deserted and apparently

almost forgotten by the civilized world; yet there stand her stone-cut cities and rock-hewn villages, silent but imperishable monuments to the accuracy of Holy Writ.

The prophecies concerning the land of Moab have been literally fulfilled. Her lands are laid waste, her cities are desolate, and the glory of Nebo is spoiled; but the very stones which lie among her ruins still testify to the living truth.

While kingdoms have risen and fallen around them, the grey pyramids have stood alone, like sentinels on the coast of time. Centuries have swept over their brows; but, ever faithful to their ancient trust, the rock-bound records have been safely kept, and lo! to-day they stand revealed as witnesses for God.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### EARLY PROGRESS OF TRUTH.

IGNOMINY OF THE CROSS.—OPPOSITION OF CHRISTIANITY TO ALL  
OTHER RELIGIONS.—THE WIDE CIRCULATION OF ITS TRUTHS.  
—PERSECUTION OF ITS ADVOCATES.



**F** the miracles of Christ and His apostles were not far above the suspicion of fraud, the rapid spread of Christianity in that early age was the strangest phenomenon that the world has ever witnessed. No explanation of it which the infidel can offer will be satisfactory *even to himself*. If we except the learned and gifted Paul, the disciples and apostles of our Lord were men of low estate; they were tax-gatherers and fishermen, and even their Master was a carpenter's son. These were the men, of humble birth and condition, that were chosen to make known the nature of faith to both kings and philosophers. They had neither influence, power, nor learning to aid them in their mighty work.

And what was the message they bore? It was far from being attractive to the desires of man. The death of the Messiah, and especially the manner of His death, presented in that age an obstacle which was apparently insurmountable. Both Jews and Romans regarded crucifixion as ignominious in the extreme.



Among the Jews especially, it was held in absolute horror; and they regarded the victim as execrated by man and abandoned and cast off by God. The saying of their law, "Cursed is every one that is hanged on a tree," was to them literal in the extreme. They improved every opportunity of casting reproach upon the religion of Jesus on account of the death of its Author upon the cross. Says Trypho the Jew, in his debate with Justin Martyr, A.D. 140: "The person whom you call your Messiah incurred the last disgrace and ignominy, for He fell under the greatest curse in the law of God—*He was crucified.*" The heathen views upon the same subject were nearly as strong. It was a punishment inflicted only on the most notorious criminals; and, it is claimed by some, not even then unless they were slaves. In all the minds of that age it was the strongest combination of disgrace and public scandal. Hence the Apostle Paul unfurls his banner in the face of the world, and cries: "We preach *Christ crucified*: unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness."

To the philosophers of Greece and Rome, the idea of making one who had been crucified the author of a religion for the world, was indeed *foolishness*; and they looked with contempt upon the apostles for engaging in such a ridiculous and hopeless enterprise.

More than this, the religion of Jesus was at war with long-cherished opinions, with venerated superstitions, and all the ancient ceremonies of both Jews and heathen. It began by sweeping down every other religion: it admitted of no compromise; it denounced

all other gods but One, and all other worship but the true.

It came to the Jew in condemnation of his long prayers and repeated fasts while weightier matters were omitted. It even made to him the startling announcement that the dispensation of the Law was at an end. The glory and splendour of the Temple service were to give place to the simple forms of worship instituted by the humble Nazarene. Forms and ceremonies and broad pylacteries were to be done away, and they were to look upon even the despised Gentiles as children of Abraham and heirs of the promise through faith. All this *must* be done, was the language of the new religion to a people who have always been famed for their bigotry and exclusiveness, and for a strong attachment to their institutions.

To the heathen it came in a form no more attractive. It commanded them to throw away their gods of brass and wood and stone, to cast down their gorgeous temples and altars, and turn to the living God. Their most sacred superstitions were denounced as abominations, and the practices their fathers had honoured were condemned. The learning of their sages, the philosophy of their Platos and Ciceros were ignored, and their wise men and teachers were pronounced "blind leaders of the blind." How could the humble fishermen of Judea expect to succeed against such fearful odds? Surely, only upon the ground that their message was God's eternal truth, and that God Himself was with them.

And *they did succeed*. Their own testimony upon this

point is conclusive; for as many as three thousand believed in one day. But we will quote from heathen and infidel authors. Tacitus, the Roman historian, in giving an account of the great fire at Rome, which took place in the year 64, says that the Christians were punished by Nero, who accused them of being incendiaries; he also says, in speaking of their religion, that this "pernicious superstition spread itself, not only *all over Judea*, the first source of this evil, but even introduced itself into Rome. At first only those who confessed themselves of that sect were apprehended; but afterwards a *great multitude* were convicted."\*

Pliny, in his celebrated letter to Trajan in 107, in reference to putting Christians to torture on account of their faith, says: "Informations are pouring in against *multitudes* of every age, of all orders and of both sexes, and many more will be impeached; for the contagion of this superstition hath spread *not only through cities, but villages* also, and *even reached the farm houses*; I am of opinion nevertheless that it may be checked."

Among the early Christians, Justin Martyr testified that in his day "there was no part of mankind, whether Greeks or barbarians, where there were not some Christians, and where prayers were not offered to God through the crucified Jesus." Irenæus, who also lived in the second century, speaks of Churches in Germany, Spain, the East, Egypt, and Lybia. Tertullian affirms at the close of the second century, that Christ had been

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\* Tacit., Ann., l. 15, c. 44.

preached to all nations known to the Romans, and to many that their conquering arm had not reached. He names the Parthians, Medes, Elamites, the inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Armenia, Phrygia, Cappadocia, Pontus, Pamphylia, some parts of Africa, the various nations of Spain, Gaul, and Britain, of Germany, Scythia, and many unknown nations, and several unknown provinces and islands. The inhabitants of these, he says, had heard the Gospel, and though unsubdued by the Romans, *many* of them had submitted to Christ.\* All this was before the year 200, and the testimony refers to the learned as well as the unlearned. It is established beyond a doubt, that in less than forty years after the death of Christ, *multitudes* in Judea, Egypt, Lesser Asia, Greece, and Italy,—the great theatres of the arts and sciences, of learning and philosophy,—had embraced the religion of the crucified Nazarene. Thus the system of Christianity, though directly opposed to the views and temporal interests of mankind, was promulgated by a few obscure and unlettered fishermen of Judea, and that too in the face of all possible prejudice and in the midst of a storm of persecution. We appeal to the honest and candid infidel, whether such a religion, with such advocates, *could* have met with so much success, without the help of God. Unless they bore the living truth, it is utterly incredible that these poor and unlearned men should have gone on victorious over the fiercest opposition. The tyranny of the

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\* Grotius, "De Veritate," l. ii., § 18, where much additional testimony may be found upon the same point.

magistrate, the theories of philosophy, and the bigotry of the Jews were alike overcome, until the voice of their faith had been heard in every land—until at last their followers, in the language of Gibbon, “erected the triumphant banner of the Cross on the ruins of the Capitol” of Rome.

This wonderful progress cannot be imputed to a wave of popularity; for the persecutions of the early Christians would be incredible if they were not sustained by the strongest historical proofs.

The Jews sent persons into all parts of the country to denounce the Christians as impious and heretical. Their Rabbis pronounced curses against them in the synagogues. They seized every opportunity to accuse them that they might be put to death.

At the hands of the heathen they received no better treatment. Domestics were induced to give evidence against them; and murders were purposely committed by others, that Christians might be accused. For this purpose also *their wives and children were put to torture*, that in their agony they might drop something that would furnish a matter of charge.\* Says Professor Tyndall: “The sufferings of the early Christians, and the extraordinary exaltation of mind which enabled them to triumph over the diabolical tortures to which they were subjected (depicted with terrible vividness in Renan’s “Antichrist”), must have left traces not easily effaced.” †

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\* See Dr. Thayer.

† See the Inaugural Address before the British Association. By John Tyndall, D.C.L., LL.D., F.R.S., President.

Gibbon, the candid but infidel historian, cannot be accused of prejudice in their favour ; but he says : “ If the empire had been afflicted with any recent calamity— a plague, a famine, or an unsuccessful war ; if the Tiber had, or the Nile had not, risen beyond its banks ; if the earth had been shaken, or the temperate order of the seasons had been interrupted, the superstitious pagans were convinced that Christians had provoked the Divine Justice.

“ The impatient clamours of the multitude denounced them as the enemies of both gods and men, doomed them to the severest tortures, and required with irresistible vehemence that their bodies should be apprehended and cast to the lions.”

Tacitus tells us, that when the calamity of the great fire fell upon Rome, Nero inflicted the most exquisite tortures upon the Christians. He says : “ They died in torments, and their torments were embittered by insult and derision : some were nailed on crosses ; others were sewn up in the skins of wild animals and exposed to the fury of dogs ; others again, smeared over with combustible materials, were used as torches to illuminate the darkness of night. The gardens of Nero were destined for the spectacle, which was accompanied with the games of the circus, while Nero mingled with the multitude as a charioteer.”

Says Gibbon : “ The most sceptical criticism is obliged to respect the truth of this extraordinary fact, and the integrity of this celebrated passage from Tacitus. The former is confirmed by the diligent and accurate Suetonius, who mentions the punishment

which Nero inflicted on the Christians. The latter may be proved by the consent of the most ancient manuscripts,—by the inimitable character of the style of Tacitus,—by his reputation, which guarded his text from the interpolation of pious fraud, and by the purport of his narration.” Thus the testimony of the heathen historian is most emphatically endorsed by Gibbon, and we ask the infidel in all candour, *if such progress as the truth made in the face of such persecution as this, is not the most stupendous miracle that the world ever saw? There is no solution of the problem except the true one, viz., that these men were inspired by God, and miracles confirmed their mission: that the Holy Spirit fell upon them, and they spake with tongues.* How can the sceptic account for the fact that men should fearlessly and with unfaltering faith meet such terrible sufferings, unless the great principles and facts of the Christian religion were true?

Can it be possible that the disciples would submit to every conceivable torture, when they knew they were testifying to falsehood, and that confession would save them?

Would they endure this long train of evils and horrors, for the purpose of keeping up an imposition which could be of no earthly benefit to either themselves or anybody else—an imposition which from the first had brought them only imprisonment, and stripes, and chains, and racks, and stocks?

Would the sceptic or anybody else, whether honest or dishonest, submit to have their property confiscated and themselves put to the rack, placed in red-hot

iron chains, crucified, impaled, or burnt alive *for the sake of attesting a falsehood*, when, by renouncing that falsehood, they could escape these horrors? We cannot avoid this difficulty by claiming that the early Christians *were deceived*; for, as we have before demonstrated, this was impossible. They did not suffer martyrdom for what they *believed*, but for what *they knew*.

Other religions have been advanced by other means. The creed of Mahomet was enforced at the point of the sword, and its leader was a military chieftain. The religion of Jesus was promulgated in direct opposition to military power, and its advocates were forbidden to use weapons if they had them, even though it might be in self-defence.

The Great Leader sent His apostles out into the world with a declaration without a parallel in any age. He says: "I send you forth as sheep among wolves." Their only weapon was the "sword of the spirit;" their only defence was the gospel armour: while the foes they met were armed with legal power and literal swords. Their ministry was attended by want and privation; their salaries were often stripes and stocks and prison cells. After twenty-five years of faithful labour they could say: "Even to this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place; and labour, working with our hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it . . . we are counted as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things." Surely nothing could have sustained these men, in their



long pilgrimage of labour, trial, and sorrow, save the *absolute certainty* of that "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" that the golden future held for them. No doubts obscured their vision; for they told the story of what they had *heard* and *seen*. They *knew* whereof they affirmed, and sealed their testimony with their blood.

Other religions have been upheld by the State, protected by magistrates, and sustained from public treasuries; but the religion of Jesus was advanced in opposition to the edicts of kings and emperors. Magistrates could not suppress its God-given truth even with stripes and stocks. Christianity went into all parts of the Roman earth, though it went through martyr fires, and every track was stained with blood. Persecution in all ages has been the birthright of the true Church and her safeguard from worldly ambition. When the sword hangs over her head and the clouds gather around the horizon, when her only crown is thorns and her garments are dabbled with blood, she cannot falter in her way, for she knows that God is her strength and shield. But if prosperity attends her footsteps, and she places her trust in man, and "maketh flesh her arm," apostasy is the sure result. When, in the days of Constantine, she won her way to the throne, and the banner of the cross was flung over the empire, the dark ages followed fast in the wake of prosperity, and true Christianity was driven to the dens and caves of the earth.



## CHAPTER VII.

### MIRACLES.

HUME'S POSITION.—CHRIST'S MIRACLES ADMITTED BY EARLY INFIDEL WRITERS.—JEWISH TRADITION ACCOUNTING FOR HIS POWER.—FALSE MIRACLES COMPARED WITH THE GENUINE.—IMPOSTORS DARE NOT ATTEMPT TO RAISE THE DEAD.



It is claimed by the opposers of the Bible, under the leadership of Hume, that nothing can be done which is contrary to the "laws of nature;" and as there are certain miraculous events recorded in the Scriptures, they are at once rejected as unworthy of credence. Much depends; however, upon the definition that we attach to the word "miracle." If the word means that which is in direct conflict with *all* law, then indeed there could seem to be some ground for the objection; but if it only means some act outside of finite experience, the objection loses its force.

Viewed from a human standpoint, *everything* is miraculous. We are surrounded by wonders on every hand. The universe is one vast miracle; and it requires more faith to believe that its harmony of mechanism came by chance, than to acknowledge it as the result of a Creative Hand. Every law of nature has been originated independent of man, who can neither

conceive nor execute one of them. But to that Power which controls the universe and executes its laws, *there are no miracles*. It depends altogether upon whether we look at this matter from the side of weakness or the side of power. Every sceptic must admit the existence of *some* creative and controlling hand, whatever name he may choose to give it; and for him to argue that the Power which *created* the elements *cannot change* them if He will, is puerile in the extreme.

Every change of seasons is a miracle that might be hard to believe if we had not witnessed it; but from the frequency of its occurrence it excites no wonder. If we lived in a land of constant sunshine, we might not comprehend the darkness of night or the philosophy of storms; while, in a region of perpetual darkness, the story of the sunlight would be incredible.

Hence, if miracles had been perpetuated through the ages, they would lose their power and influence from their frequency. They were wrought only to confirm the Word of God and to identify the mission of Christ and His apostles. Having done their work, and done it well, their dispensation is closed and sealed.

The proofs are irresistible that the miracles of Jesus were actually wrought, and wrought in the same way that the Bible claims. The early Christians and Christian writers were surrounded by unscrupulous and vigilant foes; and if these statements were false or exaggerated they would have been buried at their source.

These miracles were wrought in open day, and many of them in the presence of both friends and foes.

There was no chance for concealment, nothing was taken for granted, and they were of a character that would admit of no deception. When five thousand men, besides women and children, were fed with five loaves and two fishes, there were thousands of witnesses that *knew it was done*. They not only saw the food, but they *handled and ate it*; hence they could not be deceived.

When the Son of God "touched the bier," when He broke the seal of death and loosed the widow's son, there was no room for doubt; for the man they had seen in the embrace of death took his place again among the living.

When Lazarus was called from his grave, he was called also from the state of death; and when his friends took him by the hand and heard his voice again, they *knew* they were not deceived.

It is incredible to suppose that any man or any company of men would dare to pen such statements as these in the face of that generation, if they were not true. But that they were *positively true*, and their truth universally admitted, is evident from the fact, that for two or three hundred years after Christ, even infidel writers did not attempt to deny them.

Celsus, the Epicurean philosopher, who wrote against Christianity only seventy-six years after the Apostle John, was one of the most bitter antagonists it ever had. And yet from the works of this enemy of the faith may be gathered a complete summary of the gospel history. He mentions the birth of Christ, the wise men who came to worship Him, the massacre of

the children by Herod, and Joseph's flight into Egypt with the child Jesus. He also speaks of the baptism of Christ, of the descent of the Holy Spirit, and His going about with His disciples, whom Celsus calls boatmen, publicans, and wicked sailors. He also states that *this same Jesus healed the sick and lame, and raised the dead*; and that He foretold His own death and resurrection. The same writer speaks of His being betrayed and deserted by His disciples; of the crucifixion, with the attendant circumstances—the robe, the crown of thorns, the reed, the vinegar and gall. He mentions too His being seen by Mary (whom he calls a fanatical woman), and His interview with the unbelieving Thomas.

These things he does not call in question; he admits that they are *facts*. He does not attempt to deny that Christ wrought miracles, but he denies that these made Christ of so much importance as His followers claimed. And to justify his remarks upon this point, he ascribes the power of Jesus in working miracles to MAGIC. Modern infidels may smile at the arguments of this primitive writer on their side of the question, but they may well wonder *why*, if miracles were a fraud, the fact was not suspected *then*, and by the wisest philosophers of that age.

If we come down to the year 270, we meet with another learned and subtle opposer to the truth, in the person of the celebrated Porphyry. He wrote a lengthy and laboured treatise against the religion of the Christians. He refers to numerous circumstances recorded in the Scriptures, and makes an effort to show

that some things were absurd and immoral. It is noticeable, however, that *he does not attack their authenticity*. He admits that the Gospels were written by the disciples; and that Christ Himself was a pious man and was conveyed to heaven as approved by the gods. *He acknowledges that Christ wrought miracles*, but says that He had done it through the agency of demons. How he reconciles this charge with the admission that Christ was a good man, of course it is difficult to see; but it is fully as consistent as many of the modern attacks upon the same point.

Porphyry had employed much time and talent in his efforts to overthrow Christianity; and if the miracles of Jesus *could* have been proved false, he certainly could have done it in that early day. And had it been possible to show that the gospels were not written by their reputed authors, *he would have shown it*, for he did attempt to prove that the Book of Daniel was not written by him nor at the time stated. If there had been any hope of a successful attack in this direction upon the New Testament, he would not have spared the gospels; but the facts recorded in them were then so recent that he dared not deny them or question their well-known authenticity.

In the year 309 Hierocles, a well-known philosopher and prefect at the city of Alexandria in Egypt, composed two books against Christianity, in which he comments upon many passages in the "New Testament." The proof of Christianity derived from the miracles of Christ he attempts to weaken, *not by denying that these miracles were performed—this he admits;*

but by attempting to show that one Apollonius had performed miracles equal to them.

Our next witness upon this point is the apostate Julian, who became Emperor of Rome in the year 361. He had been a Christian; but renounced his faith, and became a steady and persevering enemy to the religion of the Bible, employing all his talents and genius to crush it.

The volume which he wrote against Christianity is full of bitterness; but with all his malice he is forced to admit the truth of its great facts. He grants the genuineness and early date of the gospels, acknowledges that Christ had power over evil spirits, that He walked on the sea, as related by Matthew, Mark, and John; and indeed *does not pretend to deny the miracles*, but aims only to depreciate them. He says, "Jesus has now been celebrated about three hundred years, having done nothing in His lifetime worthy of remembrance, unless any one thinks it a mighty matter to heal lame and blind people and exorcise demoniacs in the villages of Bethsaida and Bethany."

It must be borne in mind that these men were learned and also shrewd; they were the avowed enemies of the Christian religion, and if there had been the least suspicion of either fraud or exaggeration on the part of the Bible writers, they would have eagerly availed themselves of it; and as *even they* admit all that we claim on this point, we consider that the evidence was and is *conclusive*.

Even the malicious Jews, who hated Jesus of Nazareth as perhaps no other people could, *admitted that*

*He performed wonderful works; but they declared that He derived His power either from demons, or from having stolen from the Temple the secret of the ineffable name. There was a tradition among the Jewish people, that the name of Jehovah (which it was not lawful to pronounce) was written upon a stone in the Temple, and that whoever should possess himself of this would be able to do anything he pleased. They further claimed that it was guarded by two brass dogs, which, should any one obtain the name, would bark so terribly at his coming out that he could not remember it. "But," say they, "when Jesus of Nazareth went in, He not only learned the letters of this name, but wrote them in a parchment, and hid it as He came out in an incision which He had made in His flesh; and though, through the barking of the dogs, He forgot the name, yet He learned it afterwards from His parchment. And it was by virtue of this that He restored the lame, healed the leprous, raised the dead, walked upon the sea, and did all His other miraculous works."\**

Here is a method of accounting for these things that will probably be new to many of the infidels of the 19th century. We commend it to them; and would ask in all candour if they consider it satisfactory.

There is only one other argument that has or can be advanced on this point, and that is, that miracles have been performed, by others. That other men can perform the miracles that Jesus and His apostles wrought, we positively and fearlessly deny. That

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\* See Grotius, "De Veritate," lib. v. 4.



impostors have *pretended* to do this we freely admit ; and therein lies one of the strongest proofs of the Divine mission of the Son of God. The very existence of the spurious is proof positive of the value of the genuine.

What band of counterfeiters ever attempted to imitate the bills of a broken or a worthless bank ? If there were no genuine coin, who would ingeniously mould the counterfeit, and attempt to deceive therewith the unsuspecting ? Evidently, none. Thus we summon the whole race of pretenders, from Jannes and Jambres that withstood Moses, down to the latest wonder-worker of the 19th century, as unwilling witnesses to the truths of the Christian Scriptures.

Spurious miracles are very different from those of Jesus, for they are usually performed in the dark, or in a very faint light at best, and often only in the presence of friends, so that only a friendly report of them can reach the public ear. The works of the Bible were wrought *before* Christianity was established, and in the face of all preconceived opinions ; they were wrought to overturn the favourite sentiments of man and to lower his pride.

The Papal and Mohammedan miracles (so called) were wrought only after the establishment of those systems, and after the people had been prepared to receive them. Hence, in the one case, *they would not be received* if they were not genuine beyond a doubt or a cavil ; while in the other, the people were so ready, willing, and eager to believe, that they were satisfied with even a very poor counterfeit.

The miracles of Jesus were performed with neither boasting nor parade ; but on the contrary with modesty, and evidently with no wish for notoriety. This was an infallible sign of his sincerity and honesty.

Pretended miracles have always been wrought with boasting and a great assumption of power and pride, which is a certain symptom of fraud.

The miracles of Jesus were received and recorded by *eye-witnesses*, and in the midst of a generation that *knew* whether or not they were true ; while those of impostors are often *first heard of* far away from where it is claimed that they were performed.

In the genuine miracles the power was *always infallible*. The Son of God never laid His hand upon a withered limb and failed to restore it "whole as the other;" He never attempted to feed the multitude when He suffered any to go away empty ; He never touched the eyes of the blind without giving them sight ; He never bade the smitten leper to "be clean" when His voice was unheeded by the disease ; He never commanded demons when they did not tremblingly obey ; His tones *never failed* to reach the ear of the deaf and waken the voice of the dumb.

What a difference—who can fail to realize it?—between Him and the "healing mediums" of to-day ? He went about simply "doing good ;" He sought no fame and asked for no reward. They advertise their coming in the daily press, and in many instances spend money freely for "puffs." The weak and credulous often seek relief at their hands, and the intelligent public is well acquainted with the general result. Where one

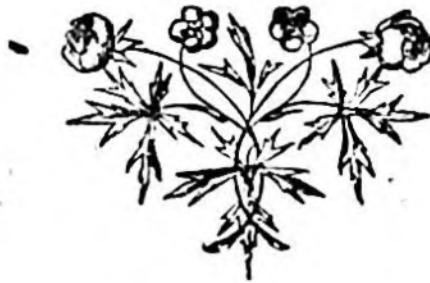
is suffering from a nervous disease, however, he sometimes fancies that he has received help from this application of animal magnetism. When this is the case, instead of "charging them straitly that they tell no man," these modern performers have the case heralded by the many-tongued press, that their fame may be increased and their finances improved by its influence. But they must all admit that many *diseases* are *entirely unaffected* by their manipulations, and no man of them all will dare attempt to *raise a dead man to life*. Here is a new field for them to experiment in. If modern "healers" can either raise the dead or "cast out devils," they had better go to work at once; for they will find business enough in either direction, and table-tipping is purely a waste of time.

The miracles of Jesus differed greatly from all frauds and impositions, in that they were *always* wrought with an object in view, and that object was to *benefit mankind*. Some good was always accomplished; the paralytic was restored and the multitude fed; the dumb were taught to sing praises and the lame man to leap as an hart; floods of beauty and glory were opened to the eyes of the blind; and the loathsome leper became as fair as a little child. If Christ walked upon the waves, it was to comfort and cheer His little band of disciples with His presence; if He stilled the tempest, it was to quiet their fears and save them from shipwreck; if He spake to the dead, it was to call them back to life.

The Son of God *raised the dead*. Into His hand even the king of terrors resigned his sceptre; for it is the

hand that holds the keys of the grave. ' This sublime fact is unapproachable ; the foot of the impostor dare not venture on this hallowed ground, for here is no room for fraud, no chance for deception. This act must remain for ever without a parallel until the earth and sea yield to the cry, "*Give up thy dead!*"

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### PROPHECIES OF CHRIST.

ANTIQUITY OF THE JEWISH SCRIPTURES.—FULFILLED PROPHECIES.—ADMISSIONS OF SCEPTICS.



HERE is but one mind in the universe to which the past and the future are alike familiar, and that is the mind of God Himself. It is only He who controls the destinies of nations; who can write their histories in advance of the ages. It is only the eye of Omniscience that can pierce the veil of futurity and reveal the secrets that lie in its fathomless depths. Hence the prophecies are among the strongest proofs of the Divine origin of the sacred books. Many other evidences are indisputable, but *prophecy fulfilled is truth verified*. There is no problem in mathematics more clearly demonstrated than the fundamental truths of the Christian Religion. The strongest sceptic, if he be honest, must admit that only the Power that created the universe can read its future history. If then we can present a single prophecy which was given in the distant past and definitely fulfilled in after ages, it is for ever stamped with God's own hand and seal, which can never be coun-

terfeited. And when we are able to point out, not one prediction alone, but hundreds, the fulfilment of which could only be known to the Infinite Mind, the weight of evidence is overwhelming.

If, then, the books of the Bible contain these prophecies,—if they have been fulfilled and are now fulfilling around us,—it stamps those books with a Divine authority which no man of intelligence can question.

The sceptic who investigates this subject must accept these books as being of Divine origin; or he must hide behind the weak and pitiful subterfuge that “the prophecies were written after the events which they foretold took place.” This statement is a tribute to the perfect precision with which the predictions have been fulfilled; but it is an assertion which no scholar dares to make, for every historian *knows* it to be absolutely false.

Of the antiquity of the Old Testament books there is the amplest proof. The laws given through Moses form the very constitution of the Jewish State, and the writings of the Jewish lawgiver are therefore traceable to the very organization of that ancient people as a nation. They contain the moral and civil law of that people, as well as their earliest history and many of the prophecies. They were recognized by the Jews, even in the earliest ages, as being of Divine authority, and as such they were sacredly preserved and kept unaltered, Josephus declares that “During as many ages as have already passed, no one has been so bold as to add anything to them, or to take anything from them, or to make any change in them.” This people

was so scrupulous in their care of the sacred text that they *counted* the large and small sections, the verses, the words, and in some of the books even the letters. They also reckoned which is the middle letter of the Pentateuch, which is the middle clause of each book, and how many times each letter of the alphabet occurs in all the Hebrew scriptures. In some of their copies also every word was numbered and the number placed over the word, so that any addition or elimination (should any one dare attempt it) might be immediately detected \*

It was in express reference to the prophecies concerning the Messiah that Tacitus calls these books "the *ancient* writings." Even the very language in which they were written (the ancient Hebrew idiom) had ceased to be spoken before the coming of Christ, "No stronger evidence," says Dr. Keith, "of their antiquity could be alleged than what is indisputably true, and if it were to be questioned *every other truth of ancient history* must first be set aside." It appears to be easy for some men to state that "Moses was a myth," that "the prophets never existed" and their writings were forgeries," etc. ; but it is quite another matter to furnish *any proof* of these reckless statements. They might as well undertake to prove that Josephus never existed and that the writings of Tacitus were forgeries, that Herodotus never wrote, that Rollin never existed, that Gibbon was a novelist and his works were romances. The antiquity of the Old Testament scriptures has been

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\* See Allen's "Modern Judaism," Simon's Critical History, 6-26.

recognised for ages, and no respectable historian has ever disputed their claim.\*

One of the most remarkable features of the Jewish religion is, that while it was infinitely superior to any other system then in existence, it acknowledged that it was preparing the way for a future and more perfect revelation.

It taught the worship of the only true and eternal Jehovah, but it was burdened with rites and ceremonies which were only adapted to a peculiar people and a peculiar age. But the coming of a Saviour and the opening of a new dispensation gleams in glory among the prophetic writings. While our first parents yet tarried in Eden, the woman received a promise that her seed should yet bruise the head of the serpent (Gen. iii. 15). And this is the first prophecy of Christ that is found upon the sacred page—the promise that He should come to redeem the world from the sin-power.

*The time of His appearing* is also foretold as being before the destruction of the second temple. “Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts” (Mal. iii. 1).

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\* Josephus declares that, even at the time of his writing, the Jewish records contained the names of their high priests from father to son for two thousand years. He also proves the great antiquity of that people from the records of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Phœnicians, besides many of the Greek writers.



He was to appear while yet the descendants of Judah remained a united people; for "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come" (Gen. xlix. 10).

These prophecies were literally fulfilled, for He came while every stone in the beautiful Temple remained unmoved, and prophesied of the time when "not one stone should remain upon another that should not be thrown down." He came while the tribe of Judah still retained its sceptre. The other tribes were extinct or dispersed among the nations, and Judah alone remained. But soon after, the sceptre was smitten from the hands of the tribe, their lawgivers passed away, and their glory departed. See also Luke ii. 1-7.

The time was so clearly defined in the prophetic writings, that the expectation of a great king or deliverer was prevalent and general among the Jews at the time of His appearing. And they will even now acknowledge that the time when their Messiah should have appeared, according to their prophecies, has long since passed. Tacitus, Suetonius, Josephus, and Philo agree in testifying to the great antiquity of the prophecies and their acknowledged reference to that period \*

*He was to be born of a Virgin.* "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign. Behold a virgin shall conceive and shall bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel." This prediction also is so plain that it cannot be mistaken; it even specifies one of the names of the Christ.

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\* See Tacitus, vol. 5, chap. 13.

*He was to be the son of Isaac, and not of Ishmael* (Gen. xvii. 19). *He should be descended from Jesse the father of David.* “And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears: but with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins” (Isa. xi. 1-5). See also verse 10: “And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and His rest shall be glorious.”

*A messenger was to be sent before Him, that should preach in the wilderness.* “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God” (Isa. xl. 3).

*Christ was to be born in Bethlehem.* “But thou Bethlehem Ephrata, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting” (Mic. v. 2).

*He was to be rejected by the Jews.* "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him" (Isa. liii. 1, 2). Please see the whole chapter. It is an exact prediction of the mission and sufferings of the Messiah. And so vividly is the picture drawn before the prophet's mind that he, as in many other instances, speaks of those things which were to be, as if they were.

*He was to be a prophet like unto Moses.* "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, *like unto me*; unto Him shall ye hearken."

The points of similarity between them are so numerous and striking that they cannot fail to attract attention. Moses' life was sought in infancy; and Herod tried in vain to find the child Jesus, that he might slay Him. Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, thereby declining the heirship of the Egyptian throne; and Christ also refused to be made an earthly king. Moses chose twelve men to spy out the land of Canaan; and Christ chose twelve apostles. Moses chose seventy elders; Christ chose seventy disciples. Moses overpowered the magicians; while the devils themselves were subject to Christ. Moses turned the bitter waters of Marah into sweet; Christ, at the marriage of Cana, turned the water into wine. Moses cured leprosy; Christ healed many lepers. Moses fed

the people in the wilderness ; Christ fed the multitude that waited upon His words. The face of Moses shone when he came down from the mount ; the person of Christ was illumined above the glory of the sun on the mount of transfiguration. Moses gave the Law ; Christ gave the Gospel. Moses fasted forty days before giving the Law ; Christ fasted forty days before giving the Gospel. Moses was noted for his meekness ; Christ was emphatically meek and lowly of heart. Moses prayed and interceded for his people ; Christ prayed even for His enemies, and ever lives to intercede for His people. Moses instituted the passover ; Christ, who is our Passover, commands us to keep it in remembrance of Him. Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness ; Christ says : "Even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life." Moses first set up the veil of the temple in the Tabernacle, which concealed the most holy place ; Christ, at His death, rent in twain the veil of the Temple, thereby showing that the Mosaic dispensation was abolished, and that He Himself was soon to enter into the holy of holies and sit down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

*Christ was to be the corner stone.* "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation : he that believeth shall not make haste" (Isa. xxviii. 16). And Peter declares to the Jewish rulers, when preaching Christ unto them : "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner" (Acts iv. 11).

*The future king was to ride into Jerusalem upon the foal of an ass.* "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass" (Zech. ix. 9).

*He was to be sold for thirty pieces of silver.* "So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver" (Zech. xi. 12).

*He was to be wounded in His hands.* "And one shall say unto Him, What are these wounds in Thine hands? Then He shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends" (Zech. xiii. 6).

*He was to be taken with wicked men, and to be buried in a rich man's tomb* (Isa. liii. 9). <https://coggc.org/>

*He was to receive vinegar and gall* (Ps. lxix. 21).

*His enemies were to part His garments and cast lots for His vesture* (Ps. xxii. 18).

Some of the predictions concerning Him were clothed in mystery until they were made plain by the events themselves. For instance, the spot of His nativity was distant from the home of His parents; and the region where He began His ministry was remote from the place of His birth. But by these peculiar circumstances another remarkable prophecy concerning Him was verified: "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naph-tali . . . by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined" (Isa. ix. 1, 2). See also Matt. iv. 12-16.

The personal character of the Messiah was also foretold in the ancient writings; for example: "Righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins (Isa. xi. 5). "He had done no violence, neither was there any deceit in His lips" (Isa. liii. 9). "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom" (Isa. xl. 11). "A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench" (Isa. xlii. 3). "He was oppressed, and afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth" (Isa. liii. 7). How perfectly is thus portrayed His meekness, candour, righteousness, and purity; and not only do these expressive terms belong to Him, but to *Him alone*. Not another character like His appears upon the pages of any history, either sacred or profane. Mahomet pretended to receive a divine warrant to sanction his past impurities and his future crimes; but how different is the appeal of Jesus to the sons of men and in the presence of Heaven,—“If I do not the works of my Father, believe Me not. Search the Scriptures” (Old Testament—none other then existed), “for these are they which testify of Me.”

These are only a few out of the many ancient prophecies concerning the Messiah which have been definitely fulfilled. There are many glorious promises concerning Him and His kingdom, the fulfilment of which shall yet crown the future. But the compass and design of the present work will only permit the spe-

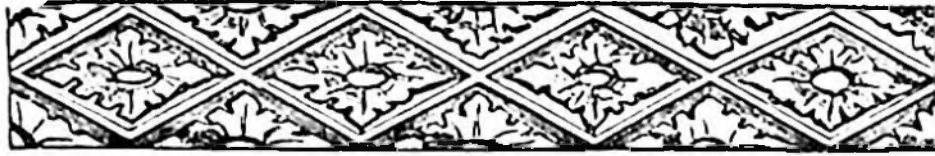
cification of *a part* of those already verified. But even here is evidence enough to convince those who are willing to see the truth. The only way to avoid a just conclusion is, by the wholesale statement that "Jesus Christ never existed, and the gospels are simply fictions." And there are but few to be found in this enlightened age who are willing to make such an assertion in the face of all history, both sacred and profane. The admissions of leading infidel writers alone being sufficient to establish the claims of the gospels, even though every other testimony in the universe were silent.

From Celsus, Porphyry, and the Emperor Julian in the early ages, down to Robert Taylor, Hobbes, Gibbon, and Lord Bolingbroke, they admit enough to prove almost everything that the believer claims. And even the noted Renan, in his "Life of Jesus," says: "To the reading of the text I have been able to add a fresh source of light, an *examination of the places in which the events occurred.*" And further (although his language loses much of its beauty in translation), he declares: "All the history which at a distance seems floating in the clouds of an unreal world, thus assumed a body, a solidity, which astonished me. *The striking accord of the texts and the places, the wonderful harmony of the evangelical ideal with the landscape which served as its setting, were to me as a revelation. I had before my eyes a fifth gospel, torn but still legible; and thenceforth, through the narratives of Matthew and Mark, instead of an abstract being, which one would say had never existed, I saw a wonderful human form live and move.*"

Thus it will be seen that *sceptics themselves* are forced to acknowledge the overwhelming mass of evidence, which proves that the ancient prophecies concerning "Jesus of Nazareth" have been *literally* and *exactly fulfilled*.







## CHAPTER IX.

### BABYLON.

WHY THE CITY WAS DESTROYED.—PROPHECIES FULFILLED.—  
COMPLETENESS OF ITS OVERTHROW.—PRESENT CONDITION.



ANCIENT Babylon was “the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency.” She is spoken of as “the lady of kingdoms,” “abundant in treasures,” and “the praise of the whole earth.” Her beauty, strength, and grandeur, her walls, palaces, and hanging gardens, are freely described in the ancient writings, both sacred and profane. Isaiah and Jeremiah speak particularly of her *gates of brass* and her broad walls, while Herodotus declares that “the city had an hundred gates, twenty-five on each side, *all made of solid brass*, while the walls, according to the same historian, were three hundred and fifty feet in height and eighty-seven feet in thickness.

A city thus fortified, and abounding in wealth and luxury, was assuredly in little apparent danger of being taken and pillaged, and totally abandoned never to be rebuilt. But Babylon as well as Nineveh was an enemy to God. The inhabitants rejected His prophets and took His people captive. The prophet Jeremiah truly said: “Israel is a scattered sheep; the lions have

driven him away: first the king of Assyria hath devoured him; and last this Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones. *Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land, as I have punished the king of Assyria*" (Jer. l. 17, 18).

Isaiah and Jeremiah lived during the kingdom of Judah, and they not only predicted the captivity of the Jews, but also the downfall of their enemies. These prophecies were given in the plainest words and were descriptive of the most unexpected events, *even the name of the conqueror of Babylon being announced by the prophet more than a hundred years before that military chieftain was born.* That these predictions were accurately and literally fulfilled, is abundantly proved by the pages of Herodotus and Xenophon, as well as by modern historians. Isaiah lived more than two hundred and fifty years before Herodotus and nearly three hundred and fifty before Xenophon. Jeremiah lived more than one hundred and fifty years before the one and nearly three hundred and fifty before the other. Cyrus took Babylon, according to Prideaux, in the year 539 before Christ. Isaiah prophesied "in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah," and this was at least *one hundred and sixty years* before the taking of Babylon, for Hezekiah died in the year 699 before Christ.

These are *historical facts*, supported by the best and most reliable historians; they can never be overthrown, and in their stubborn truth they leave no room for scepticism.

While yet "the lady of kingdoms" flourished in her splendour and lived in luxury, while she rejected the living God and poured out her wealth upon the altars of her idols, even then came the voice of the prophet Isaiah with the declaration, "And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But the wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces" (Isa. xiii. 19-22).

Not only was the complete desolation of the great and prosperous city thus foretold in definite terms, but in the following prophecy the very name of the man who should inaugurate her ruin was given to the generations that preceded him. "Thus saith the Lord to His anointed, to *Cyrus*, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut. . . . For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I *have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known Me.* I am the Lord, there is none else, there is no God beside Me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known Me" (Isa. xlv. 1-5).

The enemies who were to besiege the city and the

manner in which it was to be taken were also described in graphic colours by the ancient prophets. "Go up, O Elam"\* (the ancient name of Persia), "besiege, O Media." "Make bright the arrows; gather the shields: the Lord hath raised up the spirit of *the kings of the Medes*: for His device is against Babylon, to destroy it; because it is the vengeance of the Lord, the vengeance of His temple" (Isa. xxi. 2; Jer. li. 11). "Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her, call together against her the *kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ash-chenaz.*" "Prepare against her the nations *with the kings of the Medes*, the captains thereof, and all the rulers thereof, and all the land of his dominion. And the land shall tremble and sorrow: for every purpose of the Lord shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant" (Jer. li. 27-29).

Xenophon declares, in common with other historians, that the kings of Media and of Persia entered into a league against Babylon, and entrusted the command of their united armies to Cyrus, who eventually became the successor of them both. Cyrus subdued the Armenians and allied with the Hyrcanians. He conquered the Lydians and overthrew the Phrygians and Cappadocians, and added their armies to his accumulated forces.\* Thus, by many alliances and the gentleness of his rule, he obtained the aid of other

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\* Bockhart asserts that the Persians were first so named in the time of Cyrus, the word signifying both a Persian and a horseman.

nations, and a standard was set up against Babylon in many a land, kingdoms were summoned, prepared, and gathered together against her; and an assembly of great nations from the north, including Ararat and Minni; or the greater and lesser Armenia, and Ashchenaz, or Phrygia, were raised up, and caused to come against Babylon.

But when Cyrus with his splendid host reached the city, he rode round the walls accompanied by a staff of officers, seeking in vain for some point which was not utterly impregnable. The massive walls and brazen gates defied all hope of a successful attack. Therefore a trench was dug around the city, towers were erected, and Babylon besieged. The army was divided into twelve parts, that each by turn might keep watch throughout the year; and though the order was given by Cyrus, the command of the Lord of Hosts was unconsciously obeyed—*let not one thereof escape*. The prophet foretold that the mighty men of Babylon would remain within their holds and become as women (Jer. li. 30); and the historian declares that after the loss of a battle or two they never again dared to face the enemy in the field: they retired within their walls, and Cyrus could not provoke them to venture forth.

He challenged their king to single combat, but in vain; for "*the hands of the king of Babylon waxed feeble.*" Being unable either to bring them into the field, to scale their impenetrable walls, or open their brazen gates, Cyrus determined to besiege the city

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\* See Xenophon.

until famine came to his aid and forced them from their strong holds. Thus for two years the queen city of the world,—“the hammer of the whole earth,”—was unresistingly beleaguered. But Babylon was amply provisioned for many years, and only He who had declared that her overthrow should be completed was able to accomplish the work. Cyrus, with his mighty host, was unable to gain any advantage over the foe without the aid of the God of Israel. But the prophet had declared: “Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans . . . for thou shalt no more be called The lady of kingdoms. . . . Thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever. . . . Hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children: but these two things shall come to thee in a moment, in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood. . . . For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness” (Isa. lvii. 1-10).

“A sound of battle is in the land, and of great destruction. How is the hammer of the whole earth cut asunder and broken! how is Babylon become a desolation among the nations! *I have laid a snare for thee, and thou art also taken, O Babylon, and thou wast not aware: thou art found, and also caught, because thou hast striven against the Lord*” (Jer. l. 23, 24).

Much time being lost, and no progress made in the siege, Cyrus at last determined to change the course of the Euphrates. But the river was both broad and

deep, and in the opinion of the officers of Cyrus the task was hopeless. Over against the opinions of men, however, there lived the prophecy. "Thus saith the Lord, that saith to the deep, Be dry, and *I will dry up thy rivers.*" The gigantic scheme was accomplished and the vast besieging host entered the city through the bed of the river. The situation of the invading army was for a time perilous in the extreme; for, says Herodotus, had the Babylonians known of their design, the gates leading from the city to the river could have been easily shut, and the troops of Cyrus shut up as in a net, when their destruction would have seemed inevitable. But the Babylonians had given up the night to dancing, drinking, and revelling, and the ancient prophecy declaring "*the gates shall not be shut*" was literally fulfilled.

Thus was "*the praise of the whole earth surprised! For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness.*" The king, in the midst of his revelry, sent forth his guards to learn the cause of the confusion without; and as soon as the gates of the palace were opened, the Persians pressed through them, and thus "*the loins of kings were loosed to open before Cyrus the two leaved gates.*" The king and his princes perished, for God had numbered his kingdom and finished it. It was divided and given to the Medes and Persians, while the Babylonish lords and captains passed from the festal board into the long night of death. "*The drunken slept a perpetual sleep, and did not wake.*"

Babylon the great had fallen into the hands of her enemies; but many other prophecies remained to be

fulfilled, for she was not yet desolate; the wild beasts of the desert did not yet lie down amid her ruined palaces, and the owl and the bittern were not found in her pleasant palaces. But it was written in the unfailing Word, "Because of the wrath of the Lord it shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate; every one that goeth by Babylon shall be astonished.

. . . How is the hammer of the whole earth cut asunder and broken! How is Babylon become a desolation among the nations! Therefore the wild beasts of the desert, with the wild beasts of the islands shall dwell there, and the owls shall dwell therein, and it shall be no more inhabited for ever; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation." But the kings of the earth, although ignorant of the designs of God, were the instruments that wrought out His will. Darius took down the walls and destroyed the gates in obedience to Jeremiah li. 5-8.

Xerxes, after his return from Greece, seized the sacred treasures and plundered or destroyed the temples and idols of Babylon, for it had been written "Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground" (Isa. xxi. 9). So vividly was the picture drawn in the prophet's mind that he speaks of those events, which then lay in the distant future, as if they were taking place before his eyes. "Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, their idols were upon the beasts and upon the cattle" (Isa. xlvi. 1). "Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodoch is broken in pieces, her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces" (Jer. l. 2).



In after years, from fire and sword, the desolation and ruin of the great city became complete, while the whole land of Chaldea bore the marks of her curse. That beautiful plain, which had long been renowned for its fertility, became so barren that it could not be tilled; for it was written, "I will *punish the land of the Chaldeans* and will make it perpetual desolations. Cut off the sower from Babylon and him that handleth the sickle in time of harvest. . . . The land shall tremble and sorrow; for every purpose of the Lord shall be performed against Babylon to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant."

It was prophesied of Ammon that it should be a stable for camels, and a couching place for flocks; and of Philistia that it should be cottages for shepherds and pastures for flocks; and these predictions were fulfilled to the letter. But for Babylon was foretold a far greater desolation,—that a tent should not be pitched there even by the wandering Arab, nor a shepherd's fold be made there. While the walls were yet standing, the kings of Persia kept a variety of wild beasts within its boundaries, that they might there indulge in the pleasures of the chase; and thus the "*wild beasts of the desert*" were taught to "*lie there,*" and "*dragons dwelt in their pleasant palaces*" (Isa. xiii. 21, 22).

But it was afterwards comparatively deserted even by these. Says Mignon in his "*Travels*": "It is common in these parts for shepherds to make use of ruined edifices to shelter their flocks in; but Babylon is an exception. Instead of taking the bricks '*from thence,*' the shepherd might with facility erect a defence from

wild beasts and make a fold for his flock amidst the 'heaps' of Babylon. And the Arab, who fearlessly travels it by day, might pitch his tent therein at night. But neither the one nor the other can be persuaded to remain a night among its ruins. 'The superstitious dread of evil spirits, far more than the fear of wild beasts, effectually preventing them.'" Captain Mignon was accompanied by *six Arabs* completely armed; but it was impossible to induce them to remain until towards night among the ruins.

The dark shades of desolation still rest upon the doomed site of the city. The lonely Euphrates still wanders along, as if surveying the ruins of a deserted empire. But Babylon—the glory of kingdoms—the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, has gone down to the darkness and desolation of the grave. Her palaces are dust and her temples are heaps. "*Sit thou silent and get thee into the darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called the lady of kingdoms.*"\*

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\* As it is impossible to give here anything more than the briefest outline of this subject, the reader is requested to examine the complete history and fall of Babylon as given in the pages of Rollin.





## CHAPTER X.

### IDUMEA.

PREDICTIONS CONCERNING THE LAND.—TESTIMONY OF VOLNEY  
AND OTHER TRAVELLERS, CONFIRMING THEIR FULFILMENT.—  
DESOLATION OF THE LAND.



**DOUMAIA** is the Greek form of the Hebrew name *Edom*; or, according to Josephus, it is only a more agreeable mode of pronouncing what would otherwise be *Adooma*. Hence our version sometimes uses the name Edom and Idumea interchangeably, both words indicating the same locality.

For the transgressions of the Edomites, the doom of desolation was pronounced upon their land and their cities. “My sword shall come down upon Idumea and upon the people of my curse to judgment. From generation to generation it shall lie waste. . . . They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom; but none shall be there, and all her princes shall be nothing. And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof, and it shall be a habitation for dragons, and a court for owls. . . . Seek ye out the book of the Lord and read; no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath

gathered them." "Lo I will make thee small among the heathen, and despised among men. Thy terrible-ness hath deceived thee, and the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill: though thou shouldest make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the Lord" (Jer. xlix. 15, 16). "The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Mount Seir, and prophesy against it, and say unto it, Thus saith the Lord God; . . . I will stretch out mine hand against thee, and I will make thee most desolate. I will lay thy cities waste, and thou shalt be desolate" (Ezek. xxxv. 1-4). "Thou shalt be desolate, O Mount Seir, and all Idumea, even all of it: and they shall know that I am the Lord" (Ezek. xxxv. 15).

These are a few among the many prophetic utterances, concerning the land of Idumea. In proof of their entire and perfect fulfilment, we have only to quote the words of Volney, the noted sceptic. He says: "This country has not been visited by any traveller, but it well merits such an attention; for from the report of the Arabs of Bokir and the inhabitants of Gaza, who frequently go to Maan and Karak, there are to the south-east of the lake Asphaltites (Dead Sea), *within three days' journey*, upwards of thirty ruined towns *absolutely deserted*. Several of them have large edifices with columns that may have belonged to ancient temples, or at least to Greek churches. The Arabs sometimes make use of them to fold their cattle in; but in general avoid them on

account of the enormous scorpions with which they swarm. We cannot be surprised at these traces of ancient population, when we recollect that this was the country of the Nabatheans, the most powerful of the Arabs, and of the *Idumeans*, who, *at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem*, were almost as numerous as the Jews; as appears from Josephus, who informs us, that on the first rumour of the march of Titus against Jerusalem, thirty thousand Idumeans immediately assembled and threw themselves into that city for its defence . . . We know that as far back as the time of Solomon, the cities of Astioum Gaber, and Ailah were highly frequented marts. These two places are in the hands of the Bedouins, who, being destitute of a navy and a commerce, do not inhabit them. It even appears that the Idumeans rivalled the Tyrians, who also possessed a town the name of which is unknown on the coast of Hedjaz. From this place the caravans might reach Palestine and Judea (through Idumea) in eight or ten days.”\*

Thus we have evidence of the fulfilment of prophecy; which must be undesigned, for it comes from one of the boldest enemies of the book.

Volney thus testifies that the Idumeans were a populous and powerful nation long after the delivery of the prophecies; that Idumea contained many cities, and that these are now absolutely deserted, while their ruins swarm with scorpions; that it was a commercial nation, and possessed highly-frequented marts. In the

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\* See Volney's "Travels," vol. ii., pp. 344-346.

record of these important facts he proves himself an able although unconscious commentator upon the truth of Divine revelation.

Amid the mountains of Idumea stood the city of Petra, which in ancient times was the centre of the world's trade, for through it the eastern tribes transported the merchandise of India and Arabia; and from this point it was sent to the nations of the West. And it is undoubtedly to the cutting off of this great traffic that the prophet refers when he says: "*I will cut off from it him that passeth out, and him that returneth.*" Reference is also made to the utter impossibility that the tide of this commerce shall ever be resumed, in the words: "*None shall pass through it for ever and ever.*" It is true that it has lain for ages unvisited by travellers; but the prophecy evidently refers to caravans of merchandise, which shall pass through it no more for ever.

Says Dr. Vincent: "Petra is the capital of Edom or Seir (the Idumea or Arabia Petrea of the Greeks), considered by geographers, historians, and poets as the source of all the precious commodities of the East."\*

The same author says further: "The caravans in all ages, from the interior of Arabia and the Gulf of Persia, from Hadramant on the ocean, and some even from Sabea or Yemen, appear to have pointed to Petra as a common centre; and from Petra the trade seems again to have branched out in every direction, to Egypt, Palestine, and Syria, to Gaza, Tyre, Jerusalem, and

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\* See Vincent's "Commerce of the Ancients," vol. ii. p. 263.

Damascus, besides a variety of subordinate routes." But the Word declared that "*Edom shall be a desolation; from generation to generation it shall lie waste;*" and such is the desolation of this wide region, that the wonder now is, how it could *ever* have been adorned with cities and occupied for ages by a rich and powerful people. But it bears upon its face the indisputable proof of this fact, for here are the remains of walls and paved streets, and here are the ruins of cities.

"*I will lay thy cities waste, and thou shalt be desolate.*" It is a remarkable fact, that among the cities and towns laid down upon D'Anville's map, there are *seventeen* of which there are absolutely no traces left. Malachi, the last of the prophets, who wrote more than three hundred years after Isaiah, describes the land as "*laid waste for the dragons of the wilderness.*" But he adds: "*Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places, thus saith the Lord: They shall build, but I will throw down.*" And the existing ruins, as described by Burckhart and also Laborde, give abundant evidence that Edom did *return*, in obedience to the prophetic word (after being impoverished), and *build again* the desolate places. This truth is declared by the style of architecture that still lives among the ruins; for among the ruins of Petra there are fragments of *Grecian and Roman architecture* as well as those of more ancient date. The words, "*O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock*" have a peculiar application. Captains Irby and Mangles, with one or two others, spent some days in carefully examining the ruins of this "City of

Rocks," and they declare that "the bases of the cliffs were wrought out into all the symmetry of art, with colonnades and pedestals and ranges of corridors. There are flights of steps chiselled out of the rock, and some excavated residences of large dimensions, in one of which is a single chamber sixty feet in length. There are niches sometimes thirty feet in height, with altars for offerings, or with pyramids, columns, or obelisks. There is a bridge across a chasm now apparently inaccessible, and the rocks are hollowed out into innumerable chambers of different dimensions, whose entrances are variously and richly decorated with every imaginable order of architecture."\*

The French author Laborde, who visited the place and obtained many valuable views of the ruins, says: "It is from the summit of El Nakb that one can judge of the general aspect of the country, of the melancholy and dismal aspect of which it is difficult to convey an idea with the pencil alone;" and then he adds: "The strong language of *Ezekiel alone can come up to the height of this great desolation: 'Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, O Mount Seir, I am against thee, and I will make thee most desolate; I will lay thy cities waste, . . . I will make Mount Seir most desolate . . . And I will fill his mountain with his slain men.'*"

Among all the ruins of Petra the tombs and sepulchres are the most remarkable, and give the clearest proofs of ancient royalty and courtly splendour. "Great," says Burckhart "must have been the opu-

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\* See Irby and Mangle's Travels, pp. 407-437.



lence of a city which could dedicate such monuments to the memory of its rulers." Tombs present themselves in every avenue of the city and upon every precipice that surrounds it. They are excavated in the rock-hewn sides of the mountain and ornamented with various styles of architecture. The mountain is indeed filled "*with his slain men.*"

"*Every one that goeth by it shall be astonished.*" "I would," says a recent traveller, "that the sceptic could stand, as I did, among the ruins of this city, among the rocks, and there open the sacred Book and read the words of the inspired penman, written when this desolate place was one of the greatest cities in the world. I see the scoff arrested as the ruined city cries out to him, in a voice like that of one risen from the dead. Though he would not believe Moses and the prophets, he *must* believe the handwriting of God Himself in the desolation and eternal ruin around him."

Lord Claude Hamilton, who visited Petra in 1839, after quoting some of the prophecies and commenting upon their exact fulfilment, says: "The words, '*I will make thee small among the heathen,*' have been actually accomplished, to such a degree that the very site of Petra has for centuries been unknown. That a great city should thus be swept from the memory of man, and blotted out for a long season from the knowledge of the world, utterly exceeded all human foresight and sagacity, and is a most striking manifestation of the truth of the prophetic record."

It is declared that "*I will make thee perpetual desolations and thy cities shall not return.*" Judea, Moab,

and Ammon have the promise of being revived from their desolation; but the wild animals of those regions shall find a refuge, and shall rest undisturbed in Edom.

Thus the rock-hewn cities of Arabia Petrea stand in the wilderness as rugged monuments of God's eternal truth.





## CHAPTER XI.

### HEATHEN ORACLES.

THE ORACLES OF DODONA, OF TROPHONIUS, AND OF APOLLO.—  
MANNER OF GIVING COMMUNICATIONS.—AMBIGUITY OF EX-  
PRESSION AND NUMBERLESS MISTAKES.—THE PREDICTIONS OF  
GOD'S PROPHETS ALWAYS INFALLIBLE.—ORACLES AND PRO-  
PHECIES CONTRASTED.—PREDICTIONS CONCERNING NINEVEH,  
JERUSALEM, ISRAEL, AND JUDEA.



**W**HILE it may be said of the miracles which were performed eighteen hundred years ago that they are in the past, and those who witnessed them have gone down into the shades of death, it cannot be so said of the voice of prophecy; for its living echoes resound amid the great events of every age. Many predictions have been fulfilled in the past; and the faithful historian, be he sceptic or Christian, becomes a commentator upon the words of the ancient prophets. Others are fulfilling in the mighty issues of the present; and the prophetic voices which were uttered amid the mountains of Israel are being confirmed by modern kings and rulers. While others still are yet before us; their promises gleam upon the pages of Holy Writ, and their glorious completion shall yet crown the future of nations.

The sceptic professes to meet this overwhelming

mass of evidence with the objection, that there were oracles and diviners among the ancient heathen.

To the student of prophecy and of history this objection seems indeed pitiable; and the fact that it is presented and gravely urged as an argument against the Divine authorship of the Scriptures is our only excuse for presenting it here.

Ancient Greece produced perhaps more oracles than any other country, from the fact that her peculiarly constituted people were naturally inclined to superstition.

At the oracle of Dodona, Jupiter was supposed to give answers through oaks made vocal by certain instruments being fastened in their tops, which, when moved by a slight breeze, gave forth a confused sound; or his voice was supposed to be heard in the language of doves or by the mouth of the presiding genius of the oracle.

The oracle of Trophonius could only be consulted after many preliminary ceremonies; as washing in the river, offering sacrifices, drinking a water called Lethe, etc.

There were many others of more or less note; but the most celebrated oracle of antiquity was that of Apollo at Delphi. A priestess was here placed upon a tripod over an enchanted cave, and there delivered her oracles. At first, a single Pythia could attend to the wants of all her votaries; but as her business increased she had assistants appointed.

When the priestess became sufficiently intoxicated (with what was considered the Divine vapour) to com-

municate, her hair stood upright upon her head, her looks grew wild, she foamed at the mouth, and a violent trembling seized her whole body. She uttered at intervals words which were almost inarticulate, but which were collected and arranged by her assistants. Says Rollin: "The general characteristics of oracles were *ambiguity, obscurity, and convertibility* (if I may use that expression), so that one answer would agree with several various and directly opposite events." For instance, when Croesus was upon the point of invading the Medes, he consulted the oracle at Delphi upon the success of that war, and was answered that by passing the river Nalys he would ruin a great empire. Whether it was his own empire or that of his foe he was left to determine for himself; and in so desperate a war the oracle could not fail of being correct whichever way the struggle might terminate. We might give multitudes of similar instances,—others in which the oracle was undeniably wrong, and others still in which she guessed correctly. But the fact that they occasionally guessed right is a small argument in their favour. The weakest mortal of ancient or modern times might sometimes do as well.

While these are facts which cannot be denied, it is worthy of the sceptic's notice that *no one of the prophecies of God has ever failed*. Not one jot nor tittle of His Word shall pass away until *all* is fulfilled. All the scepticism of the universe cannot point out one of these prophecies which have been proved to be false. The Creator of heaven and earth makes no mistakes; and when an event is foretold by God's prophets,

whether in the immediate future or beyond the cycles of coming ages, it is just as sure of fulfilment as if it were already completed and had taken its place upon the records of history.

So true is this, that with the ancient prophets, the scenes which they described were pictured so vividly upon the brain, and they were so deeply impressed, with their certainty, that they often used the *present*, or even the *past* tense, in speaking of those events which lay in the distant future. And this peculiarity applies with as much force to prophecies which *are yet unfulfilled*, as to those already accomplished.

The fact that some of the prophecies were *conditional* militates in no way against this unavoidable conclusion. God has never destroyed a city or a nation without giving them a warning of the impending doom, and a chance to escape it if they accepted the warning and turned to righteousness. Even Sodom and Gomorrah were thus favoured; and He declares through the prophet Jeremiah, that "*If that nation against whom I have pronounced turn from their evil way, I will repent of [or turn from] the evil I thought to do unto them.*"

Thus a merciful God stands pledged to save those who will turn and accept His mercies, even after the decree for their destruction has gone forth. We have a sample of His mercy when Nineveh repented and turned from their sins and their city was saved.

Hence, in the comparison of the heathen oracles with the prophecies of God they will be seen to be as different from each other as is the midnight darkness from the glory of noon-day.

Almost all the prophecies of the Scriptures refer to mighty events; as the coming of a Saviour to fallen man and a sin-cursed earth, the fall of some mighty city or nation that had rebelled against God, or the coming of that era which shall yet crown the earth with glory.

The heathen oracles, on the contrary, were given (like their modern imitations) in reply to the most trivial questions, and to satisfy the merest curiosity; as are the "revelations" of the strolling gipsy.

The predictions of the prophets were almost always contrary to the wishes of kings and princes, while those of the oracles were given to promote the ambitious designs of their rulers.

The prophecies of the Bible were offensive to those in authority and to the masses generally, because they condemned their vices and failed to flatter their pride and ambition; while the heathen oracles commended themselves to the passions of the people, and especially to kings and princes, by flattering their pride, fostering their ambition, and encouraging their vices.

The prophets of God were never paid—they would never receive compensation for their services. For instance, Elisha, after healing Naaman of his leprosy, declared: "*As the Lord liveth before whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take it, but he refused.*"

And when his servant took from Naaman the two talents of silver and the changes of garments he was smitten with leprosy as a punishment for his crime. But the heathen priests, on the contrary (like modern

“mediums”), were *always paid*—they never gave responses without money.

If a prophet had dared to speak a word in the name of the Lord which was not commanded, he would have been punished with death: “*The prophet which shall presume to speak a word in my name which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.*” So far as the heathen oracles were concerned, there was no penalty whatever attached to falsehood. Had they been punished with death, their days would assuredly have been few in number. The prophecies of the Bible are endorsed by *Thus saith the Lord*, and they are *infallible*; while the heathen oracles were the result of the merest guesswork, sometimes being correct, but much oftener false. The prophecies of the Bible were not given respecting one city or nation alone. The fate of *Tyre* was predicted before she reached the zenith of her glory; and the downfall of *Nineveh* was foretold as surely as that of *Babylon*. Saith the prophet: “*The Lord will stretch out His hand against the north, and destroy Assyria, and will make Nineveh a desolation and dry like a wilderness.*” The great city has indeed become a desolation; and as the ages sweep over her grave the only relics of her former greatness are taken from the bosom of the earth. The fall of *Jerusalem*, with all the horrors of its siege, was as distinctly foretold by the prophet and described by the historian.

The prophet also declared to *Israel*, that for their transgressions, “The Lord shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be few in number among the



heathen, whither the Lord shall lead you." And "The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies; thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them, and *shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.*"

The whole history of that peculiar people for thousands of years was definitely and accurately foretold in a multitude of such predictions as these. They have been driven and scattered among all the kingdoms of the earth. They have been oppressed and persecuted in every nation except our own Republic; and even here, in the very home of freedom, they are a byword, and their name is a reproach. But amid all their sufferings and privations, they have not mingled their blood with that of the Gentiles. Though the way of their pilgrimage has been wet with tears and stained with blood, they are as much the Jewish people now as when Moses led them out of Egypt. And thus they must remain; for though "the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim; *afterward shall they return, and seek the Lord their God.*" Then shall flow unto them the blessings, the inheritance, and the glory promised to that people when they shall accept the Christ and their transgressions are blotted out.

While the cities of *Judea* were filled with inhabitants and the land flowing with abundance—while her people were yet counted by millions, came the message: "Thus saith the Lord God to the mountains of Israel, and to

the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, Behold I, even I, will bring a sword upon you and I will destroy your high places. In all your dwelling-places the cities shall be laid waste, and the high places shall be desolate." "The land shall be utterly emptied and utterly spoiled, for the Lord hath spoken this word. The earth mourneth and fadeth away; it is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant."

Moses and all the prophets set blessings and curses before the people of Israel that they might choose between them. All through the dispensation of the Law God was merciful unto them; but when they rejected the "prophet like unto Moses,"—when they despised and crucified "the Heir of the vineyard,"—the threatened judgments fell upon both land and people. To the present desolate state of Judea every traveller bears witness. The beauty of the hills and valleys is blighted, the cities are waste, and the highways desolate. Says Burckhart: "The country is a complete desert. Even the top of the once glorious Carmel is withered and the plain of Esdraelon is shorn of its beauty." "Good God!" exclaims the infidel Volney, "from whence proceed such melancholy revolutions? For what cause is the fortune of these countries so *strikingly changed*? Why are so many cities destroyed? Why is not that ancient population reproduced and perpetuated?" Again he says: "I wandered over the country, I traversed the provinces, I enumerated the kingdoms . . . This Syria, said I to myself, now almost depopulated, then

contained a hundred flourishing cities, and abounded with towns, villages, and hamlets. What is become of so many productions of the hands of man; what is become of those ages of abundance and of life?"\*

As definitely and unconsciously has this man fulfilled the words of the prophet as have the wandering Arabs in treading the Holy Land under their feet; for "The generation to come of your children that shall rise up after you, and *the stranger that shall come from a far land*, shall say, when they shall see the plagues of that land and the sickness which the Lord hath laid upon it, *Wherefore hath the Lord done this unto the land? What meaneth the heat of this great anger?*"

Says J. L. Porter: "Many of the people of those far-off days, doubtless, thought the prophets but gloomy dreamers, just as many in our day regard their writings as gorgeous fancy-pictures of Eastern poets; but with mine own eyes I saw that time has changed every prediction into an *historic fact*. I saw that those predictions were one and all graphic and delicate descriptions of real events, which the Divine Spirit opened up to the prophetic eye through the long vista of ages. Were the same holy men inspired now by the same Divine Spirit to describe the actual state of the country, they could not possibly select language more appropriate or more graphic than that found in their own predictions, written thousands of years ago. This is no vague statement made at random, or

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\* Volney's "Ruins," chap. ii., page 8.

penned for effect. God forbid that I should ever pen a single line rashly or thoughtlessly on such a topic. It is the result of years of study and of travel. It is the result of a calm and thorough comparison of each prophecy of the Scriptures regarding Palestine's history and doom with its fulfilment on the spot. I had no prophetic theory or interpretation to defend. . . . Opportunities were afforded me of seeing evidence, of testing witnesses, of seeing with mine own eyes the truth or falsehood of Bible predictions. . . . I examined deliberately, cautiously, and I believe conscientiously; and now I thank God that, with the fullest and deepest conviction,—conviction that all the ingenuity of modern criticism and all the plausibility of modern scepticism can never overthrow, can never shake,—I can take up and re-echo the statement of our blessed Lord, that 'Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled.'”

But not the land of Judea alone was specified in the sacred writings. The whole future history of *Ammon*, *Moab*, and *Egypt* were definitely foretold; and the prophecies concerning the sons of Ishmael are as definite as those that relate to the children of Jacob.

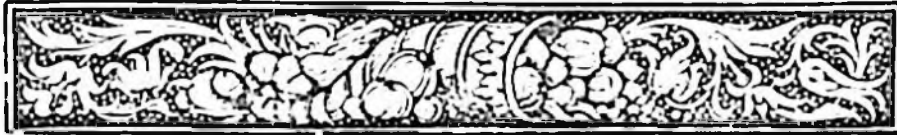
The Apostle Paul prophesied the exact position of these later times—the condition of the Church, the strength of her foes both within and without, and the relation which the “Man of sin” should occupy.

The movements of the nations everywhere indicate the filling up of the great prophetic chart; and some of the grandest prophecies of antiquity are being verified

before our very eyes. Is there a sceptic so reckless as to claim that any of the mutterings of the heathen oracles are worthy to be at all compared with the majestic prophecies of God's own Word?

Those which have been fulfilled are mostly judgments. They are those which pertain to the curse; for we are still under its force and within its dispensation. But there are many glorious promises whose fulfilment must illumine the ages of the future; for these shall be accomplished with as much exactness as the judgments have been fulfilled. The same Power that has cursed the land has promised to bless it, and to fill the earth with His glory; and the fact that the curse is here, is proof positive that the blessings shall follow. The same voice that announced the calamities of earth and her people, hath declared that her vales shall be lighted with beauty and her mountains crowned with glory, that her children shall be redeemed from sin, and "*there shall be no more curse;*" "*for, behold, I will make all things new.*"





## CHAPTER XII.

### OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

GENERAL REMARKS.—DOES THE BIBLE CONTRADICT ITSELF?—  
“IT CANNOT BE UNDERSTOOD BY THE COMMON READER.”—  
“IT IS COMPARATIVELY ANONYMOUS.”—HAVE THE BOOKS OF  
THE BIBLE BEEN CORRUPTED?—WHY DOES GOD SUFFER  
WICKEDNESS TO EXIST?—UNFAITHFULNESS OF PROFESSED  
CHRISTIANS.



THE most of the objections to the Book are purely technical and trivial in their nature. There is not now, and never has been, any evidence that it is not what it claims to be. It is useless to raise supposed difficulties which grow out of the misunderstanding of a few isolated passages while the great chain of evidence continues unbroken and unshaken. Such attacks do not reach the question at issue; and the sceptic has made no progress in the overthrow of Christianity until its arguments are fairly met and answered. This cannot be done by a cavil or a sneer; neither can it be done until the facts of history are overthrown and the very foundations of human knowledge are in ruins.

No infidel has ever yet attacked the Christian records by disproving the historical evidence presented in favour of their claims. They cannot and dare not thus assault the fortress of truth. Those among them who would be capable of accomplishing this, if it could be

done, are too well aware of the hopelessness of the task to undertake it. They have been repeatedly urged to the main issue in vain. They are as powerless in the hand of truth as a child in the grasp of a giant. Before they can prove that God's Word is false, or of human origin, they must demonstrate that Herodotus was a myth and Josephus never existed, that Tacitus never wrote and that the works of Eusebius were forgeries; they must prove beyond a doubt or a question, that Gibbon was a novelist and his writings romances; nay, more than this, they must demonstrate to the world of letters that this determined infidel ingeniously framed his productions for the express purpose of confirming the theories of Christianity. Upon no other hypothesis can they account for the fact that he so fully records the literal fulfilment of Bible prophecies. They must prove that Strabo and Rollin are no more worthy of credence than the author of the "Arabian Nights;" that history as well as prophecy is a fraud upon mankind.

When this is done they may lay unholy hands upon the sacred records and attempt to prove them unworthy of man's confidence; but *until then*, their main arguments must consist of misapprehension and misconstruction. They must direct their objections against the opinions of men, instead of the teachings of Holy Writ. They must use sarcasm for reason and sneers for logic; they must content themselves with defacing the outer courts of the temple, while its strong foundations and unfailing pillars are for ever beyond their reach.

The Christian might well rest his case within these

strongholds and ignore all side issues until they shall venture to touch the foundations of our faith ; still, we are disposed to review some of these supposed difficulties and notice their evident weakness.

Objection I. THE BIBLE CONTRADICTS ITSELF. Ever since the days of Paine, this has been the battle-cry of scepticism. They have never studied the Book to see if it was a grand harmony ; but have sought, by detaching sentences or taking advantage of circumstances, to prove that it is a mass of self-contradictions. As we have in a previous work, entitled "The Bible Triumphant,"\* taken up and harmonized all these so-called contradictions, the work is unnecessary here. We will, however, suggest to the honest searcher after truth the causes of *apparent discrepancies* among the Bible writers.

1st. *The writers of the New Testament did not undertake to give a FULL ACCOUNT of the life, death, and resurrection of their Lord.* The gospels (as they are called) are only the narratives of detached circumstances, which appeared to the writers at the time as being the most important. Therefore, one of them often records circumstances connected with the same transaction which the others omit. But this very fact is one of the strongest evidences in their favour ; and if it were otherwise, if their narratives were precisely alike, the infidel world would at once claim that it was the result of collusion, that they agreed to tell the same story, and that therefore it must be false.

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\* London : Kellaway & Co., 10, Warwick Lane. Price 2s.



2nd. *Names of persons and places are liable to be changed, not only in different languages, but even in the same tongue.*

3rd. *The name of the founder of a tribe was often given to his posterity; for example, Edom, or Esau, is used to denote the Edomites, who were the descendants of Esau. See Numbers xx. 18.*

4th. *The same persons or places sometimes had more than one name. For instance, Esau's wife is sometimes called Bashemath, and sometimes Adah. Joses and Barnabas are the names of the same apostle. The place called Eumishpat and Kadesh in Gen. xiv. 7 (Hebrew), and Magdala (Greek) in Matthew xv. 39, is called Dalmanutha in Mark viii. 10. So also the country of the Gergesenes (Matt. viii. 28) is called in Mark v. 1, Gadarenes.*

5th. *There are sometimes persons and places which have the same or similar names. There was one Bethlehem in the tribe of Zebulun (Josh. xix. 15), and another in the tribe of Judah (Matt. ii. 6). See also Luke ii. 4. There were two towns called Cana (Josh. xix. 28 and John ii. 1). There were also several Cæsareas, two or three Zechariahs, and several Herods, etc.*

6th. *Things were often related in different order, and events were sometimes introduced by anticipation; for instance, the creation of man (Gen. i. 27), which is afterwards more fully described as the creation of Adam, in Gen. ii. 7, 21-23.*

7th. *The sacred writers sometimes speak in general, or round numbers; and we often do the same in the present age, without any intention of deception.*

8th. *Numbers are sometimes exclusive and sometimes inclusive* of other dates or circumstances.

9th. Kings and their sons frequently reigned at the same time, hence the liability of chronological discrepancies.\*

According to the opinion of the best legal talent in both Europe and America, the best criterion of the truth of human testimony is, "*substantial truth under circumstantial variety*;" and this is precisely the evidence which the New Testament presents. The mass of evidence in favour of the Book is absolutely irresistible, in the mind of every man who *honestly* and *faithfully* investigates it.

But it is revealed to us through the medium of language; and language, like everything else that is human, is necessarily imperfect. Hence the same word, under various circumstances and in different connections, often has a different meaning. But we are willing to submit it to the closest scrutiny; we only ask the *simplest justice*, and that the laws of language and the obvious meaning of terms shall have due respect. For nearly eighteen hundred years it has stood the test of the closest scrutiny and severest criticism, from *friends* as well as *foes*; but, like the pure gold in the furnace, it gleams more brightly in the fiery test.

No other book has ever passed through so many mutations. No other has ever been so closely assailed or so severely tested, and no other stands to-day so unimpeachable as this.

Objection II. "IT CANNOT BE UNDERSTOOD BY THE

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\* See Dr. Sleight.

COMMON READER." It is claimed that the English version contains so many mistakes and mistranslations, that the common reader is unable to arrive at anything like a definite idea of its contents. But this is a charge which every sceptic who is a linguist knows to be *absolutely false*. He knows that the only difference between the various translations and the different manuscripts is *purely technical*,—that there is no important truth or cardinal doctrine endangered by them. The most that they can claim, is a shade of meaning, a misplaced letter, or a mistaken numeral, which no more invalidates the testimony of God's Word, than an imperfect copy will invalidate a national law.

Every scholar will admit that our common version is in the main a fair one; and the technical differences would perhaps never have been investigated but for the attacks of infidels, who have compassed sea and land to find objections to the Book. The Bible contains the language of God to His children; and He has, like an earthly parent, simplified His utterances to harmonize with human capacity. The more intellectual power the student possesses, the richer the glories that are mirrored to him from the sacred page; while to the ignorant slave or peasant, it seems to carry its own evidence, and they see it, like the sun, in the light of its own glory. The noblest minds of earth have found within that volume intellectual treasures which are *inexhaustible*, while the humblest of God's little ones can receive enough of its truth to light their way through the darkness of time to the glories of eternity. It is the only book in the whole domain of literature

that is adapted alike to the mind of the child and the philosopher—that comes with equal force to the heart of the unlearned and the mind of the scientist.

The language of Moses was chiefly addressed to semi-barbarous tribes. The eloquent words of the prophets fell alike upon the ear of peasant and king. The songs of David were chanted in public worship. The words of Christ were spoken to the fishermen of Galilee, and to the common multitude. And this was long ago; the centuries have come and gone, but Sinai still speaks of her baptism of fire and glory, and the words of those ancient prophets still echo through the hearts of men. The psalms of David have rolled down through the ages, tingeing the literature and finding a home in many a land; and still they seem as fresh and young as when they came from the lips of the poet king, or strengthened the hand of Luther when he flung his banner in the face of Europe. The gentle words of the Nazarene can never lose their sweetness until “death is swallowed up in victory.” They breathe their blessing alike upon the lips of childhood and the silvery crown of age; they wipe the tear from the eye of the stranger, and smooth the pillow of the dying; they bind up the broken heart, and pour the oil of gladness upon wounds that earth hath no power to heal.

Objection III. “IT IS COMPARATIVELY ANONYMOUS.” Some of the books of the Bible claim to have been written by those whose names they bear, and others do not.

We have as much proof of the authorship of these

as of any other ancient writings, and very often more. We have the same evidence that these books were written by their reputed authors as that Homer wrote the Iliad, or that the works of Cicero and Tacitus were the productions of those men. It is also admitted by prominent infidel writers that these books were written by the authors whose names they bear.

Robert Taylor, in his "*Diagesis*," admits in the most unequivocal language the *authenticity* and *genuineness* of the Acts of the Apostles and Paul's Epistles.

Chubb admits that the *books of the New Testament* are the production of the disciples and apostles of Christ. Hobbes says that "the writings of the New Testament are as ancient as the times of the apostles, and that *they were written by persons who lived in those days, some of whom saw the things they relate.*"

The celebrated Lord Bolingbroke says, "It is *out of dispute* that we have in our hands the gospels of Matthew and John, who give themselves out as eye-witnesses of all that Christ did and taught."

Gibbon may also be added to the class of men who make these admissions.

Thus infidels themselves admit the genuineness and *authenticity of books enough to establish the whole Christian system.* Even if all the rest of the Bible were spurious, there is enough in these to bring eternal life to all who will avail themselves of its offers. But this is not all; for, these books being established, they prove the *authenticity of others*; for they quote from, and appeal to, the Old Testament writings. More than this, they contain the history of *unquestionable facts*,

which occurred in *literal fulfilment* of the ancient prophecies. Thus the leading sceptics have unconsciously admitted nearly all that the Christian claims.

There are other books, however, whose authorship is just as well established, historically, as these, and others still which *are anonymous*, but what of that? It furnishes a strong argument in their favour; for it silences *for ever* the claim that the Bible was written by ambitious and designing men. If a book be written to propagate the ambition or flatter the pride of any men or set of men, rest assured they will be very careful to let the world know who the author is. But when men are only instruments in the hand of the living God in giving His truth to the world, they neither know nor care whether future generations shall ever hear of them individually or not. Even the writers of the gospels, although their names are given, are so far from advertising their claims to posterity, that they seem to be the most humble actors in the establishment of Christianity.

Of Matthew, little or nothing is said, except that he had been a tax-gatherer, which was a humble occupation. The names of Mark and Luke are not once mentioned in the gospels; and but for the incidental mention of them in the Acts and in one of Paul's epistles, we should have no Biblical authority (save their writings) that such persons ever existed. John is the only apostle to whom any prominence is given, and his name is never mentioned in the gospel which he wrote. Thus the Scriptures are destitute of *every symptom* of human origin. Because a book is anonymous, it does

not therefore follow that it is without authority. Our calendars and time-tables are all anonymous; but do we therefore reject them, and all of us get up calculations of our own? The great book of nature is anonymous; but do we therefore doubt who it is that has framed its laws and wrought out its mighty problems?

Objection IV. "THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE HAVE BEEN CORRUPTED." It is declared that the sacred writings have been corrupted by erasures and interpolations to such an extent, that we have no means of knowing what may or what may not be contained in the original documents. And this statement is made with the utmost coolness and effrontery. It passes current among a certain class of sceptics, who are willing to accept *any* declaration, without a particle of proof, which militates against God's Word. We have a perfect right to say nothing in reply to this, save to challenge them to produce their proofs. But these are not forthcoming; it is very much easier to make such statements than to *prove* them. While, on the contrary, we have the strongest evidence that they have not been corrupted.

So far as the Old Testament writings are concerned, they were essential to the constitution of the Jewish State. They contained the moral and civil law of that people, as well as their history and the prophecies. Hence they were treated with the greatest reverence and kept most sacredly unaltered.\* They were not kept from the common people; for they were read in the

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\* See page 104.

synagogues every sabbath day, and were translated into Greek more than two hundred and fifty years before the Christian era.

We have abundant proof of the scrupulous care of the Hebrew text on the part of the Jews.

And in relation to the Gospels and Epistles, they certainly could not have been corrupted or forged during the lives of the writers; for they not only knew what they had written, but many among the Churches written to must have known the penmanship and signature of the authors.

The first Christians, then, were absolutely certain that the documents which they received as apostolic were *genuine*.

It is well known also, that the original manuscripts and autographs of some of the writers were preserved for many years after their death. Ignatius appealed to them in the first century; and in the second Tertullian affirms, that they were carefully preserved in the Christian churches, and urged those who were curious in such matters to go and see them. They were also appealed to by Peter, the Bishop of Alexandria, in the *fourth* century.

It must of course be admitted that all corruption was prevented while these autographs were in existence; because, if the attempt had been made, the original documents would have been referred to, and the matter ended at once.

We have proof positive\* that before A.D. 350,

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\* See Constantine's letter to Eusebius.



the copies of the Bible, and especially of the New Testament, were greatly multiplied; and of course the difficulty of corrupting them constantly increased as the copies were multiplied.

The New Testament has been transcribed much more frequently than any other ancient work. When Griesbach prepared his critical edition of the Greek Testament, he examined more than three hundred and fifty manuscripts, some of which were over twelve hundred years old. Among them was the celebrated Syriac manuscript, which was brought from India by Dr. Buchanan. It is written in large folio, and the words *are all numbered* throughout the copy, hence any attempt to either erase or insert a word, must be *instantly detected*.  
Church of Christ General Conference: McDonough, GA, <https://coggc.org/>

It was impossible for the priests to corrupt them without being detected by the people. The books themselves also bear witness that they have not been trifled with in the interests of priestcraft; for the Bible is one united voice against bigotry and superstition. This fact was so apparent to a certain prominent opposer of Christianity (Mr. Hobbes) that he makes the following candid confession: "I am persuaded the ecclesiastics did not falsify the Scriptures; because, if they had an intention to do so, they would surely have made them more favourable to their power over Christian princes and civil sovereignty than they are."\*

But if it had been possible for Christians and priests

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\* See Leland's "Deistical Writers," vol. i., page 58.

to unite in a determination to change and corrupt the books they so highly revered, the first attempt would have been detected by the Jews, who watched all their movements with intense interest. They would have rejoiced in the exposure of any fraud which would enable them to convict the early Christians of dishonesty.

Not only were the followers of the Nazarene watched by the Jews, but on the other hand the heathen philosophers criticized them with equal severity. They lived and suffered in a storm of opposition and persecution. Among their most bitter and jealous enemies were three men who combined learning with ability and exerted themselves to the utmost in their efforts to overthrow the Christian religion. Think you that interpolations and erasures could have been made in the sacred books without being detected by such men as Celsus, Porphyry, and the emperor Julian? Is there an infidel at the present day who would not raise (and justly) a storm of indignation over such an attempt? Most assuredly not. More than this, the differences of opinion which divide Christendom most effectually prevent any possible chance for corruption; for should any one sect seek to incorporate within the sacred books any clause which was favourable to their particular tenets, all the rest would expose them with one united voice. Hence the very differences of opinion among Bible believers (which have always been sneered at by the sceptic) becomes a powerful means of keeping the Word inviolate. And this is not all. The very fact that they

are divided into sects and schisms, serves to divide ecclesiastical power in such a way that freedom of thought and liberty of conscience may prevail. It is no argument against Christianity. Men of science differ as widely in their opinions as do Christians; and perhaps it is safe to say, their differences are more radical. Are we then to conclude that science is a grand fraud upon humanity and that every scientist is either a dupe or a hypocrite? If we follow out the sceptic's mode of reasoning, it will drive us to this point, and many others which are even more absurd.

Objection V. "IF THERE IS A GOD, WHY DOES HE NOT INTERFERE IN BEHALF OF RIGHT?" Why does He allow the innocent to be injured and His own people to be persecuted?  
Church of God General Conference: McDonough, GA, <https://coggc.org/>

The pages of earth are stained with blood, and the very laurels of her chieftains have taken root among the bones of dead men. Sin walks the earth in gold and purple, while virtue often hath not where to lay her head. The creeds of men are powerless to stay the hand of crime. Professed Christians wear the robes of formality and self-righteousness. The sceptic stands amid this moral chaos and asks, "If there is a God in heaven, why does He suffer such things to be?" We answer *Because the time has not yet come when He shall vindicate His power in the earth.* As we look upon the half-finished plan, only one page of God's universe is visible to our eyes. We stand like little children in an unfinished building and wonder at the confusion around us, many of us only half believing

that the Great Architect can bring order out of chaos and beauty out of deformity. The earth herself was born amidst air and water. There was the sweeping of tides and currents—the smoke and steam of submerged volcanoes—the warm ground of seething continents—the heat of subterranean fires and the darkening clouds of vapours. If the sceptic could have stood among the desert places and watery wastes of chaos—if he could have listened there to a beautiful prophecy of sunlit vales and snow-crowned mountains, of crystal lakes and rolling streams; if he could have heard of the fragrance of flowers and the songs of birds, how like a fairy-tale it would have sounded in his ears, how he would have sneered at a Christian who was fanatical enough to believe that God could create such a beautiful world. He would have taunted us with the chaos and the darkness—he would have told us that the rumbling earthquake and throbbing mountain were poor evidence of sunlit landscapes and peaceful seas. He would have said, “If God *can* create a finished earth, whose vales shall be flooded with beauty and mountains crowned with sublimity, why don't He quiet these restless surges, and bring the helpless land out of their grasp?” But in His own good time He wrought out the problem of creation—the waters fled away from His presence, giving up earth's hills and valleys, where trees and flowers sprang to life, and at last the beautiful prophecy was fulfilled. In like manner, He shall yet work out the great moral problems of humanity. Earth is apparently lost in the wild ocean of crime

and misrule; but *a strong hand is at the helm*, and He who shaped her mountains and hollowed her seas; who melted her rocks in His furnace and her metals in His crucible, shall yet lead her into the glorious light of Eden restored. This is the age of discipline and the age of suffering—the age in which men are developing characters for eternity. But we are not left alone in the struggle and the warfare. Every cry of humanity reaches God's ear — every pain of His children is felt in His heart, and every act of injustice is written in the book of His remembrance.

As the Spirit of God “moved upon the waters” of the chaotic earth; so, in His own good time, a new power shall be introduced amid the restless waves of humanity. He who said, “Let there be light,” shall send into the moral darkness of the present age the “Light of life;” and He shall divide the light from the darkness, and bring out the truth and purity that have dwelt in the wilderness of sin.

Then shall the wrongs of innocence be avenged, and the tyrants of earth be crushed by Infinite power. The seething volcanoes of moral corruption and political strife shall fade before His eye. The dross of hypocrisy and self-righteousness shall be melted in His furnace, and the pure gold of loyalty to God shall gleam with sevenfold brightness. Looking upon earth's sin and sorrow; looking at her helpless throes and weary brow, we see only one fragment of the grand eternal whole. But when the vast design is finished—when the grand scheme is completed and earth herself is flooded with glory, we shall see with undimmed eyes

the wisdom and justice, the power and the love of the Infinite Father.

Objection VI.—PROFESSED CHRISTIANS ARE OFTEN UNFAITHFUL TO THEIR TRUST, AND THERE ARE HYPOCRITES IN THE CHURCHES. This is very true, and as sad as it is true. It is common for men to shield themselves behind the faults of professed Christians and comfort themselves with the thought that “I am as good as half the Church members.” Suppose you are! Is their sin any benefit to you? When a man is in a sinking boat, he is just as well off as his fellow-passengers; but the fact that they are going down to death with him is very little consolation, and he makes every effort to reach the life-boat and gain the shore. But there is only one life-boat upon the wild sea of humanity, and happy is he who finds safety therein; for it will assuredly reach the green shores of eternal life.

It is true there are men who profess Christianity from sordid motives, who will thus win the confidence of their fellows that they may the more easily defraud them.

There are donors to public and conspicuous charities who will wrong an orphan child out of his daily bread. There are names upon Church books that will never appear upon the Book of Life. There are costly Bibles upon centre tables, which are never studied in the home circle. There are expensive churches which minister to the pride of sectarianism instead of the glory of God. Yes, there are hypocrites—men who wear the garb of religion as a cloak to covetousness and crime; but this sad truth is an *unanswerable argu-*

*ment in favour of pure Christianity.* Men do not profess to be thieves, liars, or cheats, when they are not; but they *do* profess to be disciples of the Nazarene when they are unworthy of the name: for no man lives who does not respect purity of principle and practical conformity to God's truth.

No counterfeiter will imitate the bills of a broken or worthless bank—no imitations are made of the baser metals. If there were not diamonds there would be no paste jewels. If there were not gold coins there would be no base imitations. If there were not genuine bank-bills there would be no counterfeits. *And if there were not pure Christianity there would be no hypocrites.*

The successful counterfeit may deceive the masses, but it is detected when it comes to the bank; so a careful hypocrite may deceive his fellow-mortals, but he cannot pass current at the bank of heaven. Long faces or canonical robes, church books or pew rents cannot deceive the all-seeing Eye; and the woe pronounced upon hypocrites is as sure of execution as if already finished. Hence this objection is merely a criticism upon the faults and follies of mankind, and falls far short of the code of laws which God has given to man.

Jesus of Nazareth gave to the world the highest conceptions of truth and the purest code of morals that mankind has ever known. His teachings are the embodiment of purity and love—His life was a life of sacrifice, and His death was the crimson seal of God's love to man.

We earnestly beg of the sceptic that he will examine these matters candidly and thoroughly. He has nothing to lose by becoming a Christian; for even if infidelity were true, his future would *then* be as safe as *now*: but if, on the contrary, Christianity be true; if the Creator of heaven and earth is *able* to fulfil His promises, he has *everything* to gain by embracing the glorious truths of the Gospel. He has voluntarily placed himself in a position where no ray of Divine light illumines his pathway—no well-founded hope of the future finds a place in his bosom—no anchor of faith holds his helpless bark from being dashed upon the rocks of despair. And what does he appeal to for help in his loneliness and danger? Not to the pitying eye and outstretched arm of the Eternal Father; for he recognizes no such power. Not to the golden promises that reach from earth's heartaches into the haven of rest; for he ridicules the only chance of salvation that is offered him. His only appeal is to *human reason*, cold and pitiless—*reason* which, aside from Christianity, is as helpless as man himself.

The sceptic is adrift upon a sea of speculation,—the cold waves of unbelief beat against his aching heart, and the clouds of oblivion are fast closing around him. The life-boat is waiting near, willing and glad to bear him to the shores of life; but he scorns its aid, and appeals to *reason* to dispel his fears and bring relief. And thus he will perhaps continue to *reason* until his weary brain fails, his helpless hands fall, and the dark waters sweep him down into the halls of death.



And yet, a recent writer declares that "The believer in infidelity has the advantage over every other man in the world. He is filled with joy and peace. Death he looks upon as a deliverance from all care."

Infidelity is a religion without a faith; a system of worship without a God; a philosophy without logic; and its advocates are preachers without a message: and yet its believer is said to be filled with joy and peace. Is he rejoiced because earth's problems await a glad solution—because He who seeth the end from the beginning holds evenly the scales of justice, and right at last shall triumph? Is he rejoiced because his beloved dead shall be gathered back from the land of the enemy and he shall meet them beyond the reign of death and suffering? Is he rejoiced that his pilgrimage is almost done—that he shall soon lay by his battle-stained armour and wear the victor's crown? Ah no; but because *he looks upon death as a deliverance from all care*. And this is the hope he offers us—*eternal death*. This is the end of our hoping and loving; this is the result of our watching and waiting; this is all—only death, decay, oblivion. Earth's wrongs are never to be righted; innocence can never be vindicated; justice can never be crowned; truth can never triumph. Earth's heartaches can never be healed; the sin and woe of six thousand years can never be blotted out; the tears of humanity can never be wiped away by the hand of Infinite Love. Crime hath no penalty, and virtue no reward. Our loved ones are slipping out of our arms—for ever. No hope illumines their graves; no promise hovers over the

golden heads ; no resurrection can crown their brows with beauty and tinge their lips with love.

O Infidelity ! is *this* the hope you offer ? If *this* is your joy and peace, where is your gall and bitterness ? If *this* is hope, what is despair ? If this is happiness, what is torture ? Your very light is darkness compared to the Christian hope. You may spend your time, if you will, in pointing out the errors and inconsistencies of human creeds ; but it will avail you nothing. They have no place in God's book, no part in His plan. Let us beseech you then to turn away from weak cavils and weaker sneers. You cannot afford to trifle with matters which are of the deepest moment to your personal welfare. Lay aside, then, the productions of man, and search the *Book* itself ; for therein you will find the words of eternal life. If you will believe and obey its teachings, you will find implanted in your soul, instead of the vague theories of infidelity, a well-founded hope of future life and glory. You will find, instead of a system of negations, a golden chain of promises that spans the age of suffering and the river of death and reaches to the very throne of God. You will find, instead of the darkness of doubt and unsatisfactory speculations, a vital faith and a living truth, that will cheer and sustain you in earth's darkest hours. The productions of man lose their influence before we reach the dark river ; the theories of man lose their hold in the hour of trial ; and the hope of man is only sustained by God's eternal truth. Newton laid his dying head, not upon his "Principia," but upon his Bible. Cowper sought no consolation from

his wide fame, but from his Testament. The grandest intellects and noblest hearts of earth have reposed, not upon genius, fame, or philosophy, but upon God's own truth. This is the only Book that can offer purity to the criminal and life to the dying; the only Book that can bring hope to the despairing and salvation to the lost. It is the only Book whose words can go down with us into the valley of the shadow of death, and whose promises flash their glories through its gloom to the kingdom that lies beyond. This is the Book which offers to you a home beyond the wilderness of sin, and life beyond the reign of death. It offers a haven from the storm, and an age of glory and peace when life's broken threads shall be gathered up and Church of God General Conference, McDonough, GA, <https://coggs.org/>er silver cords renewed. It offers a bright solution to the dark problems of humanity, a smoothing of its tangled web, and the wing of the peace-angel across its troubled waves. It flashes its rays through the darkness of the tomb, and gilds with glory the promised morning when the sleeper shall be called to life. It offers a crown of life and an entrance through the pearly gates of the city; it offers the wine of immortality at the marriage feast of the Lamb, and the fruit of Life's tree on the banks of the beautiful river.





## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE STUDY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

NECESSITY OF SEARCHING GOD'S BOOK.—METHODS OF INVESTIGATION.—WHERE WRITTEN, AND BY WHOM.—ITS HARMONIOUS TEACHINGS.—ITS ADAPTABILITY TO DIFFERENT MODES OF THOUGHT.



THE great fault of the age is the want of attention to the Book. Many professed Christians do not *study* it at all, and perhaps content themselves with reading one chapter a week. There are others who read it consecutively, and thus read the volume through; and others still who closely study its pages. But the mass of mankind content themselves without a knowledge of its teachings, and indolently endorse whatever is announced from the pulpit of their particular church, without making any effort to learn whether these announcements are in accordance with the letter and spirit of the Scriptures or not.

The infidel world is equally guilty, and we may say more so; because they not only neglect its study, but loudly denounce the Book, while they remain in utter ignorance of its teachings.

If they read it at all, it is as a printer reads his proof—simply to find faults, mistakes, or typographical errors therein. It is safe to say that they know little

or nothing of its teachings. They get a general idea of what some *suppose it* to teach, and start out to lecture against *that idea*. The fact that the creeds of men are filled with mistakes and inconsistencies is no excuse for such wild tirades against Christianity; for God's Book is in no way responsible for the blunders they contain. What would an infidel think of a man who should start out on a lecturing crusade against the science of mathematics, because forsooth some one had told him that three times two were nine? What would be his opinion of one who spent his time in wild denunciation of figures and problems, because a school-boy, who was perhaps doing his best, had made a mistake in his examples? Would he not recommend such a hair-brained enthusiast to *study* the science of mathematics and ascertain something about it before he took the rostrum to indulge in wholesale abuse of its principles? Most assuredly he would. And a course of mathematical study would change the tenour of the student's thoughts to such an extent that he would never again be guilty of so absurd a blunder.

This is exactly the condition of most of the lecturers against Christianity: Somebody claims that the Bible teaches this, that, or the other; and lo, they start out to lecture against the Book, without ever looking to see whether its teachings have been correctly represented or not. This is not an unfair charge, neither is it made in any spirit of unkindness, but from an honest conviction of its truth. There is no man who has studied the Scriptures, be he sceptic or Christian, who is not astonished at the misquotations and mis-

representations of them which are fulminated everywhere from the so-called "liberal" platform.

This is as true of their best and ablest speakers as of the weakest and most illiterate; and we have the charity to believe that it is caused by ignorance rather than deliberate falsehood. But we appeal to every honest man and woman, be they speakers or hearers, if this is fair? Is it honest? Is it in any sense whatever "*liberal*"? Most assuredly not. No man can intelligently criticize any system of science or philosophy while he is ignorant of its simplest rudiments; neither is he qualified to lecture against the Bible, or any other book, until he *understands* its meaning.

The Word of God claims our attention; and if we would understand and appreciate its wisdom, we must study it *by subjects*. To learn its teachings upon any given point, we must collect all that is said upon that particular theme. We shall find that whatever is obscure in one passage will be clearly explained by another; and the result of such examinations cannot fail to be satisfactory. What should we think of a teacher who would give a child an Arithmetic Book or an English Grammar, and instruct him to *read it through* that he might understand its contents? The merest tyro knows that it is necessary to study one rule, principle, or subject until it is thoroughly understood, and then investigate another. In like manner, the knowledge of God's Word is not to be obtained by careless reading, but by close and critical study. Says H. L. Hastings upon this subject:—

"Read it in parts, taking an epistle at a time, or

a discourse, like the Sermon on the Mount, or our Saviour's parting words to His disciples at the Supper. In this way much knowledge can be gained. Read it with the marginal readings, taking it verse by verse from the beginning, and looking out *every reference* to parallel passages. No person can go through the Bible in this way without gaining great light. Take up the histories of different persons,—Abraham, Joseph, David, Solomon; the different kings; trace their rise, their prosperity, and their fall. Study the history of Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Elijah, Nehemiah, Paul, Peter, John, and all the men whose lives are there written for our learning. Study the history of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Tyre, and Israel, in their prosperity, captivity, and dispersion. Note the prophecies and their fulfilment. Study the prophecies of earthly empires—Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, till man's rebellion is ended, and Christ is Lord of all. Note how every part of the Scriptures points to Christ. Study the types, the offerings, the sacrifices, the tabernacle, the temple, and all the Jewish worship, as laid down in the Old Testament and expounded in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Study the Bible by topics and words. Take Faith, and read every passage that speaks of faith, and read about every man who had faith, and pray the Lord to increase your own faith. Take the word Grace, or Glory, or Salvation, or Redemption, or Resurrection, and trace it through the Bible. Learn the meaning of Atonement, Justification, Sanctification, Righteousness, and all other leading words; first by examining all places where they are

used, and then by seeing what is said concerning them in other passages. Study the prophecies concerning Christ, in His humiliation, in His exaltation, in His sufferings, in His glory; in His first coming to bear the sins of many, and in His coming again in triumph without sin unto salvation. Study His history from the time when He was in the beginning with God, from the first dim prophecy of Him as the woman's conquering Seed, down through all the ages of expectation; then study His earth-life and the years of His toil and sorrow; and then pass upward to the throne, where He sits at God's right hand. Study also His predicted destiny, when He shall come as Lord, as Judge, as King, to reign for ever over a world renewed and redeemed, when all authority and power shall bow before Him, when the last enemy shall be vanquished, death destroyed, earth renewed, and God shall be all and in all.

“In such lines of thought as these we may follow the light of God as it streams upon us from every chink and crevice of His word; not forgetting, while thrilled by those ‘thoughts that wander through eternity,’ to study carefully those portions which refer to our own personal condition, which unveil our hearts and describe our lives, and which teach us our duties as men, as women, as Christians—as husbands, wives, parents, children, masters, servants, members of human society, and as members of the flock of God.

“Such studies as these briefly outlined, will cause our profiting to appear to all; will fit us for such usefulness and service as we may never yet have known; will



make us mighty in the Scriptures: and by them the man of God shall be 'perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.' ”

Any branch of knowledge, whether human or divine, is more or less uninteresting, until we sufficiently understand its scope and meaning to partially, at least, appreciate its beauties. And although the Bible may appear unattractive at first, if we patiently and thoroughly study its principles and teachings, new beauties will dawn upon us at every step.

It is indeed worthy of our closest attention. It was written in the centre of Asia and amid the sands of Arabia, in the courts of the Jewish temple and in the deserts of Judea, in the schools of the prophets, within the luxurious palaces of Babylon, and even on the banks of the Chebar.

Its later books were penned in the centre of western civilization, but in the midst of polytheism, pantheism, and false philosophy.

It was written during a space of fifteen hundred years, by many scribes, the first of whom preceded by centuries the most ancient philosophers of Greece and Asia. His writings were old when Thales and Pythagoras, Xenophon and Confucius were young. Others wrote in the classic age of Greece, others in the days of Thales and Pythagoras, and others still in the age of Seneca and Tacitus, of Plutarch and Domitian. The writers varied as much in position and acquirements as in their locality and the ages in which they lived. The pen was held by the king on his throne and the shepherd in his tent, by the sage in the

desert and the fisherman by the sea, by the lawgiver in the wilderness and the humble tax-gatherer amidst the multitude. It was held by men who had been taught but little save by nature and by God, and was also moved by the most perfect scholars of different ages. And yet it is undeniably the work of one great Author, for *its plan and its purpose are one*.

Science in every age discovers the faults and blunders of the preceding era; but there is nothing of this in God's Book. It advances calmly and surely from the history of the first man's sin towards the one great end—the redemption of the lost through the second man, Christ Jesus.

If these books were mere human productions, and written during so many ages, in so many different countries, and by men of such varied acquirements and temperaments, we can only imagine the extent of the discord which would exist among them. But when we find that it is instead one harmonious whole, leading with stately step from Eden lost to Eden regained, we are compelled to admit that there is only one Mind in the universe that could have produced it. The same voice comes to us from Babylon as from Horeb, from Jerusalem as from Athens, and from Rome as from Patmos. From the plains of the desert or the dungeon of the metropolis come the same words of warning and of hope—the same brave lessons of faith and courage.

This then is the Book which we commend to your attention, and ask you to *study*, knowing that, whatever may be your temperament or pursuit, you will find intellectual food therein.

The scientist learns, that although it only professes to teach the knowledge of God, still every allusion within its pages is in strict accordance with the most advanced ideas of modern research; while there are others which point to those discoveries which shall yet crown the future. The logician will find the clearest reasonings, the finest discriminations, and the purest logic in the crystallized sentences of Paul.

The historian will find that history has been long anticipated—that before some of the nations were born their career was described in the language of the prophets. He finds that He who controlled the pen of the prophets, must control also the destinies of nations, else they could not thus fill out the task assigned to them. Church of Christ, Inc. Copyright 1904 It is His hand that hath prepared a warrior prince in the mountains of Persia, and another in those of Media, and allied their armies, at a point long foretold, with ten other specified people. It is His hand that hath led them, in the way of a thousand obstacles, against the enemies of Israel, and crowned their united banners with victory on the *very day* which terminated the seventy years of captivity, so long before assigned to Judah. The same hand that drew in richest colours the visions of John upon Patmos, shaped the destinies of the Roman empire which are recorded by the infidel historian. So that, in the emphatic words of Dr. Keith, “If you strike from Gibbon a few unholy sentences, his work is a complete commentary upon the book of Revelation.” To the historian, then, the pages of God’s Book bring a rare fascination.

The poet too will here find his love of the beautiful gratified, and his every conception of majesty surpassed. The grandest poetry of antiquity burns in Sinai's trembling mount and quivers in the parting sea. It flashes across the pages of Isaiah, through broken kingdoms and crumbling thrones, but reaches its full triumphant notes when the morn of millennial glory dawns upon his vision. It gleams through the willows where the weeping prophet hung his harp, and burns amid the wheels of Ezekiel. It mingles in the prophecies of Micah and tinges with golden beauty the visions of Daniel.

But the purest and sweetest poetry that earth has ever known is that which fell from the lips of Him "who spake as never man spake." The perfect thoughts fell from His lips like jewels from a crown, and they shall live until death itself is crushed beneath His feet. The Sermon on the Mount stands for ever without a parallel. Infidelity dare not touch it. If it approaches with unhallowed tread, it shrinks abashed in the presence of perfect purity.

The Book of God is closed with a golden seal, for the Apocalypse is poetry itself. Its rapid eloquence is like the sound of chariots or the rush of leaping waters. Alone upon the sea-girt isle is the wondering apostle, while before his vision sweeps in panoramic view the symbols of coming ages.

The first glorious form is "one like unto the Son of Man," who is girded with gold; and, holding the seven stars in His hand, He walks amid the golden candlesticks, giving His charges to the Churches of His love.

Afterward a door was opened in heaven, and the throne was set, and Him that sat thereon ; “ And out of the throne proceeded lightnings, and thunders, and voices,” and the lion of the tribe of Judah opened the seals of the book, for He alone was worthy. There is the coming forth of the horses of heaven, bearing their mystic colours, and the opening of the sixth seal. The harpers of Zion are seen in white raiment upon the glory-clad mount ; the angel is flying through the midst of heaven bearing the everlasting gospel ; and lo ! upon the white cloud is the form of Him who beareth the sickle in His hand to reap the vintage of earth—the harvest of blood ; for her grapes are fully ripe.

Here too are the seven angels, clad in linen and girt with gold, bearing in their hands the seven vials of God’s wrath, one for the earth and one for the sea, one for the fountains and one for the sun, one for the seat of the beast, and one for the fated river, one for the waiting listening air, and one for the fall of mystic Babylon.

Soon is ushered in the dreadful grandeur of the last great battle, where the Conqueror rides at the head of his armies, and His vesture is dipped in blood. His name is called the “ Word of God ; ” and the armies of heaven follow in His footsteps, and He treadeth the winepress of God’s wrath.

When the conflict is over, and the consummation complete, the glorious morn of millennial day illumines earth’s hills and valleys. The pearly gates of the city are open, and the crystal waves of the beautiful river roll from the foot of the throne.

The tide of scepticism may beat against it, as beat the ocean waves against the rock-bound shores of Patmos; but the vision *shall stand*, until the glorious reality shall gladden our éyes, and the harpers of heaven shall sing the new song before the eternal throne.

