

THE BIBLE TODAY AND YOU

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H. W. HATHAWAY

“Thy word is true from the beginning.”

—*Psalm* 119, 160

“The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

—2 *Peter* 1, 21

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The Bible Today and You

A MODERN RECONSIDERATION

CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

YOU, ME, AND OUR MODERN WORLD

All subject to bondage—Victims of modern environment—Baffled enquirers—The wrong key—A real live message of hope—"Snow-men" objections melt in the sun. Page 1

CHAPTER TWO

THE BIBLE AND MODERN ARCHAEOLOGY

Part 1

Tom Paine, Voltaire, Darwin and the clergy unite to discredit the Bible—Mature archaeology now the Bible's best friend—Initial errors of archaeology adjusted—A chronological review of Bible incidents and their archaeological confirmation: Eden—Mesopotamia—Egypt—Metallurgy—The Flood—Abraham. Page 12

THE BIBLE AND MODERN ARCHAEOLOGY

Part 2

Israel in Egypt—Moses—The Exodus—Jericho—Israel's monarchy — Daniel in Babylon — Nebuchadnezzar — A triumphant vindication of the Scriptures as a true and reliable history. Page 32

CONTENTS CONT'D

CHAPTER THREE

BIBLE PROPHECY AND MODERN HISTORY

God's unanswerable challenge—Self-imposed and exacting conditions—A threefold challenge—Babylon and the testimony of travellers—Egypt and the history books—The immortal Jew—A future promise—Assaults of modern infidelity absolutely impotent—A fulfilment of our promise—The Bible must be divine. Page 53

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS AND OUR MODERN BIBLE

A Bible Chart—Sources of our modern Bible—The original manuscripts and early translations—The Latin Vulgate—Anglo-Saxon translations—John Wycliffe—William Tyndale—The Authorised Version—A flood of new material used in the Revised Version—Fresh evidences still accumulate—Papyri “finds” in Egypt—The testimony of the manuscripts is final—Our Modern Bible is the Word of God. Page 80

CHAPTER FIVE

PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANS AND MODERN CHRISTIANITY

Part 1

The Church, the Bible, and You—The Founder of Christianity—His life and teaching—Primitive Christians and the historians—Immortal soulism—The Holy Trinity—History of the development of the apostate church to the seventh century. Page 102

CONTENTS CONT'D
PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANS AND MODERN
CHRISTIANITY

Part 2

History of the development of the apostate church from the seventh century to the Reformation—Indulgences—The Reformation—Purgatory—Vagaries of modern Protestants—Church's conflict with modern progress—The Bible and the Church separated. Page 131

CHAPTER SIX

WHAT THE BIBLE REALLY TEACHES

The nature of man—No inherent immortality—The need of salvation from death. The covenant in Eden—The seed of the serpent—The seed of the woman—The devil and satan—hell. The covenants to Abraham and David—Relation of covenants to the Kingdom of God. The kingdom of men and the Kingdom of God—The approaching time for the Kingdom—Zionism a sign. What does God require of man? Page 160

The Bible Today and You

A MODERN RECONSIDERATION

CHAPTER ONE

YOU, ME, AND OUR MODERN WORLD

ALL SUBJECT TO BONDAGE—VICTIMS OF MODERN ENVIRONMENT—BAFFLED ENQUIRERS—THE WRONG KEY—A REAL LIVE MESSAGE OF HOPE—“SNOW-MEN” OBJECTIONS MELT IN THE SUN.

“All is vanity and vexation of spirit.”—Solomon.

Do you expect to die at some time or other? If you do, then this book has been SPECIALLY WRITTEN FOR YOU.

It is a reasoned attempt to point the way of escape from a calamity which, all our life long, hangs over our head, suspended by a thread, like the sword of Damocles.

Everyone fears death: unbeliever and believer alike; for we notice that “Christian” believers in heaven-going at death generally shew little disposition to take the plunge. They regard their doctor as a better friend than their undertaker, for when the undertaker is obligingly waiting to conduct them to “realms of heavenly bliss,” they hurriedly send for their doctor, in undignified haste, in order for him to delay the experiment.

Yes—experiment! That is what they really feel it to be, and with these anxious misgivings they prefer to remain as long as possible in this “vale of tears.”

There is a strong natural reason for this instinctive fear of death which no pagan belief in the immortality of the soul can quieten. It has been truly said: “The strength of natural instinct can never be overcome by theological

fiction. Men will never practically believe the occurrence of death to be the commencement of life, when they see it to be the extinction of all they ever knew or felt of life."

Paul, writing on this subject of universal concern, declared of all humanity:

"Through fear of death they were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Heb. 2. 15.

And whatever we are, Christian, Atheist, or Agnostic, that fear is implanted deep in our very bones.

A remedy for this evil state of affairs is either despaired of or disbelieved. Thus, at times when extremes of danger serve to force the unwelcome subject on men's attention, we find them countering its dread by foolish jokes and banter.

Grim jokes, however, are neither a palliative nor a cure, and one day, in everyone's life, this problem has to be faced in all its naked terror—this problem which is at once as ancient as Adam, and as modern as this morning's sunrise.

Indeed, it has ever been a "modern" problem in all ages, for all are "modern" in their turn. Nelson lived in a "modern" age in *his* day. His was an age of great consequence and importance—to itself. But today the ant-like activities of Nelson and his contemporaries have passed away with the stream of time, and today not a soul of his generation remains alive on the earth. Instead, the world today is being run by men and women who were then unborn, and who are in the main as indifferent to Nelson's age and activities as the next generation will be to theirs.

ILL-FATED SHIPS

Thus, you see, the problem is ever modern for every modern man. The time to face it and, if we can, solve it, is *now*. Past generations have no further opportunity, and as for future generations, the problem for them does not yet exist.

While it would be impossible to write on any other subject and engage the attention of persons with so many differing interests, stations in life, and temperaments, here

we have a subject which touches upon something that affects us all in common.

All of us, without distinction of age, sex, or rank, are but feeble, transient organisms, energised by and depending on the breath of life to maintain us in hourly being. All of us are destined to live merely for a short space, and then to pass away like ephemeral May-flies. For death visits the palaces of kings and the cottages of shepherds alike; it is indiscriminate, impartial, impassive, and implacable—death is the common denominator of the sum of human existence.

Air liners, wireless, television, X-rays, and wonder drugs, make our modern world very different, outwardly, from those of past ages. The modern world in which you and I live is a very wonderful place. Labour saving and time saving devices, in industry and the home, made possible by the amazing advance of science, have increased our leisure and contributed to the comfort and pleasure of countless millions.

In the field of medicine and surgery we see the same revolutionary progress of recent years, and men now speak as if science bids fair to introduce a scientific millennium.

A GILDED CONDEMNED CELL

But things are very far from being so progressively promising as this. It must be apparent to everyone who thinks at all, that the *real* need for human happiness is security from suffering, disease, and death. Without this, every other benefit, relatively great though it be, is only a palliative to relieve, not a remedy to cure.

It is very much like providing more cushions for the chairs, and dainties for the meals, of men condemned to death and awaiting the arrival of the hangman. It is very kind of science to make our brief stay in the condemned cell a little brighter, while we wait our turn to be hanged. Very nice also of medical science to relieve the pain of the rope at the last; it makes dying so much easier than it used to be for our forerunners who never lived in a "scientific age."

What we should appreciate far more, however, would

be the king's reprieve. We should then enjoy the simple things of life, if only assured of their continuance, so much better than an electric-lit, cushioned, and gilded condemned cell.

But, of course, the most optimistic scientist holds out no such visionary hope. He says, "We belong to a condemned race, and no reprieve need be expected; suffering and death are inevitable, and we must make the best of it." Very practical words, very philosophical words, but very comfortless words. Never mind, science has not said the last word on the subject by any means, as you will see later on.

We must acknowledge, however, that while all goes reasonably well with us and our loved ones, the scientific amenities which minister to our comfort and pleasure do induce a feeling of well-being and peace towards the world—the modern world that science has given us.

But even assuming that settled and happy conditions at present prevail in our domestic circles, it is not possible to count on their indefinite continuance. Human affairs are, of all things, the most subject to change, and one day, in my life and in yours, they will change for the worse—accident, ill-health, bereavement.

Then what has science to offer us? Science gave us the cinema and the wireless, very good narcotics to soothe the vexations and frets of the daily round, if our tastes should run in those directions. But for the greater ills of life, which come to us all in turn, they are mocking, ineffective, and unavailing. Moving pictures won't mend broken hearts.

Our modern grief, despite our modern progress, is as deep and poignant in this respect as was the sorrow of our forebears in the days of Elizabeth and Drake. In spite of living in a modern age, we are still no better placed in this matter than were the ancient Britons.

"IS LIFE WORTH LIVING?"

Now, if you are a man or woman given to thought, however casual or infrequent it may be, you must realise the unpleasant truth of our remarks. At times, at least, you have experienced a feeling of frustration, a feeling of

the futility of life, which has found expression in a sigh and the exclamation, "Is life worth living?"

You may even have gone on to think a little deeper. You may have got as far as yearning for something to fill a gap, which, although you cannot define it, yet you feel to exist—a something which would not only give life a meaning but a purpose also, something which would recompense you for all the suffering and sorrow which you perforce have to undergo. And then, somehow the problem remained unsolved, and was dismissed with a shrug, which was a mixture of resignation and despair—"Oh, well, I suppose what is to be will be."

Of course you will probably realise that there are people who have *not* so despaired, people who have opinions concerning these ills and their remedy? They are not so numerous as they once were, but that is because we are living in an age which is so markedly different.

Without committing ourselves to the religious opinions of the Victorians, we can look back, in order to see the contrast between their age and ours. In the days of our grandfathers, people in general were satisfied that the reason of, and the cure for, our ills was to be found in the Bible. The present generation, on the contrary, will look to any other authority except the Bible.

We have travelled a long way since those days when a Bible was to be found in railway station waiting rooms, and hotel bedrooms; when Bible discussion was a regular feature of the daily press and periodical magazines; discussion in which the leading statesmen of the day and other public figures enthusiastically joined.

All this has passed now and given place to a new order and a new outlook. Bible discussion today sends everyone into a strained silence. It is as if a Wellsian ape-man suddenly made his appearance at an Embassy reception at the height of its refined festivities—just the last thing to be thought about, and entirely out of place.

Bible discussion causes embarrassment and uneasiness; a loss to know what to do or say next, or how to turn the conversation. The Bible introduces principles and subjects of which most people have only imperfect knowledge, and, if argument is persisted in, it usually results in bad feeling and frayed tempers.

Thus we find that in books which teach the art of social success and popularity, we are specifically warned against religious discussion, as a thing "not done in the best circles," and one which we must avoid like the plague if we wish to cultivate and retain our popularity.

The reasons for this striking contrast between our own age and that of our grandfathers are known to most. The Bible has fallen into disrepute owing to attacks which have been made upon it by various writers. Its authority has now become so weakened as to lose the influence it once had on men and nations; so that today men are one of three things on Bible matters—ignorant, apathetic or rebellious.

You and I who live in this age cannot escape being affected by it, and, maybe, influenced by it. It is the psychological principle of environment. If we had been born in an age predominantly religious, then it would be comparatively easy to be religious also. Everything around would encourage and foster religious thought and devotion.

HAVE YOU "GONE WITH THE CROWD"?

So it is with our present irreligious age. People are largely not responsible for their mental outlook. Early education and environment have made them what they are. They, of course, see no reason to lament the fact. We, however, knowing their true position, feel sorry for them. We can see how they have been deceived, and how that deception, if continued in, can have far-reaching and evil consequences for them.

You may be, you probably are, a product of this modern age of which we speak, and if we are going to arouse your interest in the Bible, we realise that we have to adopt different methods from those successfully used in a more religious age. A "Thus saith the Lord" is no longer good enough for you. You would just smile at us, if you were polite, for you, in common with your contemporaries, no longer believe that God has spoken at all.

Before you will even listen, we have to create in your mind a confidence which training, and maybe personal inclination, has destroyed. We believe that we can do this, but not without your willing co-operation; YOU MUST BE

PREPARED TO RECONSIDER THE POSITION IN THE LIGHT OF WHAT WE SHALL HAVE TO TELL YOU.

Now, we live in this modern world with you. We, too, are exposed to the apathetic, ignorant, and rebellious spirit of the age. We, too, have access to modern works on evolution, philosophy, and religion. We know your point of view, because we once shared it. But upon a reconsideration our views underwent a change—a radical change.

After a thorough investigation of the Bible's claims, we believe the Bible to be what it claims, an inspired and infallible revelation from God, the Creator of the Universe.

You doubtless do not agree with us—this was to be expected; but you will allow that *our* views were formed after personal enquiry and not at the behest of others. Has *your* antagonistic opinion been formed by the same process? Have *you* enquired and investigated the Bible's claims, and found them wanting? OR HAVE YOU RATHER TAKEN THE LINE OF LEAST RESISTANCE, AND GONE WITH THE CROWD?

“THE BURNING SANDS OF LIFE”

You may not agree with the Victorians, you may not agree with us, but it is a poor life which is guided by reasonless opinions. A man who has a reason for his opinion, even though it differs from ours, commands respect; but not so a sheepish follower of public opinion.

But may be at some time you did get as far as actively looking into the claims of religion, only to discover that the only apparent alternative to your state of uncertainty was the acceptance of the teaching of the church. You then found yourself rebelling at its ritual, dogmas, and self-contradictory creeds; and the faint hope that you had of finding a reasonable or satisfying explanation of life and its problems was abandoned as but the mirage vision of a thirsty soul, condemned to walk the burning sands of life until his strength fails and his parched tongue is stilled in death.

Or it may be that in your enquiry you were discouraged by the seeming complexity of the whole problem. You saw a multiplicity of denominations, each with clever men

as their leaders, who differed radically among themselves, and you despaired of unravelling a tangle which seemed to baffle greater minds than yours.

This is a pity, a great pity; but would it give you fresh heart to be told that most of your fears are without real foundation, and that the subject is not nearly so involved or complicated as you think?

A man with a large bunch of keys, all of which refuse to open a lock, might feel quite justified in believing this particular lock to be extremely complicated, and impossible to open.

The lock *could* be anything but complicated. It *could* be a perfectly simple two-lever lock which, although resisting the efforts of complicated keys, would respond to a very, very simple key—if it were the *right* one.

Whether, therefore, you are just drifting in apathetic indifference, or whether you have made the unsuccessful effort of which we have spoken, and have now relapsed into a state of indifferent resignation, just try to remember that you are the product, or shall we say victim, of this modern age. You need some outside help with that "lock." We appeal to you to reconsider your position, and indeed the whole problem, in the light of recent knowledge. It is then to be hoped that we shall be able to re-arouse your interest, and restore your confidence in the Bible, by a reasoned, methodical setting forth of its claims.

If upon examination it is found to be true, then a study of it will prove of more than mere academic interest, for it will be found to contain the very solution of the practical problems which you despair of being solved.

"SOMETHING ALIVE"—"CRYSTAL CLEAR"

This book is not a despairing effort to restore the waning influence of church religion; indeed, if it does its intended work it will help the church to wane. Neither is it just another "religious book," in the accepted sense of the term. We have nothing to sell; we leave "benefices" and "livings" to an apostate clergy. Freely have we received, freely we give, "without money and without price."

Neither are we going to treat you to the exposition of

some vague philosophy, or a metaphysical disquisition on "Holy mysteries." Rather are we going to treat of things tangible, of things solid, of things alive. Something that will not leave you in two minds as to what we are driving at.

Our testimony will be plain testimony, a trumpet with no uncertain sound. We are going to talk to you as we ourselves like to be spoken to, in plain language. We are going to talk of many things which you may already know, but have not yet seen the true significance. Other things you may learn for the first time.

But it is our intention that they shall be made crystal clear to you, in A PLAIN STRAIGHTFORWARD APPEAL FOR A RECONSIDERATION OF YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARD THE BIBLE. We are going to submit, not opinions, but evidences for our unqualified belief that the Bible today, in this modern world, is THE INSPIRED AND INFALLIBLE WORD OF THE LIVING GOD.

It is regarded as anything but this in our present age. The modern temper wants to know what an ancient book, written by primitive Hebrew shepherds, can have to do with modern problems, in a modern world. Its right place, they say in effect, is in the museum along with other archaic musty manuscripts. In saying this the modern man thinks he has everything to justify him in his opinion. But what evidence has he?

Nothing should be simpler to test today than the teaching of this ancient book whose origin is obscured in the mists of time. If it is just a product of primitive religious thought, expressing primitive beliefs, and reflecting primitive science—then surely in the full glare of modern enquiry, its early barbaric flaws should stand out in bold relief. Modern knowledge of ancient customs and literature should have found more than sufficient evidence for exposing the Bible for what it is, and for putting it in its place—the museum, as a useless archaic exhibit.

Far from this being the case, however, modern science and modern research have served to illustrate, amplify, and confirm the Bible record, in most unlooked-for and remarkable ways.

Now in order more effectively to correct the erroneous views of our contemporaries on Bible matters, it is well

that their views be summarized. Reasons they themselves give for their indifference to, or unbelief of, the Bible, might be fairly summed up under the following sections:

FOUR IMPOSING "SNOW-MEN"

(1) That the Bible is a book of ancient Jewish literature, how and when written no one really knows; but probably collected or composed by designing priests in order to impose their will upon a credulous people, by claiming the book to be of divine origin. Whereas, in fact, it is now known to be a crude mixture of fact and fiction, folk-lore and legend.

(2) That the claim of the Bible to be an inspired revelation is simply out-of-date, fit only for belief in earlier ages which were ignorant of ancient history and archaeology. In any case, there are no means at our disposal for testing such an impudent claim.

(3) That if it could be proved the Bible as first written was an inspired message from God, even then the repeated copying of it, by hand, for centuries, its translation into other languages, and its constant revisions, have finally destroyed any reasonable hope that our present Bible would be recognised by a man who had seen the first original books. Therefore it is useless as a standard of appeal.

(4) That Christianity is another world religion arising out of man's fear of the "unknown," and the desire to placate the gods of whom he stood in awe. Modern study has confirmed this view.

This appears to be a very formidable list, but it is surprising what a little sun will do to quite a big snow-man. In the chapters which follow, we shall invite you to watch these objections one by one "melt away" like snow-men in the sun.

The first statement, that the Bible is unhistorical fable and legend, will be decisively "melted" in Chapter Two by the penetrating rays of Modern Archaeology.

The second statement, which affirms that the Bible's claims to inspiration cannot be tested, will be effectively "melted" right away when, in Chapter Three, we consider Prophecy.

The third, which says that the Bible's transmission has altered its message beyond recognition, will suffer a like fate with the other two "snow-men" when we consider the Manuscripts, in Chapter Four.

Whilst the remaining fourth objection will be effectively disposed of when we come to consider the doctrinal teaching of true Christianity at the end of the book.

You may hold us to our promise; we have no fear of the outcome. We now invite you to watch our first "snow-man"—the Bible unhistorical and fabulous—dissolve as we turn on the heat in the following chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BIBLE AND MODERN ARCHAEOLOGY

Part 1

TOM PAINE, VOLTAIRE, DARWIN AND THE CLERGY UNITE TO DISCREDIT THE BIBLE—MATURE ARCHAEOLOGY NOW THE BIBLE'S BEST FRIEND—INITIAL ERRORS OF ARCHAEOLOGY ADJUSTED—A CHRONOLOGICAL REVIEW OF BIBLE INCIDENTS AND THEIR ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONFIRMATION: EDEN; MESOPOTAMIA; EGYPT; METALLURGY; THE FLOOD; ABRAHAM.

A hundred and eighty years ago the creation of Adam and Eve at about 4,000 B.C. was, along with the rest of Bible revelation, generally accepted as an inspired historical record.

Then came the French Revolution, that great social upheaval, which aimed at the overthrow of an oppressing royalty, and the breaking of the power of the Church by which it was sustained. The Church then received a blow from which it has never fully recovered.

Attacks upon the Church soon spread to attacks upon the Bible, which was believed to be responsible for Church doctrines and ritual. Men like Voltaire and Thomas Paine, gifted with caustic wit and the ability to write entertainingly, satirized the clergy and attacked the Scriptures so effectively that they have never since been held in the universal esteem they once enjoyed.

About 60 years later came Charles Darwin with his theory of the origin of the human race through a slow and gradual evolution. This theory necessitated an enormous antiquity for man—upwards of millions of years. Predisposed by the labours of Voltaire, Tom Paine and others,

many eagerly seized upon Darwin's explanation as the true one because it further discredited the Bible version of creation, as the Bible taught that man was a comparatively recent creation, *fully* developed when newly made.

With the advent of Voltaire and Paine there also came into existence a more subtle class of Bible enemies known as "Higher Critics." These men, by methods best understood by their learned selves, were able to tell all sorts of wonderful things about the Bible, such as certain books of the Bible having had two or more authors, other books not having been written at the time of which they professed to speak, and still more being quite "unhistorical and mythical."

So effective was this pernicious teaching that it became generally accepted by the Church, as can easily be seen by the way it is advocated in their printed Bible commentaries, and taught in their colleges. This system, with the blessing of a degenerate Church, has done more to undermine and destroy confidence in the Bible than all the assaults of Voltaire, Tom Paine, Darwin and Bradlaugh put together, as our present generation only too clearly testifies.

A LAW-COURT TEST

There were many Church scholars, however, who opposed the pretentious claims of "Higher Criticism," and denied the soundness of the application of its principles. They even went further and declared that, although its methods were convincingly "scientific" to those who practised them, the evidence of Higher Criticism would never carry the day in a court of law.

It seemed that such a charge could never be practically demonstrated. Yet, in a most remarkable way, the matter has now been put to the test in a modern law-court. Sir Charles Marston, to whom we are indebted for the information, sets forth the details at some length in his book, "The Bible is True."

A certain Miss Deeks (of Canada) wrote a book entitled "The Web," and deposited the manuscript with her publishers. Then Mr. H. G. Wells published his book, "Outline of History"; whereupon Miss Deeks, confident that, with the connivance of her publishers, he had copied large

portions of her book, brought an action against him for plagiarism.

In order to get the best available evidence for the alleged copying of her manuscript, she went to a learned gentleman who specialised in literary matters—an Associate Professor of Ancient and Old Testament Languages and Literature, the Reverend W. A. Urwin, M.A., D.B., Ph.D., at that time of Toronto University, and afterwards Professor of Old Testament Languages and Literature at Chicago University—in fact, a real live Reverend “Higher Critic.” He made a statement to the court in explanation of his reasons for consenting to give his learned evidence on behalf of Miss Deeks. It was a very important and significant statement. He declared :

“I consented in considerable measure because this is the sort of task with which my study of ancient literature repeatedly confronts me, and I was interested to test out in modern works (‘The Web’ and ‘Outline of History’) the methods commonly applied to those of the ancient world.”

Here then are the self-confessed methods of Higher Criticism which are applied to Scripture writings and which this learned gentleman was anxious to put to the test in a modern court of law, no doubt feeling confident about the result. But what a shock he had coming to him. His evidence, and that of two other similarly learned witnesses, was duly heard. One of them went so far as to declare that it was his opinion that :

“Mr. Wells wrote his book with the manuscript of Miss Deeks’ book upon the desk in front of him.”

But in spite of this confident charge, in spite of the learned methods by which literary experts thought they had proved their case, the Judge, and later the Appeal Judges of Canada

“COMPLETELY REJECTED THE EVIDENCE OF THE HIGHER CRITICISM, AND DISMISSED THE CASE.”

This, in itself, was decisive enough to shew the legal opinion of the Higher Criticism. But Miss Deeks, still not satisfied, and having great confidence in the testimony of her learned witnesses, took the matter to the highest legal

tribunal in the Empire—The Privy Council in London. Then what happened?

“After a long hearing in which the Higher Criticism was thoroughly reviewed . . . THE COURT UNANIMOUSLY REJECTED THE APPEAL.”

A BOLD ARCHAEOLOGIST

Surely this is damaging if not decisive evidence against the methods by which men presume to determine Bible questions of authorship. The justification of these legal findings on the worthless evidence of Higher Criticism and the exposures which it has suffered will be shewn in the decisive and concrete evidence now to follow, and which is admirably summed up by a modern archaeologist, Sir Charles Marston:

“Nearly a century after Biblical criticism had started, archaeologists first began to dig in the mounds of ancient ruins in Bible lands, in order to increase existing knowledge of ancient history. So THE SOURCES OF INFORMATION WERE NO LONGER DERIVED FROM CLASSICAL WRITERS, COMBINED WITH CONJECTURE OF WHAT *ought* TO HAVE HAPPENED; but began to be slowly enriched by evidence left behind by those who lived in times that were mythical to Herodotus, and other ancient historians . . . So IT HAS BECOME NECESSARY TO SCRAP MOST, IF NOT ALL, OF WHAT PEOPLE HAVE LEARNED OR read about the Old Testament, in Colleges and Seminaries, in text books, commentaries and encyclopedias, and to go back to the original books of Genesis, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy and Joshua.”

The reasons for this revolutionary and sweeping statement of Sir Charles, by which he unceremoniously disposes of all the learned lumber of the schools, it is now our intention to pass under review. We shall see that the confidence expressed by Sir Charles did not, however, come all at once, for in the very early stages of archaeological research it sometimes appeared that archaeology favoured the critics.

As a result of early generalisations resulting from *partial* finds, the Bible was sometimes under a cloud, much to the delight of its enemies. It was found that Egyptian chronology calculated by the reigns of her disinterred Pharaohs, and compiled from inscriptions on obelisks and temples,

put Egyptian history back to 10,000 B.C. more or less, according to differing authorities.

Early discoveries in the Euphrates and Tigris valleys, just north of the Persian Gulf, had also shewn the Mesopotamian civilization to be far more recent than the Egyptian. Yet this (Mesopotamia) was the district which had always been associated with the Garden of Eden, identified as it had been by the mention of the rivers Euphrates and Hiddekel (Tigris) in Genesis.

CLERGY TAKE FRIGHT

Many clergy of the Established Church became seriously alarmed by the impressive array of accumulating "evidence." Some of them, taking premature fright, sought to shew that evolution was "quite compatible" with the Bible story, for Eden, Adam, and Eve were but "profound allegories." As for the chronology of the Bible which was now "discredited"—well that, too, was "never intended to be taken seriously." After all, they said, the Bible was but the "collected stories, traditions, and legends of the wild Jewish tribes," and like all early literature was largely influenced by the primitive outlook and "infancy of the race."

Yes, it certainly did seem, in those days, as if the Bible had received blows from which it would never recover. Its enemies were numerous and powerful. Its professed friends were ready to give it up to betrayal, and few—very few—retained the old-fashioned robust belief in its divine inspiration and infallibility. But what a revolutionary change there has been during the present century. Darwin is now discredited. Many scientists contend that the Edenic story of Creation is strictly scientific.

A more mature archaeology is now rapidly discrediting every early view which was based on faulty hypotheses and misleading deductions, owing to partial and imperfect knowledge of the facts. Bible stock is higher today than it has ever been since the first onslaughts of open infidelity and refined agnosticism. But alas, the damage they did has largely remained. The Bible, dethroned from the common homes as a result of these attacks, has never since regained its place. Evidence for its claims now exists in

abundance, far more evidence than our loyal forebears ever had, but today people are ignorant and apathetic in Bible matters. They have not the interest or intelligent understanding to appreciate the growth of knowledge made possible by the labours of the field archaeologist.

A REAL GARDEN OF EDEN

Modern discovery has proved that the earliest civilization known was not Egyptian but Babylonian (Mesopotamian). This confirms the Bible location of Eden in the district of the Euphratean and Tigris valleys (modern Iraq). What caused the matter ever to be doubted by archaeology? It was a mistake made in all good faith.

When the exhumed chronicles of the reigns of Egypt's kings were compiled it was found that their *added* reigns amounted to many thousands of years. More complete knowledge of Egyptian history has demonstrated that MANY OF THESE REIGNS OVERLAPPED INSTEAD OF BEING CONSECUTIVE. Also, at times, many kings were reigning in different parts of Egypt at the same time. Fear of usurpation by rival claimants to the throne often impelled the reigning monarch to associate his son and heir with him on the throne, in order to safeguard and insure the continuity of his royal house.

When this and other practices were found out in Egyptian history, alterations were made to the dates on various statues in the British Museum. New gilt lettering called our attention to altered dates of the reigns of Egypt's kings, now revised in the light of fresh discovery. Further difficulties were caused by the unscrupulous practice of many Egyptian monarchs. They often erased the names of their forerunners from buildings and monuments, erected to perpetuate their memory, and substituted their own.

However, the gradual sifting of the evidence, although still leaving much to be found out, has progressively reduced the length of Egypt's history. Some theories still remain which conflict with Bible history. But they are only theories—the opinions of individuals. TODAY THERE ARE NO INDISPUTABLE EVIDENCES OF EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITY WHICH CLASH WITH THE BIBLE or are found to be irreconcil-

able with it. Indeed, so orderly have many later parts of Egyptian chronology now become that Dr. Kyle declares:

“By pursuing independent investigations in both Egyptian and Bible chronology and history, and arranging the results in parallel columns, we find that Josiah is side by side with Pharaoh Necho, as the Bible places him; Hezekiah with Tirhaka; and Rehoboam with Shishak . . . These are but a few of the multitude of synchronisms which may be traced between the chronological system of the Bible and that of ancient Egypt.”

Thus the reason for believing Egyptian civilization to be older than the Mesopotamian no longer exists. Archaeology has come to the aid of the Bible most decisively. We are now told of the many revisions in official records at the Museums and that “Classical dictionaries need constant revision in the light of fresh discoveries. Chronologies, the reigns of kings, etc., are in a continual state of flux.”

AN ERROR CONFESSED

Prof. Sir Leonard Woolley confesses: “Until recently it was thought that the Egyptian civilization was the oldest in the world.” Now Prof. Woolley is of the firm opinion that the oldest is the Mesopotamian in the region of Eden. This latter fact is being fully confirmed by modern archaeological research:

“The garden (Eden) has not been definitely located by archaeological evidence, but it is very significant that all traceable lines of the world’s great emigrations, when followed back towards the beginning, invariably centre from all parts of the world towards a certain small area in Western Asia.”

With the final settling of the age precedence of Mesopotamia over Egypt, there arose a doubt as to the *real* age of this early civilization. Early views were that it greatly exceeded the alleged date of Creation. Thus the Bible and archaeology were in conflict. This view, of course, was encouraged and played up by those who were eager to see the Bible worsted. Now, growing knowledge, which discriminates between historical records and religious myths, has helped to clarify the picture, and to reduce

the time of early Mesopotamian civilization, until much learned opinion admits that it agrees with Bible chronology :

“ At what point are we to place the earliest evidences of Sumerian culture known to us? The question is one which has been the subject of infinite debate. But it would appear that . . . A MUCH SHORTER PERIOD OF DEVELOPMENT THAN WAS FORMERLY HELD TO BE NECESSARY . . . Of late years, there has been a reaction against those early dates. The reign of Ur-Nina, the earliest king of Lagash who is more than a name, would fall about 3,000 B.C.” (The Creation was approximately 4000 B.C.)

The next point of interest is that of the alleged barbarity and ignorance of early man. Man is supposed to have grown out of ignorance and gradually acquired the civilized arts and crafts. The Bible, on the other hand, represents the race as having early acquired the arts and crafts which, subsequently, became lost—as in the case of the early inhabitants of Britain, less than 2,000 years ago.

For instance, the Bible speaks of the descendants of Cain being skilled in music and the art of working metals, things which we associate with advanced civilization. And so it has proved to be. Prof. Woolley in his excavations at Ur (one of the early Bible cities) has unearthed actual specimens of early musical instruments, also beautiful examples of the goldsmith's craft, made at this very time of which the Bible speaks. He also brought to light innumerable evidences of a highly civilized state, of which we shall have more to say later.

Of the metallurgical skill of the early inhabitants of Mesopotamia one writer says :

“ The art of melting, hardening, casting, and chasing metals . . . was well established. The chemical analysis of early metal objects by the late Dr. Helm has recently shewn that ancient Babylonian brass founders . . . used not only tin but also antimony, in order to harden copper and at the same time to render it more fusible.”

To recapitulate: we see that, in spite of initial mistakes and misleading evidence, order has gradually emerged from chaos, so that our present knowledge confirms the Bible record as to the location of Eden somewhere in the lower Euphratean valley—“the cradle of the human race.” It

has also demonstrated the high degree of skill possessed by these early descendants of Adam, exactly as the Bible represents. It also (in round figures) confirms Bible chronology.

This is surely a good beginning. It shews the Genesis account to be history, in no uncertain way. This result has not been arrived at by obscure or abstract reasoning. It is based on long-interred tangible evidence composed of actual objects, written records, and the remains of buildings. Archaeology might be termed petrified history. And unlike written history, which is largely a copy of previous works, here we have THE ORIGINALS LOCKED AWAY IN THEIR EARTHY SAFES UNTOUCHED BY HUMAN HANDS, UNSEEN BY HUMAN EYES FOR CENTURIES, WAITING THE ADVENT OF THE MODERN SCIENTIFIC ARCHAEOLOGIST TO UNCOVER THEIR HIDING-PLACE, READ THEIR SECRETS, AND PUBLISH THEIR FINDINGS IN VINDICATION OF THE ANCIENT RECORDS WITH WHICH THEY WERE CONTEMPORARY.

NOAH AND A REAL FLOOD

Among other Bible incidents, Noah and the Flood have had more than their share of criticism. Until recently, many professing Christians, overwhelmed by the opposition yet still retaining their loyalty, would confess their belief in the Flood almost apologetically. The only practical interest shewn in this "old world legend" was the manufacture of little wooden ships filled with wooden horses, cows and sheep as toys for children.

The Bible records this incident as sober history. (We have the record of a universal catastrophe to the human race by a flood, and a fresh start made with the sons of Noah, written with the detailed accuracy of genuine history.) It tells how Noah's three sons became the progenitors of a threefold division of the human race, and these genealogical records have since been pronounced as sound by archaeologists.

A few years ago, whilst believing this record, we should have been hard put to it if anyone had demanded material proof of us. The historian is apt to demand material proof, and material proof of such an event as this is hard to find. But, unlikely as it was ever to occur, material proof

of the flood has come to light through the labours of Sir Leonard Woolley in Babylonia, particularly in the Bible city of Ur. Prior to these actual finds, WRITTEN EVIDENCE HAD BEEN UNEARTHED which shewed that the early dwellers in Ur had a tradition of a flood which they treated as an actual occurrence. As one writer puts it:

“Many authorities have doubted whether (the) story had any basis in historical fact. That the Sumerians had no such doubt is clear, for . . . the annalists in their sober table of the reigns of kings made mention of it as an event which interrupted the course of history: they vouchsafe us no details about it—‘Then came the Flood, and after the Flood kingship again descended from heaven.’”

Thus these early chroniclers, by dividing their kings' reigns into pre- and post-Deluge eras, make the Flood the great interrupter of their course of development. And they do so just as actually and literally as we now refer our historical dates to the birth of Christ. Some events took place 100 B.C. (before Christ), others 100 A.D. (in the year of our Lord). Whether men believe the claims of Christ matters not; all agree that he was an historical person. In the same way, we are not at present concerned as to whether the early Sumerians believed the Flood to be a *divine* visitation or just a *natural* calamity. The fact is, they believed it to have happened. This, of itself, would have been a signal confirmation of the Bible record; but little did we expect, in those days, the dramatic finds which were yet to come. Before we tell of these, a few observations on archaeological practice will serve to give us a more intelligible picture of the Flood evidence.

STRATIFIED HISTORY

In the early days, 1850 or thereabouts, archaeologists seemed intent on winning the big prizes. And big prizes there certainly were, as witness the colossal granite lions and bulls now in the Assyrian gallery of the British Museum. In order to find these huge sculptures, shafts were sunk into the tops of mounds, which were once cities, until something was struck. If it was a wall, a tunnel would be driven along its face, underground, in the hope of finding sculpture work or inscriptions. As the tunnel lengthened, another shaft would be sunk to obtain more light, and to

act as an outlet for hauling up the baskets of unwanted rubbish. By these methods the site of an ancient city was soon honeycombed with underground passages which subsequently collapsed, and destroyed any hope of later efforts at "scientific digging."

Today, mere treasure-hunting archaeology has gone. The method which has succeeded it, though more laborious, is one which yields more reliable data. A prospective mound is now removed from the top in layers. Whenever anything of importance is found it is drawn and photographed in situ before anything more is excavated. This process continues until virgin earth is reached, then the diggers know that they have come to the end of the city's "history." The reason for this stratified history is found in the fact that in the East the ruins of houses are not cleared away but built upon by later builders. In this and other ways layer after layer of "evidence" of early settlers is left in the earth. The latest settlements are naturally found nearest the top of the mound.

In the Spring of 1929 Sir Leonard Woolley was busy at work on the site of Ur. Here he found many remarkable evidences of very early civilization. One day, after having dug through layers of rubbish and broken pottery, his diggers came upon

"Perfectly clean clay, uniform throughout, the texture of which shewed that IT HAD BEEN LAID THERE BY WATER."

The workmen having had similar experiences before, said that they had reached virgin soil, and that this was the original clay of which the delta of the river was composed. Sir Leonard was at first disposed to agree with them, in which case the workings would have been abandoned and we should have been the poorer for their error.

Something caused Sir Leonard to hesitate as, with experienced eye, he took in one bearing after another. By these he saw that they were too high up for it to have been the old river bed. So he tells us: "After working out the measurements I sent the men back to work to deepen the hole." He goes on to say:

"The clean clay continued without change . . . until it had attained a thickness of a little over 8 feet. Then, as suddenly as it had begun, it stopped, and we were once more in layers of rubbish . . . and pottery."

A DRAMATIC MOMENT

It is difficult to imagine a more dramatic and tense situation. We can visualize the looks that would be exchanged between the archaeologists, and the unspoken words which would run through their minds. **THE FLOOD!** To make sure that they were not the victims of a geological freak Sir Leonard Woolley ordered his men to sink another shaft 300 yards to the north-west. Then they waited in impatient anticipation while the digging proceeded down through rubbish and pottery seemingly without end. But, at last, the clay again! Clay and more clay, until 8 more feet were removed, and early pottery and rubbish once again reached. The new pit had verified their first find; there they found "the same bed of water-laid clay."

Here then, like a giant sandwich, were two layers of early remains of distinct civilizations, a difference known by the different types of pottery, and between them the irrefutable evidence of a great flood! Sir Leonard has no doubts about it, for, as he says:

"8 feet of sediment imply a very great depth of water, and the flood which deposited it must have been unparalleled in local history.

"The bed of water-laid clay deposited against the sloping face of the mound which extended from the town to the stream or canal at the north-east end, **COULD ONLY HAVE BEEN THE RESULT OF A FLOOD; NO OTHER AGENCY COULD POSSIBLY ACCOUNT FOR IT.**"

It would be difficult to imagine what more the sceptic could ask. Such evidence as this was more than we once ever dared hope could be found. But it has been found, and that by a man who will not be accused of being a simple believer of the Bible. He himself has said that he is not concerned with theology—he leaves that to the theologians. He is simply an archaeologist who has made the most moving and dramatic discovery of all time till now. In doing this he has silenced the critic and the scoffer on the subject of Noah and the Flood. There *was* a flood preceded by a peculiar mixture of peoples. There *was* a flood followed by the growth of a different culture. The pottery and the clay tell their own story, corroborate the

testimony of early Sumerian writers, and set their seal to the Bible record.

“The great bed of clay marked . . . a break in the continuity of history; above it we had the pure Sumerian civilization slowly developing on its own lines; below it there was a mixed culture.

“A whole civilization which existed before it is lacking above it, and seems to have been submerged by the waters.”

ABRAHAM AT HOME

Abraham is one of the most important figures in the whole of Old Testament history. Two great races of antiquity, the Jew and the Arab, claim him as their common ancestor. He is the bearer of unique titles—“Heir of the world”—“Friend of God.” But none of these things deterred the critics, nor exempted this great man from their meddling attentions.

They were formidable critics too, in those days: men whose scholarly attainments were of world-wide notoriety. With a great show of learning they demonstrated the mythological character of Abraham in a way that no unlearned person could possibly gainsay. Those who, in spite of such learned opposition, persisted in their primitive beliefs, and accepted the Bible record at its face value, were regarded with pitying disdain by these erudite scholars.

Their “inexhaustible learning” and “profound scholarship” were responsible for reducing Abraham to a fiction as unreal and non-existent as Mars, the god of war; anything in fact, except a real person, as the Bible represented him to be. Two short quotations reproduced by Dr. Kyle will shew this; we could quote pages to the same effect.

“The individuals, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, are eponyms—personification of clans, or ethnological groups—and they are nothing more.”

“Abraham and Lot are the same as *Gemini*, called by the Romans Castor and Pollux.”

There were other critics, not of this extreme school of thought, as represented principally by German scholars, who magnanimously allowed Abraham to have “prob-

ably" been real. Nevertheless he could have been only a "tribal chieftain" whom legend and fancy had elevated to an unreal importance. The story of Abraham as scripturally recorded could by no means be regarded as "sober history."

Both these views, extreme and moderate, have now been exposed and shewn to be childish and absurd in the extreme. The greatest regret that these so-called "scholars" must now have is that they were so foolish as to commit their views to print. Their works, however, remain as a punishment to them for their inexcusable haste to convict the Bible on half-digested evidence and almost total lack of facts. They serve another purpose also. They shew how unreliable and tentative are man's opinions, for CONTINUAL DISCOVERY INVALIDATES THEIR PREVIOUSLY SETTLED CONVICTIONS. The Bible, however, remains as it was written, and has to take the consequences of any error, and you may be sure that many are only too anxious for the chance of finding it. Yet, in spite of it all, the Bible is emerging from these past conflicts stronger than ever before in the light of modern research and growing knowledge. When the tide began to turn a few years ago, Dr. Kyle could write:

"The critics have been too hasty in these concessions to the insistent claims put forth for a mythological element in early Bible history. The archaeologists have now uncovered to view such appropriate historical setting for the patriarchal stories that these narratives no longer present to us the patriarchs as obscure."

"At one time the ignorance of the patriarchal age was once a frontier fortress in criticism which frightened away all literary pretensions beyond that limit . . . there are a good many today who seem to wish that time forgotten."

AN EXHUMED CITY

Since these words were penned, archaeological discovery has gone ahead by leaps and bounds. Ur, the very city of Abraham, once only a vague name—and that tucked away obscurely in the Bible—has been exhumed, and the daily life of its inhabitants has been revealed by the recent excavations under Sir Leonard Woolley.

Ur is situated on the *western* side of the river Euphrates

about half-way between Basra, at the head of the Persian Gulf, and Bagdad. Aerial reconnaissance has shewn that it was once on the *eastern* bank of the river; not that the city has moved, but the Euphrates now flows in a different channel. This is confirmed by Scripture, which records that Israel, in Palestine, were told that their fathers, who were idolaters, served their gods on "the *other* side" (east side) of the Euphrates.

Layer by layer scientific excavation revealed the fact that Ur was a City-state. A reigning royal house was closely allied with the city's religion. An hierarchy of priests conducted the temple worship and maintained the king's authority among his subjects, much as is done today by the State-Church. The temples in these cities were built on the top of ziggurats. These ziggurats were artificial hills and were a natural outcome of the Babylonian desire to escape from the unrelieved flatness of their endless plains. Also they served to bring into prominence the temples around which their lives centred.

The ziggurats, some of which have been found in a remarkable state of preservation, were composed of a series of elevated platforms, square in shape, superimposed one upon another in tiers, and diminishing in size until a small square court surmounted the whole. Upon this uppermost platform was erected the sacred shrine which housed the god of the city. (In the case of Ur it was Nanna the moon goddess.) These ziggurats stood with their corners towards the cardinal points of the compass, N. S. E. W. The terraces, formed by the receding platforms, were reached by steep roadways running parallel with the sides of the tiers. In some parts, notably through gateways, ascent was continued by means of steps. Judged even by today's standards, these ziggurats were very remarkable structures, and evidence a very advanced knowledge of architecture.

THE TOWER OF BABEL

Bricks made from the clay which abounded on every hand predominate in Babylonian buildings. Stone was unobtainable except further north in Assyria. These sun-dried and kiln-baked bricks were held together by bitumen. Many specimens may be seen in the museums. Bitumen

was also a local product and is the material rendered "slime" in the Genesis account of the building of the Tower of Babel. Indeed, there is a good deal of evidence for believing that the remains of the actual tower have been found under the lowest levels of the Babylonian excavations. It is believed that THE TOWER OF BABEL WAS, IN FACT, A MIGHTY ZIGGURAT similar to the one at Ur and elsewhere. The reason the builders gave for its erection was lest they should be "scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." But doubtless they had another reason in the back of their minds, for such an elevated erection, they thought, might serve as a sanctuary in the event of another flood. However this may be, the ziggurat was the central feature of life in Ur.

The temple arrangements were run in a most orderly manner. Every transaction had to be witnessed by written documents:

"As the stores were drawn upon for use of the temple, animals required for sacrifice, oil for 'squeaking' door-hinges . . . the responsible official drew out an issue voucher giving the name of the recipient and his authority for the demand, and copies of these, too, were filed."

These receipts, like all documents at Ur, were written upon soft clay tablets, which were afterwards baked. This accounts for their preservation, enabling us in these far-off days to read their intimate details. Any other medium, parchment, or papyri, would have long since perished.

SO CURIOUSLY "MODERN"

One very homely incident comes to light from the temple archives, consisting of the written permission of a foreman for one of his temple workmen to see the doctor, and the doctor's prescription to be taken to the temple dispenser for his medicine. This, and the chit for oil to silence a "squeaking" door, speaks volumes of the essential frailty and sameness of human nature in all lands and in all ages.

Surrounding the ziggurat hill and temple at Ur were the houses of the people; houses large or houses small, according to the importance or insignificance of their tenants. Things have not changed; social position is as much sought

after today in London or New York as it was in Ur in Abraham's time. These houses of 4,000 or more years ago are curiously "modern". Sir Leonard Woolley writes:

"We discovered that in Abraham's time men lived in houses built with walls of burnt brick . . . two storeys high, and containing as many as thirteen or fourteen rooms."

Quite a respectable house, judged even by today's standards. Not all were so big; but Ur was a brick-built city in which commerce was transacted, factories flourished, and schools were filled with little Babylonians doing tiny-tot sums on "slates" of wet clay. Sir Leonard Woolley speaks of

"Regular factories where raw materials were manufactured into finished goods. And we have elaborate balance-sheets of such a factory in which women attached to the service of the god were employed in spinning wool and weaving cloth: balance-sheets drawn up every month and three months, with a nominal roll of the workers, and, in parallel columns, the amount of raw wool each had received, the tally of her work and its cost."

It is difficult to imagine that such practice was so near the beginning of things. It all seems so curiously modern and not a bit as we should expect apart from archaeological research.

Then as to their learning—already evident in the wide and varied use made of handwriting in their daily life—we learn that they were considerable mathematicians. Sir Leonard found clay tablets containing mathematical tables "ranging from plain sums in addition to formulæ for the extraction of square and cube roots." To mention "cube roots" a few years ago, in the same breath as Abraham, or even Moses 400 years later, would have provoked a shout of derisive laughter.

Well, here are the *facts* revealed by the spade. *Facts* handled by the diggers. *Facts* seen under glass by thousands yearly in our great museums. *Facts* which testify that Abraham was the citizen of no mean city and not the petty sheik of a rude age, or, even worse—just a "myth" or "legend."

Sir Leonard Woolley declares:

"We must revise our ideas of the Hebrew patriarch when we learn that his early years were spent in such sophisticated surroundings: he was the citizen of a great city and inherited the traditions of an ancient and highly organized civilization."

ABRAHAM AT SCHOOL

Here then at Ur lived Abraham, amidst a nation of Chaldean idolaters. From here Abraham received a call from God to separate himself from his kindred, to leave Ur for ever and to remove to a country which would be indicated later. God knew whom He was calling; knew in advance of Abraham's response. So great was this man's faith that we are told that "He went out, not knowing whither he went." But he was fully persuaded that what God had promised He was able to perform, and although, as we are told, he had opportunity to return, he never looked back; he had burned his boats, and left Ur never to return.

His obedience, always remarkable, becomes trebly so in the light of the Ur excavations. To leave a camping ground, or even a mud village, is one thing; to leave a great city in which all one's life has been spent is another. If Abraham was born at Ur, and there is no reason for believing that he was not, then Abraham as a child had pored, tongue in cheek, over his little clay tablets of sums and had laboriously tried to copy the writing of his teacher at the head of his writing-exercise tablet. Then he had grown up into a young man among those many indefinable ties that link a man's affections to the scenes of his boyhood days. All this Abraham left in obedience to God, and for this he was called by God, "Abraham my friend."

Ur at this time is described by Sir Leonard Woolley as

"A very highly developed state of society of an urban type, a society in which the architect was familiar with all the basic principles of construction known to us today. The artist, capable at times of the most vivid realism, followed for the most part standards and conventions whose excellence had been approved by many generations working before him; the craftsman in metal possessed a knowledge in metallurgy and a technical skill which few ancient peoples ever rivalled; the merchant carried on a far-flung trade and recorded his transactions in writing; the army was well organised and victorious; agriculture prospered, and great wealth gave scope to luxury."

A JIG-SAW PUZZLE COMPLETED

The next point of archaeological interest in the life of

Abraham occurs after he left Ur. It concerns a recorded battle between certain kings of Abraham's time. A raiding party of one side had, in their engagement at Sodom, carried off Lot, Abraham's nephew. Abraham, by means of his retainers and the use of stratagem, was successful in rescuing Lot, and restoring him to his city. This record in Genesis, with its detailed enumeration of the kings, once came in for scathing criticism. The German school were most prominent in their denunciation of Genesis 14, but they did not lack able lieutenants in this country. Strange as it may now sound, they appealed to archaeology for support, and with its supposed backing they declared of Genesis 14:

"Criticism has for ever disproved its claims to be historical. The political situation pre-supposed by it was incredible and impossible.

"At so distant a date Babylonian armies could not have marched to Canaan, much less could Canaan have been a subject province of Babylon.

"The whole story, in fact, was a fiction. The names of the princes commemorated in it were etymological inventions."

A detailed recital of subsequent archaeological evidence, which has relegated these views to the shelf of exploded opinions, would be tedious. Suffice it to say that the political and military dominance of Elam over Palestine, which would make this expedition credible and natural at this time, is now established beyond all successful cavil by archaeological "finds." The surroundings and exploits of Abraham, as recorded in Scripture, present a strictly correct and historical picture of the times and places in which he moved. He fits into his surroundings exactly as a piece in a jig-saw puzzle for which it was expressly made. The record is vulnerable at scores of points, now that the true facts are being unearthed, but at no point has irreconcilable conflict been found. At most, and in an ever-growing number of points, complete harmony is found to exist between Bible history and archaeological research.

MEN ON THE SPOT

Thus the Bible has emerged from the most searching tests of modern knowledge in triumph, and has proved

itself to be an authentic record written by men on the spot, or alternatively, by men divinely inspired to record truths which they never witnessed personally. For the present, either alternative will serve our purpose.

In spite of its records of unusual happenings and even miracles, the BIBLE STANDS TODAY VINDICATED AS NEVER BEFORE. Sir Leonard Woolley, fully aware of all recorded history, sacred and profane, is of the opinion that Abraham and his recorded exploits are historical and in their correct setting, true in substance and in fact; so much so that he has written a book, devoted to the subject, entitled "Abraham". In it he observes:

"I had previously assumed that the oral tradition might be relied upon for the basic fact of Abraham's historic existence; we are told now by Gadd that WE CAN 'FEARLESSLY ACCEPT' THIS IN THE LIGHT OF EXTERNAL KNOWLEDGE."

Sir Leonard then proceeds to shew his agreement with Gadd, and contends for the historical correctness of the record by evidence outside of Scripture itself. He shews that it is a faithful reproduction of local colour impossible for a forger at a later age to have written. Neither is it the work of a well-meaning romancer, for all the attendant details of the records have been amply confirmed by the discoveries at Ur, even to the discovery of Abraham's name. Sir Charles Marston says:

"The name of Abraham, or rather Abram, is found in the Babylonian cuneiform contract tablets of about his era."

CHAPTER TWO

THE BIBLE AND MODERN ARCHAEOLOGY

Part 2

ISRAEL IN EGYPT—MOSES—THE EXODUS—JERICHO—
ISRAEL'S MONARCHY—DANIEL IN BABYLON—NEBUCHAD-
NEZZAR—A TRIUMPHANT VINDICATION OF THE SCRIPTURES
AS A TRUE AND RELIABLE HISTORY.

In course of time Abraham died, leaving behind his sons, Ishmael and Isaac, who continued the nomadic life of their father. Ishmael became the father of the Ishmaelite Arabs. The Jewish line was preserved in Isaac whose son Jacob became the father of twelve sons, and from them sprang the twelve tribes of Israel (for it was to Israel that Jacob's name was changed). Israel with his sons and their families were compelled to go down into Egypt for grain because of a great famine that had arisen in Canaan. Most people are fairly familiar with the details of this time: how that Joseph, the favourite son of Israel, was sold as a slave by his brothers, how he afterwards became great in the land and was able to succour his brethren and get them settled in the land in the district of Goshen.

For about 200 years the Israelites, favoured at the first by the Egyptians, grew into a very considerable nation. A Pharaoh then arose who "knew not Joseph," and becoming alarmed at the growth of this foreign people, brought them into a rigorous bondage as described in detail in the book of Exodus.

BAD HISTORIANS

At present, archaeology has little to tell us about Israel in Egypt; one reason being that the Egyptians were very bad historians. Little is recorded except boastful claims of individual kings concerning their personal exploits in war or in temple building; recorded history as such is almost non-existent. Another reason is that, while enthusiastically exaggerating their victorious exploits in war, these ancient monarchs were equally energetic in playing down their humiliating defeats. Therefore, to expect to find records of the overthrow of Pharaoh and his hosts in the Red Sea, or a recital of the humiliating ten plagues on Egypt, is to expect more than is reasonable.

Fierce and sustained have been the arguments employed by Bible opponents to discredit the birth of a nation, and their deliverance from Egypt under Moses. Today these arguments are less self-assured, less sustained; convulsive would best describe them now. Nothing very dramatic has come to light in Egyptian archaeology, but, like the history of Abraham in Canaan, the local colour is true to life. Incidental harmony prevails, undesigned coincidences abound. No incident can be pronounced "impossible" as once it was or indeed even "improbable", for the narrative fits the facts as known. In the opinion of many archaeologists (Dr. Yahuda in particular) THE BIBLE RECORD WAS WRITTEN BY SOMEONE INTIMATELY ACQUAINTED WITH EVERY SMALL DETAIL IN EGYPTIAN LIFE, and it is impossible for it to have been compiled by a later romancer; it could only have been written by a man on the spot. We have no doubts as to who was that man, who could answer all the requirements so fully. It was Moses, the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter; Moses the destined leader of Israel out of Egyptian bondage.

"CHILD OF THE LADY"

Now for one or two of these incidental evidences of Israel's contact with Egypt. Moses was a little Hebrew child who fell under Pharaoh's edict that all male Hebrew babies were to be destroyed at birth. With a despairing heart Moses' mother conceived the idea of making a little

reed boat, and hiding him in the rushes on the bank of the river Nile, trusting to her God that in some way, she knew not how, his tiny life might be spared. Later, Pharaoh's daughter came down to the river and there found Moses in his little green cradle where loving hands had placed him, and a breaking heart had left him. The princess, stirred at the sight of the helpless babe, and with maternal instincts strong within her, determined to adopt this helpless object of her pity.

Many years pass, when we learn that Moses was educated at the court of Pharaoh and was known as the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter.

Of recent years a very remarkable inscription has come to light which seems to have a bearing on this event. In the reign of Rameses II (the reputed Pharaoh of the oppression), a public function was held, and among the recorded names of the princes, says Dr. Kyle, was:

“The Ra-Moses child of the Lady and priestess of the sun-god Ra.”

The name, Moses, commemorated his rescue from the river Nile as a baby, for it meant the “drawn-out one.” The prefix Ra was common in Egypt and is found in many Egyptian names. The definite article “The”, Dr. Kyle tells us, is a pun upon Moses' name: “The Moses,” *i.e.*, “The drawn-out one.” Then, Moses is not described as the *son* but as the *child* of the Lady; the usual Egyptian word for son is not used. As the narrator says, the record plainly shows

“a laboured effort on the part of the scribe to describe an unusual situation.”

A MORE CONCRETE EVIDENCE

These records show a remarkable resemblance to the story of Moses almost to the point of identification, but we must be careful not to claim more than the facts clearly warrant. Indeed we have no need to do so with so much clearly corroborated testimony at our disposal. But as one writer pertinently enquires concerning this singular record: “Does mere romantic legend ever find

such natural setting and a place of such fitness in real history?" The only rational answer is, "Of course not!"

There is another and more concrete evidence of Israel's sojourn in Egypt, in two of Egypt's exhumed cities. The Bible record tells us that Israel, besides making bricks under forced labour, also built the store cities of Pithom and Rameses (Ex. 1, 11). Of this Sir Frederick Kenyon says:

"In 1883 Professor E. Naville, excavating for the Egypt Exploration Fund, identified the site of Pithom, near the modern Ismailia, and subsequently Petrie found Rameses in a mound a few miles west . . . the mound contains a temple of Rameses II."

The nature of the ruins clearly show them to have been store cities (for grain) as the Bible declares.

EARLY WRITING

Moses has been credited with writing the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible), but it is unfashionable to believe this today. It is well, however, that you should be told that the same class of higher critic who now affirms the piece-meal authorship of the Pentateuch was but a few years ago boldly proclaiming that Moses never did and never could write the Pentateuch or any other document, because writing was entirely unknown in Moses' day.

The Scriptures commit themselves in no uncertain way concerning the existence of a "book of the law" written by Moses. For example:

"And Moses WROTE THIS LAW, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi . . .

"And it came to pass, WHEN MOSES HAD MADE AN END OF WRITING THE WORDS OF THIS LAW IN A BOOK, until they were finished, that Moses commanded . . . saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant . . . that it may be there for a witness . . ."

Deut. 31. 9, 24-6.

The testimony of Jesus Christ to this truth is frequent and unmistakable, notably when he declared:

"Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for HE WROTE OF ME." John 5. 46.

Against this Dr. Kyle quotes Von Bohlen as scoffing "at the idea of the 'undisciplined horde' Israel possessing letters."

A REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE

But history did not reach far enough, except Bible history, and this was suspect. Since those days, however, secular history has been extended and made to "reach" back further by archaeological discovery, and the Bible has been shewn to be true and reliable history.

Dillman, another critic, is reported as saying:

"But also the legal portion of THE PENTATEUCH CANNOT BE FROM MOSES, neither written by him nor delivered orally and written down by another. And aside from the fact that so extended A LITERARY PRODUCTION AT THE VERY RISE OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL IS NOT BELIEVABLE."

Such compositions as this, which give the lie direct to the Bible, look very learnedly foolish in the light of modern discovery. It has been truly said: "That the theory of the ignorance of the patriarchal age has been absolutely abandoned by everyone, hardly needs to be stated."

This revolutionary change has been effected by the amount of written evidence that has come to light which confirms the fact that communication by writing was carried on between Egypt and distant Babylonia centuries before Moses was born.

CLAY LETTERS

Clay writing tablets sent from Babylon and Palestine to Egypt at this early age were found at Tel-el-Amarna in Egypt in the year 1887. They have been deciphered and they clearly

"reveal the literary conditions in Palestine about midway between Abraham and Moses. The widest diffusion of letters is indicated. All sorts of people are found writing letters: governors and court officers, petty officials, private citizens, ladies and servants."

Among them were royal communications also, so that, with the help of those skilled in cuneiform writing, we may read

the letters that the king of Babylon sent to the king of Egypt a century before the birth of Moses.

PEN AND INK

Even more recent than the Tel-el-Amarna finds are the manuscripts discovered in Egypt written, not on clay, but on papyri (a paper manufactured from reeds). Among them is an actual original Egyptian document written about 2200-2000 B.C.

This is centuries before Moses was born and about contemporary with Abraham—written, mark you, at that very time. Some of them are written in “beautiful cursive handwriting”; that is, a running hand such as we use in our private letter writing. Thus was paper, pen and ink in use in Abraham’s day. These facts—for facts they most certainly are—entirely destroy the once learned disbelief in the credibility of Moses writing the law. For as Sir Charles Marston says, the knowledge of those times makes it “preposterous to affirm that all that Moses said and did was handed down by oral tradition for eight centuries.”

THE HABIRU

Of the exodus of Israel from Egypt under Moses archaeology has, as yet, little of a definite nature to say. One point of interest is that among the clay letters found at Tel-el-Amarna were urgent communications from petty kings in Syria, frantically appealing to Egypt for help against the incursions of powerful invaders. The Hittites were coming in from the north and the Habiru from the south. The Hittites, once only a name in the Bible, are now well known to the archaeologist.

Of the Habiru, or southern invaders, Sir Charles Marston writes:

“For many years it has been suggested that those invaders (the Habiru) were the Hebrews under Joshua; the evidence that Jericho fell about 1400 B.C., in the middle of the reign of one of the Pharaohs to whom these letters were addressed, now definitely establishes that identification.”

Here is one of the letters of appeal from the Tel-el-Amarna Tablets; it is from the then king of Jerusalem, Abdkiba:

“As long as ships were upon the sea the strong arm of the king occupied Nahrma and Kas, but now the Habiru are occupying the king’s cities. There remains not one prince to my Lord the King, everyone is ruined.”

Upon which Sir Charles Marston observes:

“It is difficult and indeed impossible, because the dates are so identical, any longer to resist the conclusion that, so far as Canaan is concerned, the Tel-el-Amarna letters contain Canaanite, Amorite, and Jebusite accounts of Israelitish invasion—versions of the Bible story written by the other side.”

Thus there seems no doubt that in the invaders from the south, who were striking terror into the hearts of the inhabitants of Palestine, we have the victorious Israelites, or Hebrews, under their military leader Joshua. Egypt being pre-occupied with her own troubles was unable to help them, and so the invasion continued.

The capture of one great city by the Hebrews, and the unusual manner of its fall, is recorded in detail in the book of Joshua. Jericho was to be compassed once a day for six days by a procession of Israelites, blowing with trumpets. On the seventh day the process was to be repeated with seven circular marches, and the priests blowing with trumpets. This was to be followed by a great shout from all the Israelites, whereupon God promised “the wall of the city shall fall down flat” (Josh. 6, 5). After this we are told that the city’s destruction was completed by fire:

“And they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein.” (Josh. 6. 24).

Joshua then pronounced a curse upon any who should presume to rebuild its ruined walls, a curse involving the loss of sons to the offender:

“And Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before the Lord, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it.” (Josh. 6. 26).

Many years later, during the time of Ahab, king of Israel, a bold spirit defied the curse of Joshua, and reaped the consequences:

“In his days did Hiel the Beth-elite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Joshua. (1 Kings, 16. 34)

These three points—the violent destruction of Jericho’s walls, the subsequent destruction by fire, and a long desolation followed by a subsequent rebuilding centuries later—have ALL BEEN DRAMATICALLY CONFIRMED BY THE RECENT EXCAVATIONS AT ANCIENT JERICHO.

Among the findings of Professor Garstang concerning Jericho were these:

“(THE) WALL ALSO HAD BEEN VIOLENTLY DESTROYED. Masses of it had fallen down the slope, and all the ruins within the walls had been destroyed by fire, the evidences of which were of unusual intensity.”

“It would appear, therefore, that the city . . . was VIOLENTLY DESTROYED AND BURNED at a date about 1400 B.C. Thereafter IT REMAINED DESOLATE FOR A LONG TIME.”

Sir Frederick Kenyon, commenting on the subject, says:

“The wall was destroyed by some violent convulsion; archaeology cannot tell us how the convulsion was caused . . .

“The town also had been burned with fire, as it is recorded to have been by Joshua.”

What more could the most biased sceptic ask than this remarkable and recent evidence of this ancient historical record of the far-off wars of Joshua. Sir Frederick Kenyon further writes:

“It will not be denied that, if the conclusions of the excavator are to be accepted (and Professor Garstang’s statement of the evidence and his deductions from it have been confirmed by other experts) THERE IS HERE A REMARKABLE CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE OLD TESTAMENT NARRATIVE.”

A BUFFER STATE

After Joshua’s time Israel had a chequered career for about 400 years, under various non-hereditary rulers known as Judges. This condition then gave place to a monarchy in Israel when David became the founder of a royal line of kings.

In the days of Rehoboam, David’s grandson, ten tribes revolted against the house of David, and established an

independent government in Samaria, leaving two tribes with their capital at Jerusalem.

It is at this point, the history of the dual-monarchy, that the Bible record and archaeology again make contact.

Egypt and Assyria were often at war in those days, with Israel very much in the same position as Belgium between Germany and France, as a glance at the map will show. If Israel favoured Egypt she incurred the displeasure of Assyria, or, if Assyria, she lost the friendship of Egypt. Thus from time to time Jerusalem, the capital city of Judah, and Samaria, the capital city of Israel, were besieged by the kings of Assyria.

The Bible has much to say concerning a king of Israel by the name of Jehu, also of Shalmanezar, king of Assyria, who warred with Israel. At Nineveh a black marble obelisk was found which, upon being deciphered, proved to be a record of the triumphant exploits of Shalmanezar. On its four sides are pictures in bas-relief, and over 200 lines of cuneiform inscription, recording the leading events of the reign of Shalmanezar. It contains also

“The first direct reference in any Assyrian record to a person known to us from Scripture; ‘I received the tribute of Jehu, son of Omri, silver, gold, etc.’”

A “CAGED BIRD”

The Bible records events in the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah, and tells how on one occasion Hezekiah was besieged in Jerusalem by Sennacherib, another king of Assyria. Things were beginning to look black for Jerusalem, and Hezekiah was compelled to buy off his enemy by the payment of tribute money. The Bible record is as follows:

“Now in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did Sennacherib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them.

And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish, saying, I have offended; return from me: that which thou puttest on me will I bear. And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold.

And Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the King's house.” (2 Kings 18, 13-15.)

Sennacherib had his own account made of this incident, and his stone record has recently come to light. In the boastful manner common to Assyrian monarchs he wrote:

“I besieged Hezekiah of Judah . . . and captured forty-six of his strong cities . . . (Hezekiah) himself, like a caged bird, I shut up within Jerusalem, his royal city . . . I reduced his land. I added to their former yearly tribute . . . and he (Hezekiah) despatched after me his messenger . . . to pay tribute and to make submission with thirty talents of gold, eight hundred talents of silver etc.”

“A DREAMER OR AN IMPOSTER”

Thus Scripture history has again been unexpectedly confirmed out of the rubbish mounds that once were Nineveh, the proud capital of Assyria. A comparatively few years ago “he who would have ventured to predict such a discovery would have been treated as a dreamer or an imposter.” Yet today we can look on the name of Hezekiah inscribed on stone by the command of Sennacherib over two and a half millenniums ago.

After Hezekiah’s death Manasseh his son succeeded to the throne of Judah. He, too, was a victim of Assyrian violence, but this time for an offence against his God. The record in 2 Chron. 33, 11 tells us:

“Wherefore the Lord brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters and carried him to Babylon.”

The Assyrians carried Manasseh to *Babylon!* Babylon was *not* an Assyrian city *but* was the capital of Babylonia. Babylonia and Assyria were enemies and rivals—surely the divine scribe erred in making such a statement. So men might have supposed, but now that Assyrian and Babylonian history has been revealed by archaeology, **THE BIBLE’S STRICT ACCURACY HAS AGAIN BEEN DEMONSTRATED.**

Sennacherib, the contemporary of Hezekiah, father of Manasseh, had made war on Babylon, conquered it, and, as the custom was, carried off their gods in triumph. Esarhaddon, the son of Sennacherib, had, upon his accession to the throne of Assyria, returned Babylon’s gods and repaired their damaged buildings, and thus conciliated

them. He then proclaimed himself king of Assyria and Babylon, and thenceforward spent his time between the two capitals. Hence the record that Manasseh was carried to Babylon by his Assyrian captors fits the facts of history exactly. Yet for this corroboration the Bible has had to wait patiently for over 2,000 years!

Although archaeology does not touch at many points during this period, we find among the points touched, direct confirmation of Scripture narrative. In points indirectly touched we find general agreement and harmony as in the other cases already noted. As illustrative of this background harmony we might notice some of the finds made in Samaria and other cities which were destroyed by the Assyrians before they carried Israel into a captivity from which they never returned.

OSTRAKA

Samaria, just a mound for centuries, has of very recent years been uncovered, and many things found there bear a remarkable similarity to descriptions in the Bible. The discovered documentary evidence was written in ink upon broken pottery, termed "Ostraka" by the archaeologists. Sufficient has been read to "provide useful evidence on the economic details of life under the Israelite monarchy."

Just prior to and during the break-up of Judah's kingdom by Babylon, Jeremiah, a prophet of God, was commissioned to turn his brethren from their sins in order to avert the impending calamity. His efforts, and the names of his contemporaries great and small are recorded in considerable detail in Jeremiah's prophecy. Now that the ruins of this national calamity are being unearthed, many of the names mentioned by the prophet are found written on ostraka.

As recently as 1935 the Wellcome Archaeological Research Expedition discovered, at Lachish, ostraka "amid the fiery ruins marking the final overthrow of the city." Among them were letters of "the military (?) governor" of the city, all agreeing with the picture presented in the Scriptures. Also there are many names occurring in the ostraka which are identical with Scripture names mentioned at this time, such as:

“Hoshaiah,” Jer. 42, 1. 43, 2. “Gemariah,” Jer. 29, 3. 36, 10. “Jaazaniah,” Jer. 35, 3. “Neriah,” Jer. 32, 12. “Elnathan,” Jer. 36, 12, and “Nedabiah grandson of the king,” i.e. Nedabiah grandson of Jehoiakim (1 Chron. 3, 18).

The names remarkably confirm the local colour, at least; whilst the “grandson of the king” is an historical confirmation without a doubt.

The Bible record tells us that at this time Nebuchadnezzar, the victorious king of Babylon, who had now turned the tables on the king of Assyria, had overthrown Judah and appointed a military governor by the name of Gedaliah (Jer. 40, 5). There has recently been unearthed at Lachish

“A clay seal, bearing on its back the impression of the fibres of the papyrus document to which it must once have been attached, and inscribed with the words ‘The property of Gedaliah who is over the house’.”

Sir Frederick Kenyon does not, in our opinion, over-state the case when he says:

“It is quite reasonable to suppose that it is actually an impression of the seal of the unfortunate governor (Gedaliah was murdered).”

A REMARKABLE DOCUMENT

A remarkable document has also been found which illustrates the work of the prophet Jeremiah at this time. Jeremiah, commissioned by God, declares:

“Thus saith the Lord, This city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon’s army, which shall take it. Therefore the princes said unto the king, We beseech thee, let this man be put to death: for thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people in speaking such words unto them: for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt.” (Jer. 38, 3-4.)

And here for comparison is the recently discovered letter, Letter VI:

“Who is thy slave, a dog, that my lord has sent the letter of the king and the letter of the officers, saying, Read, I pray thee, and thou wilt see; THE WORDS OF THE (PROPHET) ARE NOT GOOD, TO LOOSEN THE HANDS, TO (MAKE) SINK THE HANDS OF THE COUNTRY AND CITY.”

The word "prophet" is conjectural, but Mr. J. W. Jack "identifies him with Jeremiah, who, at this time was pronouncing military defeat upon Judah." Here again, to say the very least, is a remarkable agreement; even if we could not claim identity, surely here is the harmony which we expect to characterise true records.

Now consider the following (ostraka extract) in the light of Jeremiah's warnings:

"Then the princes (same word as translated 'officers' in Jeremiah) said . . . THIS MAN . . . WEAKENETH THE HANDS OF THE MEN OF WAR THAT REMAIN IN THIS CITY, AND THE HANDS OF ALL THE PEOPLE."

That "this man" was any other than Jeremiah, in view of what we read in Scripture, is difficult to believe. For of the contemporary nature of these finds Sir Frederick Kenyon declares:

"There is no sort of reason to doubt that they (ostraka) are the original documents belonging to the last days of the Jewish kingdom, the days in which Jeremiah spoke and wrote."

Also the similarity, and even identity, of the wording of ostraka and Scripture, altogether rules out coincidence.

A HOPELESS EXPECTATION

Upon the defeat and overthrow of Jerusalem (603 B.C.) Nebuchadnezzar transported thousands of Jews to Babylonia, with the object of preventing further insurrection. When they were settled among the Babylonians Nebuchadnezzar hoped that they would become absorbed and cease to be Jews, but this was a hopeless expectation, as many have found since his day. The reason for its hopelessness is revealed in prophecy, but this is another subject.

By Nebuchadnezzar's orders several refined and promising young Jews were selected from among their brethren to be trained in the Babylonian arts, wisdom, and court etiquette. Among them was a young man whose name is now a household word—Daniel, not then a prophet but just an upright, God-fearing young Hebrew.

The book which bears his name was written by him at Babylon, and Babylon occupies a prominent place both

in the narrative and in the prophecy. For the present we are confining ourselves to the narrative, which has received more criticism than any other writing of the Hebrew prophets.

Points like the Greek names for Babylonian musical instruments, described by Daniel, have been seized by the critics to prove a late authorship, whereas the book claims an early one. But archaeology has since shown that the "Greek" musical instruments were used in Persia and Babylonia before ever Greece saw them, and thus has been dispelled another suggested anachronism.

A WORD-PICTURE

Then the size and might of Babylon, of which Nebuchadnezzar boasts in the book of Daniel, was once declared to be "grossly exaggerated"; but this was in the days when even the site of Babylon was unknown and in dispute among scholars. But from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards Babylon has been disinterred, and steady progress in knowledge has been made, so that today quite a lot is known about Babylon. We will not tire you with tedious details—rather will we reproduce a word picture, constructed from modern discoveries, by an archaeologist. He describes the Babylon into which Daniel and his companions were led, in triumphal procession, as captive slaves of war:

"In the heyday of (Babylon's) splendour under the New Empire, when the Jews of the exile first beheld her, the city must have appeared a miracle of glory and beauty. Her explorer permits himself few superlatives in writing of what he has discovered; but even his style warms as he speaks of the wonders of the vast Temple of Marduk: The colossal mass of the tower which the Jews of the Old Testament regarded as the essence of presumption, amidst the proud palaces of the priests, the spacious treasures, the innumerable lodgings for strangers—white walls, bronze doors, mighty fortification walls set round with lofty portals and a forest of a thousand towers—the whole must have conveyed an overwhelming sense of greatness, power, and wealth, such as could rarely have been found elsewhere in the Babylonian kingdom.

"When you add to the picture the many others, only less glorious than the mighty house of Marduk, the glittering palaces, the many coloured splendours of the great Procession Street and the Ishtar Gate, the frowning might of the great

ramparts, with their gates of gleaming bronze, and people the whole with the thronging rainbow-hued crowds of an Eastern city, and the flashing bravery of an unconquered army, you can understand something of the pride with which the great king said, as he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon:

“‘Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?’”

So much then for the corroborated testimony of Daniel concerning Babylon's greatness which, after all, was *not* “grossly exaggerated.”

AN INDEFATIGABLE BUILDER

In the quotation at the end of the above extract are the words of Nebuchadnezzar as reported by Daniel. In them, the king claims to be the great builder of great Babylon. If ever there was a builder it was Nebuchadnezzar, and upon this subject archaeology speaks unequivocally. Here is an abridged account by Nebuchadnezzar himself:

“In Babylon my favourite city, which I love, the Palace . . . the abode of my royalty in the land of Babylon . . . In Babylon a site for my abode, for the insignia of my majesty . . . a structure of brick I constructed, and on top of it a great house for the seat of my royalty with bitumen and brick loftily I made . . . the city of Babylon I made strong as the wooded hills.”

Today you may see some of the bricks used in these buildings with Nebuchadnezzar's name stamped on them. So widespread was his demolition and new building that archaeologists state:

“NINE OUT OF EVERY TEN BRICKS of the ruins of Babylon have Nebuchadnezzar's name on them.”

To this Sir Leonard Woolley adds his testimony:

“Shortly before 600 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon succeeded to the empire which Assyria had won. OF ALL THE RULERS OF MESOPOTAMIA HE WAS PERHAPS THE MOST INDEFATIGABLE BUILDER, and in almost every city of his dominions there are monuments witnessing to his passion for bricks and

mortar; he rebuilt his capital (Babylon) so thoroughly that modern excavators could find SCARCELY ANY TRACE OF BUILDINGS OLDER THAN HIS TIME."

Nothing need be added to impress upon the reader such remarkable evidence of archaeology's verdict upon yet one more Bible record :

" THIS GREAT BABYLON THAT I HAVE BUILT." (Dan. 4. 30.)

In the third chapter of Daniel is a story which may read like a legend and which many once believed it to be. It records the erection of a great image exposed to the public gaze. Upon an appointed day, and at a given signal, all people were commanded to prostrate themselves in worship before it. Such an act was contrary to the conscience of enlightened Jews; therefore Daniel's companions refused to do obeisance, and as a punishment were cast alive into a furnace of fire.

For some time, at least during the early part of their captivity, the Jews had not been required thus to pay homage to an idol, else they would have come into conflict with the customs of Babylon much earlier. Up until the king's decree it is obvious that there was no religious persecution of Jews. The king at this time was evidently introducing a departure from the current religious practices. Let this fact once be granted, then the revelation that archaeology provides upon the subject again produces an unexpected, unlooked-for corroboration of the truth of Bible history. Sir Leonard Woolley says :

" The temple (Ur) was indefinitely old. Too little was left of the earliest buildings to shew its form, but from the days of Ur-Nammu at least up to and after those of Kuri-Galzu, that is FOR MORE THAN A THOUSAND YEARS, SUCCESSIVE BUILDERS HAD RESPECTED AND REPEATED ITS GROUND-PLAN . . . only the priests would enter here, and IN PRIVACY wait upon the twin deities."

" THIS ANCIENT TRADITION WAS COMPLETELY SET AT NOUGHT BY NEBUCHADNEZZAR WHEN HE RESTORED THE TEMPLE. The rooms in front of the sanctuary, store-rooms and rooms which, as tablets found in them shewed, were for the priestesses specially dedicated as concubines to the god who would naturally be at home in this harem building, were swept away; the whole front of the sanctuary was opened up . . .

“IN THE OLD TEMPLE EVERYTHING HAD BEEN SECRET; NOW A NUMEROUS PUBLIC COULD WATCH the priest making his offerings on the open-air altar, and behind him could see through the sanctuary’s open door the image of the god.”

Thus archaeology testifies that a firmly established religious tradition of Babylon was set at nought, and radically changed by Nebuchadnezzar. Then a remarkable thing happened—remarkable, that is, to us who are so used to Bible disparagement. Sir Leonard Woolley appeals to the Bible to explain this archaeological phenomenon. He says:

“THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE REMODELLING OF THE BUILDING IMPLIES SUCH A CHANGE OF RITUAL, BUT HOW CAN THIS ITSELF BE EXPLAINED? THE ANSWER IS GIVEN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT story of the Three Children of the Book of Daniel . . . Now the gist of the story is this, that Nebuchadnezzar made a great image and set it up in a public place, and ordered that at a given signal everybody was to fall down and worship it; the Jews who seemed to have lived hitherto undisturbed in the land of their captivity, were by this order given the choice between idolatry and disobedience involving death.

“What was there new in the king’s act? Not the setting up of a statue, because each king in turn had done the same; the novelty was the command for general worship by the public: for a ritual worship performed by the priests the king is substituting a form of congregational worship which all his subjects are obliged to attend.

“WE MUST NEEDS ACCEPT”

“SO STRIKING IS THE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE WRITTEN STORY AND THE FACTS OF THE RUINS, AND SO COMPLETELY DO THEY EXPLAIN EACH OTHER, THAT WE MUST NEEDS ACCEPT THE BACKGROUND . . . AS HISTORICAL. The alterations in (the temple) were designed deliberately with a view to religious reform attributed to its builder in the Old Testament.”

With such singular evidences accumulating, who can escape the inevitable conclusion that the Bible is the most reliable history we have, even to put it no higher than history? But it is impossible so to limit it on account of its inextricable connection with prophecy—but this is another subject.

There is another point worthy of notice before we leave the book of Daniel. Belshazzar figures in Daniel’s prophecy as the son or descendant of Nebuchadnezzar. Many

critics, for a long time, just disbelieved in such a person's existence; for archaeological discovery, whilst confirming previously known kings, had not confirmed Belshazzar; therefore its very silence was construed to deny his existence. They declared:

“Belshazzar is not mentioned by any secular historian.”

In other words, the Bible, which does mention him, is not of the same authority as a secular history. Oh the blasphemous folly of such an objection, which has since been shown to have no more real foundation than many other objections! for Belshazzar is now a well-known historical person. Clay cylinders have been unearthed recording the restoration of the temple at Ur, by Nabonidus the restorer; and, says the archaeologist:

“The inscription upon all of them closed with a poetical prayer for the life of THE KING'S OLDEST SON, BEL-SHAR-USER, who is no other than the Biblical Belshazzar.” (Daniel 5).

This Nabonidus, addressing himself in prayer to the moon-god Sin, petitions:

“And as for me Nabonidus the king of Babylon, protect thou me from sinning against thy exalted godhead, and grant thou me graciously a long life; and in the heart of BELSHAZZAR, MY FIRST-BORN SON, the offspring of my loins, set the fear of thin exalted godhead, so that he may commit no sin and that he may be satisfied with the fullness of life.”

Comment is unnecessary.

Arising out of the captivity of Judah in Babylon, although not necessarily connected with the record in Daniel, there is a corroboration of a wholesale Jewish captivity and removal of Jews to Babylonia, in recent finds at Nippur (the Bible Calneh). Among the clay records, recently unearthed, were found the business accounts of a great banking firm with the modern appellation:

Murashû Sons, Bankers and Brokers, Nippur.

Of these accounts the excavator says:

“Very numerous are Persian and Aramean personal names in these documents. Unusually large is the number of Jewish

names known from the Old Testament, especially from the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. There can be no doubt that a considerable number of Jewish prisoners carried away by Nebuchadnezzar were settled in Nippur."

Thus again do witnesses start out of the earth to confirm the Bible and confound its critics.

HERODOTUS, THE FATHER OF HISTORY

Before the days of archaeological research two records bore testimony to ancient happenings; they were the secular histories of the classical Greeks, chief of whom was Herodotus "Father of History"; and the Bible. Both records contained references to the same things in more recent history, *i.e.*, a few centuries B.C. When disparity was found between the Bible and the classics, most men preferred to believe the classics. Now archaeology has come to act as an arbitrator upon the matters in dispute, and what a gulf has been revealed between the revered human recorder and the divine. Archaeological light has exposed the flaws of human narration, but has enhanced the beauty of the Bible records. For instance, a modern scholar speaking of the "classical authority" of "Herodotus, Strabo, Diodorus, Xenophon and others" says:

"Today . . . we correct the errors and faulty perspective of the ancient historians by the irrefutable data afforded by contemporary documents and relics."

Professor Sayce, well-known in archaeological circles, is even more severe on the Greek and Latin "historians" whom many once preferred to the Bible. The monuments, which have confirmed the Bible, have made havoc of their once-thought sober "histories" by repeated exposures. He speaks of:

"The profound difference between the history of the East as told by the great writers of classical antiquity and by the native monuments themselves."

Then he singles out the "Father of History" when he declares:

"The monuments have proved decisively that the knowledge Herodotus possessed of Egyptian history was extremely slight . . . the 'history' of Egypt as detailed by Herodotus

is no further removed from the truth than his 'history' of Assyria and Babylonia, or the rise of the Persian Empire.

"MYTHS AND FOLKLORE, such as were current among Greek loungers and half-caste dragomans on the skirts of the Persian Empire, HAVE USURPED THE PLACE OF ACTUAL HISTORY."

THE TABLES TURN

Oh, what a turning of the tables! "Myths" and "folklore," the identical terms once applied to Bible history whilst secular history was trusted implicitly. NOW IT IS THE ONCE REVERED HERODOTUS WHO IS GUILTY, AND THE SCRIPTURES STAND ACQUITTED. WHAT POETIC JUSTICE TO BE SURE! This great and welcome change is further described by the same authority:

"We need only compare the following chapters (of the author's book "Ancient Empires of the East") with a work on ancient history, like that of Rollin, founded entirely on the statements of Greek and Latin authors, to see how different—nay, how inconsistent—they are. If one is true, the other cannot be. If the record of the contemporaneous monument is correct, we must give up our faith in the legends of a later age, reported by writers who scorned to know oriental languages."

Yes, THE MONUMENTS HAVE CONVICTED THE HUMAN RECORDS, "living witnesses, as it were, have started out of the grave of centuries to convict them of error and deceit."

So much for the effect of archaeological research on secular histories. The exact opposite of all this is true of the Bible. Archaeology is its friend because it has nothing to fear from established truths; in the words of Sir William Dawson:

"The Bible . . . coming from God and conscious of nothing but God's truth, it AWAITS THE PROGRESS OF KNOWLEDGE WITH CALM SECURITY. It watches the antiquary ransacking among the ruins, and rejoices in every medal he discovers and every inscription he deciphers; for from that rusty coin or corroded marble IT EXPECTS NOTHING BUT CONFIRMATION OF ITS OWN VERACITY."

It is true that in the past there was conflict between the Bible and "finds," but in every case it was owing to premature conclusions. Sir Henry Rawlinson mentions an instance arising out of the paper squeezes which were taken of the inscriptions on the famous Behistun Rock:

“An erroneous impression was at one time in circulation that the information obtained from the inscriptions was adverse to Scripture. But so much was it the reverse of this, that IF THEY WERE TO DRAW UP A SCHEME OF CHRONOLOGY FROM THE INSCRIPTIONS, WITHOUT HAVING SEEN THE STATEMENTS OF THE SCRIPTURES, THEY WOULD FIND IT COINCIDE ON EVERY POINT.”

There are still some, however, who never seem to learn their lesson. They still object, quibble, and find fault, but one by one their objections go the way of those of their foolish predecessors. As Sir Henry Rawlinson is reported to have said:

“IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO PRODUCE FROM AUTHENTIC HISTORY ANY CONTRADICTION OF ANY PORTION OF THE HEBREW RECORDS: When such a contradiction has seemed to be found, it has invariably happened that, in the progress of historical inquiry the author from whom it proceeds has lost credit, and finally comes to be regarded as an utterly untrustworthy authority.”

“Before the age of archaeological research,” says Sir Frederick Kenyon, “the Hebrew records, in the form of the books of the Bible, were alone in the field.” Surely we can now say that since the age of archaeological discovery the Bible is still alone in the field as a record confirmed by archaeological research. We have seen how varied and diverse that confirmation has been, ranging from the Garden of Eden to Jewish names on an ancient banker’s accounts: from the Flood to the fallen walls of Jericho. To these and other incidents archaeology offers its testimony and sets its seal to the truthfulness of the records.

OUR HISTORICAL GROUND SETTLED

For the present, as a result of the evidence we have placed before you, we ask you to accept the conclusion that **THE BIBLE IS A RELIABLE HISTORICAL NARRATIVE**. This we feel sure is not asking too much in the light of what we have seen.

Having got our historical ground settled it will give us confidence as we proceed to examine and test some of its many prophetic utterances, which, if they are found to be true, will take us a step further in our acceptance of the Bible, not only as a reliable history, but as a divine revelation.

CHAPTER THREE

BIBLE PROPHECY AND MODERN HISTORY

GOD'S UNANSWERABLE CHALLENGE—SELF-IMPOSED AND EXACTING CONDITIONS—A THREEFOLD CHALLENGE—BABYLON AND THE TESTIMONY OF TRAVELLERS—EGYPT AND THE HISTORY BOOKS—THE IMMORTAL JEW—A FUTURE PROMISE—ASSAULTS OF MODERN INFIDELITY ABSOLUTELY IMPOTENT—A FULFILMENT OF OUR PROMISE—THE BIBLE MUST BE DIVINE.

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy."—Peter.

Our object in dealing with archaeology was to demonstrate the *historical reliability* of the Bible. Our object in considering prophecy is to demonstrate the *divinity* of the Bible; for no power except the divine can reveal the future.

A deplorable ignorance exists among many people of the nature and scope of Bible prophecy. When prophecy is cited as a proof of the Bible, they either assert that the forecasts are of a vague and general character capable of having any construction placed upon them, or susceptible of application to any event *after* it has occurred. If upon further pressure these arguments prove unavailing they will often take refuge in vague references to "Old Moore's Almanack," "Mother Shipton" and "Astrology."

A CHALLENGE

These petty objections merely beg the question. There are no possible grounds for comparison of popular newspaper astrologers with the prophets of Israel, and only

wilful unbelief or hopeless ignorance would ever suggest that there was. Real prophecy, the power to foretell the future and not just guess at the probable outcome of a certain train of events, is not an attribute of mortal man but of God alone. Man does not and cannot know what a day may bring forth; if he did he himself would be a god. Indeed this is the point of a challenge which God issues to vindicate His supremacy in this field, and by it emphasizes man's utter powerlessness to foretell future events:

“Produce your cause, saith the Lord; bring forth your strong reasons . . . Let them bring them forth and shew us what shall happen . . . or declare us things for to come. Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods.” (Isa. 41. 21, 23.)

God on the other hand can declare:

“Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them.” (Isa. 42. 9.)

Here is an infallible test supplied by the Bible. Can the Bible stand the test? Can it show us “things to come”? We shall see.

EXACTING TERMS

First we would remark, that if we are to make out a successful case for Bible prophecy, we must prove that:

- (1) The prophecies were written *before* the foretold events;
- (2) The predicted events were of such a nature that NO AMOUNT OF HUMAN FORESIGHT COULD ANTICIPATE THEM;
- (3) THE EVENTS WERE NOT PROBABILITIES likely to develop but rather improbable and seemingly impossible AT THE TIME OF THEIR PRONOUNCEMENT;
- (4) The predictions were couched in clear and INTELLIGIBLE TERMS, INCAPABLE OF HAVING TWO OR MORE CONSTRUCTIONS PLACED UPON THEM;

- (5) They were of such a nature as to be CONTINUALLY IN DANGER OF BEING FALSIFIED DOWN TO OUR OWN DAY.

If in addition to these very exacting conditions we can show that the prophecies were not petty or personal forecasts of single or quickly passing events but broad in their scope, embracing centuries of time, and affecting the destinies of modern nations, then, we submit, we shall have made out an unanswerable case.

This is a very ambitious programme, but we have no doubt that we can satisfy all these exacting requirements from recorded Bible prophecy.

Our examples for the present purpose will be few, but they will be of a nature that will defy the ingenuity of the most fervent unbeliever successfully to gainsay.

We are selecting prophecies the subjects of which are common knowledge. They concern three ancient peoples who existed contemporary with one another. Two of them are still with us, in our modern world; the other has completely disappeared. It was while their future fortunes were as yet unknown and undreamed of that three separate and widely differing destinies were declared for them. Their foretold calamities were to be as varied and diverse as it is possible to conceive, and to be of long duration.

Thus were these forecasts exposed every day to the vagaries of political change which could easily wreck them if they were anything short of divine.

ONE KINGDOM WAS TO CEASE UTTERLY AND HER PEOPLES TO DISAPPEAR AS COMPLETELY AS IF THEY HAD NEVER EXISTED. Its cities were to be destroyed, and its name disappear from world politics.

ANOTHER WAS TO BE REDUCED PERMANENTLY FROM A VERY HIGH TO A VERY LOW ESTATE, TO SUFFER PERPETUAL SERVITUDE, nevertheless to continue as a kingdom but as an ignoble one, always ruled over by foreigners with never again a king from among their own people.

WHILE A THIRD PEOPLE WERE TO BE DRIVEN OUT OF THEIR LAND, AND LIVE IN EVERY OTHER COUNTRY EXCEPT THEIR OWN; in those countries they were to endure, and always survive, the hatred and cruel persecution of all

peoples; they were to be a nation of living fragments with no king, parliament, or priesthood to hold them together; and, left uncultivated by its conquerors, their abandoned country was to lie desolate until they were again gathered back at an appointed time.

AN ENTHUSIASTIC SCHOLAR

But this is anticipating. Our first task is to prove, beyond all question or doubt, the early date of the prophecies. This happens to be quite easy. All the prophecies with which we intend to deal are contained in the Old Testament portion of the Authorised Version of the Bible. The earliest books of the Old Testament were written at about the 16th century B.C. and the latest books about the 5th century B.C. But as this is a matter which might involve debate with the sceptic, we can afford to agree to a much later date which will still be early enough to fulfil our first requirement, *i.e.*, "The prophecies were written *before* the foretold events."

There happens to be a notable event in secular history which will admirably serve our purpose in establishing the early age of the prophecies. Ptolemy, the Greek king of Egypt who lived in the 3rd century B.C. was an enthusiastic scholar. He collected a wonderful library and among his books, it is said, he wished to include the sacred books of the Jews. These books were written in Hebrew, so Ptolemy, it is said, commissioned seventy learned Jews to translate their Hebrew scriptures into Greek. Thus there came into being a version known to history as the Septuagint Version, *i.e.*, The version of the Seventy. This version was largely used by Christ and his apostles. It is still extant today and contains every book of the Old Testament that is found in our Authorised Version of the Bible.

Here then is elementary and indisputable evidence that the Jewish Scriptures were a finished and complete production in the 3rd century B.C. How otherwise could a version be made from them at that time? Thus we can now consider the prophecies themselves confident of our age question. We can now examine them strictly on their merits of fulfilment.

A CITY BECOMES HEAPS

The first example is Babylon, which was at the height of her power under King Nebuchadnezzar when Jeremiah wrote his prophecy (about 600 B.C.), and was still a mighty city of the Greek Empire at the time of the translations of the Jewish Scriptures into Greek.

Here is a digest of some of the things predicted by Jeremiah, and by Isaiah over a century earlier, concerning Babylon. We have numbered the sections for ease of reference later. Note their contents very carefully in order to appreciate their fulfilment when we explain them:

From Jeremiah 50:

- (1) "For out of the north there cometh up a nation against her which shall MAKE HER LAND DESOLATE AND NONE SHALL DWELL THEREIN: they shall remove, they shall depart, both man and beast."
(Verse 3.)
- (2) "It (Babylon) shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate." (Verse 13.)
- (3) "How is the hammer of the whole earth cut asunder and broken; how is Babylon become a DESOLATION AMONG THE NATIONS!" (Verse 23.)
- (4) "CAST HER UP AS HEAPS and destroy her utterly: let nothing of her be left." (Verse 26.)
- (5) "A DROUGHT IS UPON HER WATERS and they shall be dried up." (Verse 38.)
- (6) "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 no more be inhabited for ever, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation."
(Verse 39.)
- (7) "SO SHALL NO MAN ABIDE THERE, neither shall any son of man dwell therein." (Verse 40.)

From Jeremiah 51:

- (8) "We would have healed Babylon but SHE IS NOT HEALED." (Verse 9.)

- (9) "O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures, THINE END IS COME." (Verse 13.)
- (10) "THEY SHALL NOT TAKE OF THEE A STONE for a corner nor a stone for foundations." (Verse 26.)
- (11) "Thou shalt be DESOLATE FOR EVER, saith the Lord." (Verse 26.)
- (12) "For every purpose of the Lord shall be performed against Babylon to make the land of Babylon A DESOLATION WITHOUT AN INHABITANT." (Verse 29.)
- (13) "THE SEA IS COME UPON BABYLON, she is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof."
(Verse 42.)
- (14) "BABYLON SHALL BECOME HEAPS, A DWELLING-PLACE FOR DRAGONS (JACKALS), an astonishment . . . WITHOUT AN INHABITANT." (Verse 37.)
- (15) "Her cities are a desolation, A DRY LAND AND A WILDERNESS, a land wherein no man dwelleth."
(Verse 43.)
- (16) "The broad walls of Babylon shall be UTTERLY BROKEN." (Verse 58.)
- (17) "O Lord, thou hast spoken against this place to cut it off that none shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but that IT SHALL BE DESOLATE FOR EVER."
(Verse 62.)
- (18) "THUS SHALL BABYLON SINK AND SHALL NOT RISE from the evil that I will bring upon her."
(Verse 64.)

From Isaiah 13.

- (19) "And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be AS WHEN GOD OVERTHREW SODOM AND GOMORRAH." (Verse 19.)
- (20) "IT SHALL NEVER BE INHABITED, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation."
(Verse 20.)
- (21) "NEITHER SHALL THE ARABIAN PITCH TENT THERE, NEITHER SHALL THE SHEPHERDS MAKE THEIR FOLD THERE." (Verse 20.)

- (22) "But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures, and OWLS SHALL DWELL THERE and satyrs (wild goats) shall dance there." (Verse 21.)
- (23) "I will also make it A POSSESSION FOR THE BITTERN AND POOLS OF WATER, and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction." (Isaiah 14. 23.)
- (24) "CUT OFF THE SOWER FROM BABYLON." (Jeremiah 50. 16.)

FULFILMENT PAR EXCELLENCE

Travellers of three centuries ago and travellers and archaeologists up to our present day all concur in describing the state of Babylon *exactly* as these predictions would lead us to expect. Indeed they themselves repeatedly and often unintentionally use the very phrases employed by Bible prophets when describing what they saw. Some of them were not Bible believers and would therefore do nothing willingly to help the cause of Bible truth. They simply recorded what they saw, no more, and no less. And that is all we require them to do, for in the telling words of one writer:

"To diverge in the least from the most precise facts, would here weaken and destroy the argument, for the predictions correspond not closely with anything except alone with the literal and express reality . . . THE ACTUAL FACTS RENDER ANY EXAGGERATION IMPOSSIBLE, AND ANY FICTION POOR."

Here is fulfilment par excellence if so be that such language is justified. That it is more than justified we shall now proceed to demonstrate.

RELIABLE WITNESSES

The following extracts are from various travellers and archaeologists; some quite modern, others not so modern. They include such names as Sir Ker Porter, Keppel, Rich, Keith, Mignan, Buckingham, Rassam, Rawlinson, Sir Henry Layard, and Professor Hilprecht. They shall speak for themselves.

“Neither shall the Arabian pitch his tent . . . neither shall the shepherds make their fold.” See Section 21.

Rawlinson says: “On the actual ruins of Babylon, THE ARABIAN NEITHER PITCHES HIS TENT NOR PASTURES HIS FLOCKS—in the first place, because the nitrous soil produces no pasture to tempt him; and secondly, because an evil reputation attaches to the entire site, which is thought to be the haunt of evil spirits.”

“Captain Mignan was accompanied by six Arabs completely armed, but he ‘COULD NOT INDUCE THEM TO REMAIN TOWARDS NIGHT, from the apprehension of evil spirits’.”

“They shall not take of thee a stone for a corner . . .” See Section 10.

“The famous excavator Rassam says: ‘There is one fact connected with the destruction of Babylon and the marvellous fulfilment of prophecy which struck me more than anything else . . . THE NON-EXISTENCE . . . OF ANY SIGN OF STONE WHICH HAD BEEN DUG UP FROM THE ANCIENT RUINS. It seems that in digging for old materials the Arabs used the bricks for building purposes, but ALWAYS BURNT THE STONES THUS DISCOVERED FOR LIME’.”

“Babylon shall become heaps . . .” See Sections 4, 14.

“IMMENSE TUMULI of temples, palaces, and human habitations of every description.”

“MISSHAPEN HEAPS of rubbish.”

“Buried in SHAPELESS HEAPS.”

“HEAPS of rubbish.”

“VAST HEAPS NOW CONSTITUTE ALL THAT REMAINS OF ANCIENT BABYLON.”

“I will make it pools of water . . .” See Section 23.

“While WORKMEN CAST HER UP AS HEAPS in piling the rubbish while excavating for bricks . . . the numerous and DEEP EXCAVATIONS FORM POOLS OF WATER on the overflowing of the Euphrates.”

“Deep cavities are also formed by the Arabs when digging . . . the ground is sometimes covered with POOLS OF WATER IN THE HOLLOW.”

“From the summit of Birs Nimrood,” says Sir Henry Layard, the famous archaeologist, “I gazed over a vast marsh, for Babylon is made a ‘POSSESSION FOR THE BITTERN, AND POOLS OF WATER’.”

A TENANTLESS METROPOLIS

“It shall never be inhabited . . .” Sections 1, 2, 6, 7, 12, 14, 15, 20.

“The eye wanders over a barren desert in which the ruins are nearly the only indication that it ever had been inhabited . . . Babylon is spurned alike by the heel of the Ottomans, the Israelites and the sons of Ishmael . . . it is A TENANTLESS AND DESOLATE METROPOLIS.”

“Wild beasts . . . and owls shall dwell there.” See Section 22.

“There are MANY DENS OF WILD BEASTS in various parts . . . in most of the cavities are NUMBERS OF BATS AND OWLS . . . the refuge of JACKALS AND OTHER SAVAGE ANIMALS . . . THE KING OF THE FOREST (LION) now ranges over the site of Babylon.”

“The sea is come up upon Babylon . . .” See Section 13.

“During spring and summer (Babylon) is almost a continual marsh, a veritable ‘desert of the sea’. (Isa. 21, 1.) While the inundations prevail, a dense vegetation springs from the stagnant waters. Large flocks of birds with brilliant plumage, pelicans and cormorants sail about in undisputed possession of their safe and tranquil retreats.”

“Her cities a dry land and a wilderness.” See Section 15.

“The lofty embankments (of the canals) like a perfect network, ‘stretching on every side in long lines until they are lost in the hazy distance, or magnified by the mirage into mountains, still defy the hand of time,’ bearing witness to the great skill and diligent labour which once turned these barren plains into one luxuriant garden. THE PROVERBIAL FERTILITY AND PROSPERITY OF BABYLONIA WHICH EXCITED THE ADMIRATION OF CLASSICAL WRITERS, HAVE LONG DISAPPEARED. ‘HER CITIES ARE A DESOLATION, A DRY LAND AND A WILDERNESS’.”

“A drought is upon her waters.” See Section 5.

“The solitude and utter devastation which characterise Babylon in her present aspect are even more impressive and appalling. The whole country from ‘Aqargûf Quorna looks as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. THE INNUMERABLE CANALS WHICH IN BYGONE DAYS, LIKE SO MANY NOURISHING VEINS, CROSSED THE RICH ALLUVIAL

PLAIN, bringing life and joy and wealth to every village and field, are CHOKED UP WITH RUBBISH AND EARTH. Unattended by industrious hands and no longer fed by the Euphrates and Tigris, THEY ARE COMPLETELY 'DRIED UP'—'A DROUGHT IS UPON THE WATERS OF BABYLON'."

"Cut off the sower from Babylon." See Section 24.

"Ruins composed, like those of Babylon, of HEAPS OF RUBBISH IMPREGNATED WITH NITRE, CANNOT BE CULTIVATED. The decomposing materials of a Babylonian structure doom the earth on which they perish to EVERLASTING STERILITY."

OVERWHELMING EVIDENCE

Here then are the prophecies which, we submit, were delivered at the time when Babylon was the magnificent capital of a mighty empire; when her fertile and smiling plains, irrigated by a gigantic system of canals, supported an enormous population of highly intelligent and skilled people; when a false prophet, depending on probability to guide him, would have predicted any other fate except the one outlined so clearly by Israel's prophets.

IF Babylon had ever been rebuilt, as indeed it almost was, by Alexander the Great—IF the canals had been maintained, and perpetuated Babylon's fertility—IF flocks grazed on the site of her ruins, as they do on those of other ancient cities—IF an Arab could be induced to pitch his tent, and spend a night there, as he will among other ancient ruins—IF a Babylonian kingdom still existed—IF her ancient site could be sown and cultivated as are other mounds of ruins such as Nineveh—IF wild beasts and owls were not now the only living inhabitants of Babylon—IF the cormorant and other wild waterfowl did not live in lonely solitude in her marshes today—THEN would Jeremiah and Isaiah have proved to be false prophets.

When the reader considers the chances against the natural outworking of such an unnatural, unheard of, and unique fate for any country and people, and the ease with which any of these "ifs" could happen—then surely he or she will allow that we have here overwhelming evidence that a mind higher than man's was behind these amazing forecasts; the mind which knows the end from the beginning and who has declared:

" My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure."
(Isaiah 46, 10.)

THE LAND OF THE SPHINX

We now turn to consider the second example of the wonders of prophetic forecast. Egypt was a great nation contemporary with Babylon. She, too, was the subject of prophecy. Her future, however, was to be entirely different from that of Babylon, but like Babylon she was to have a unique future with NO POSSIBLE PARALLEL IN RECORDED HISTORY. We would emphasise this. Egypt was to meet with a fate which has befallen no other nation. To a person living at the time it would seem that the prophets of Israel were inviting disaster to overtake their predictions, so undreamed of, unlikely and seemingly impossible of fulfilment were their messages. But TIME, THE GREAT ACID TEST OF PROPHECY, HAS PROVED THEM TRUE. Our task is to show you in simple language how this has been done in the case of Egypt.

As before, we will quote the prophecies first. Ezekiel, who wrote at the time when Egypt was still a mighty power under her Pharaohs, declared for God :

" I WILL MAKE THE LAND OF EGYPT DESOLATE in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities among the cities that are laid waste shall be desolate forty years: and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries.

" Yet thus saith the Lord God; at the end of forty years will I gather the Egyptians from the people whither they were scattered: and I will bring again the captivity of Egypt and will CAUSE THEM TO RETURN INTO THE LAND . . . OF THEIR HABITATION; AND THEY SHALL BE THERE A BASE KINGDOM.

" IT SHALL BE THE BASEST OF THE KINGDOMS, neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations: for I will diminish them, that THEY SHALL NO MORE RULE OVER THE NATIONS." (Ezek. 29, 12-15.)

" And I will make the rivers dry, and sell the land into the hand of the wicked: and I WILL MAKE THE LAND WASTE AND ALL THAT IS THEREIN, BY THE HAND OF STRANGERS: . . . AND THERE SHALL BE NO MORE A PRINCE OF THE LAND OF EGYPT . . ." (Ezek. 30, 12, 13.)

There is no record in history of Egypt's forty years' captivity. But when we remember that it was Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, who first defeated Egypt after the utterance of this prophecy, then matters become clearer. His policy was to take conquered nations away into exile, as we have seen already in the case of the Jews, whom he took into captivity for seventy years, until Cyrus the Persian conquered him and released and restored his Jewish captives to their own land. We can be sure that something of a similar nature happened to the Egyptians, but as yet there is no certain record of the event.

THE REAL TEST

The rest of the prophecy, however, provides the real test. The Egyptians, from being a premier nation, were to continue perpetually in a state of subjection in their own country, ruled over and impoverished by foreigners.

Truly a remarkable and seemingly impossible state of affairs, especially as it was to be a perpetual state and not a temporary one—"they shall no more rule over the nations." Here is an unnatural situation, the continuation of which challenges eternity. What prospect of it ever happening, and, if happening, of continuing, if God were not behind it?

And now a brief history of Egypt, taken principally from a standard encyclopedia, will illustrate the prophecy almost without need of comment. This is how it should be, for prophecy is but history *before* it happens, and history is but prophecy *after* it has happened.

"Pharaoh Necho II was defeated by Nebuchadnezzar (king of Babylon) at Carchemish . . .

"Egypt fell under the Persian power when Cambyses conquered it and added it to his empire. After many rebellions, more or less successful, they were finally subdued by Ochus in 350 B.C. From that time to the present no native prince has ruled the land.

"Egypt remained a province of Persia till its conquest by Alexander, 332 B.C.

"Subsequently Egypt passed under Greek rule and the

language of the government became essentially Greek. Epiphanes, 204-180 B.C., encountered repeated rebellion . . .

“After the battle of Actium, 31 B.C., Egypt passed into the condition of a province of Rome. Governed always by a Roman governor of the equestrian, not senatorial, rank . . .

“Egypt under Roman rule . . . at the division of the (Roman) empire, 395 A.D., Egypt fell to the Eastern empire . . . it became a province of Persia 616 A.D. for twelve years. The Coptic governor, John Mukowkis, governed Egypt in the name of Heraclius at the period of the Arab invasion 639 A.D., and perceiving in the invaders a means of escape from the detested rule of the Greeks, submitted . . . to the Arab general ‘Amir ibn el-Asi who took Alexandria 641 A.D. and soon made the whole country a province of the Calif ‘Omar . . .

“Egypt remained an appanage of the Califat, and was ruled by Arab governors . . . This in turn gave place to the heretical line of the Fâtimi Califs who advanced from their capital, conquered Egypt and founded modern Cairo, 969 A.D. . . .

A STARTLING ANOMALY

“The Fâtimis were deposed by the Kurd general Saladin, 1169-93 A.D. . . . It was the last of the Saladin line, Es-Sâlih Ayyûb, who introduced the famous bodyguard of Turkish Mamelukes, or white slaves, who on his death, usurped the supreme power 1250 A.D.

“For more than two centuries and a half Egypt was governed by a succession of slave kings . . . one of the most startling anomalies of history.

“In 1517 A.D. . . . this brilliant series of rulers came to an end on the conquest of Egypt by the Ottoman Sultan Selim I. Nearly three centuries of weak and corrupt government by Turkish Pashas, varied by faction and rebellion of the Mameluke chiefs, brings us to the French invasion by Bonaparte in 1798 . . . The French, however, were soon expelled by the British in 1801 when the country was restored to (Turkey).

“The accession of the Albanian soldier Mohammed

'Ali to the pashalik in 1805 . . . In 1816 Mohammed 'Ali reduced part of Arabia to his sway by the generalship of his son Ibrahim. Ibrahim sat on the throne for two months (1849) . . . Isma'il son of Ibrahim . . . took in 1866 the hereditary title of Khedive. The same firman made the succession to the throne of Egypt direct from father to son . . .

“Egyptian finances were placed entirely under European management. A promise of constitutional government ended in 1879 in the summary dismissal of Nebar Pasha's ministry, and brought about the peremptory interference of the European governments . . .

“A law of liquidation, for regulating the condition of the public debt, was passed at the instance of five European powers in 1880 . . . growing dislike to European interference . . .

“In 1882 British and French warships were despatched to Alexandria to overawe the rebels . . . The British Admiral occupied the city . . . The aim of the English Cabinet was to secure, as soon as possible, a firm and lasting government under the Khedive but a large measure of interference with the Egyptian government was, for the time being, inevitable . . .

“A conference of the great powers in 1884 did not sanction the English scheme for managing Egyptian finance; and Britain had consequently to resume her exclusive responsibility in Egypt . . . Egypt under British rule.”

Here then are history's comments on Ezekiel's ancient prophecy, details you may read for yourself in almost any encyclopedia. The writer of this history would doubtless be greatly surprised if he learned that we were quoting him to verify the words of Israel's prophet. But you must admit that what he has written is not just his biased opinion, but sober and well known history. Had he recorded less than the truth or more than the truth, his record would not confirm the prophecy but rather discredit it.

Surely we may say of Egypt's unique history what was said of her rule by imported slaves—“it is one of the most startling anomalies of history.” A happening in history that can be termed “startling” must needs be more startling still when found in prophecy! For surely

“startling anomalies” are not things to be easily anticipated, neither will a probable trend of events make them occur to a would-be prophet; for they are not the expected but the unexpected. Well, the unexpected happened and has continued to our very day as the following extracts amply confirm:

“Of the present inhabitants of Egypt two-thirds of the fellahin (the cultivators of the soil), who form more than four-fifths of the entire population of Egypt, together with the Copts (Egyptian Christians), who form about one-twelfth, are undoubtedly descendants of the ancient Egyptians.

“The level of material civilisation is very low among these people, and they have sunk to the level of a race of slaves, whose proud past of splendour and power is but a faded memory. Egypt exists in a state of suspended animation, a kingdom, but sunk very low.”

Mr. Wendell Willkie, the American statesman, in a book, *One World*, records the following:

“Next day we drove back to Cairo for long conferences with King Farouk, the Prime Minister, and later with Sir Miles Lampson, the British ambassador in Egypt, and for all practical purposes its actual ruler.

“I asked one of my hosts, a young Egyptian newspaper man, ‘Does a man become a Pasha by writing a great book?’ He answered, ‘I suppose he could, except that almost no one in Egypt writes books.’

“‘Do you get to be a Pasha by painting pictures?’ I asked. ‘There is no reason why you couldn’t, except that no one here paints pictures.’

“‘Does a great inventor ever get to be a Pasha?’ And I was told once more: ‘We’ve had no great inventors that I know of since the time of the Pharaohs.’”

Then Mr. Willkie adds: “I was not in Egypt long enough to learn all the reasons for this cultural sterility.”

Thus today do public men testify unconsciously that Egypt is a base and ignoble kingdom.

Her position in the Second World War of “nonbelligerent alliance” while foreign invaders desecrated her ancient soil when the German army threatened Cairo, would have

been a standing reproach to any nation of spirit. But Egypt has no power or inclination to have it otherwise—a base kingdom “sunk very low.”

IF Egypt today were a first-rate world power—IF today her people were intelligent, proud and accomplished as they once were—IF Egypt today was only a name like Assyria and Babylon are, and it could well have been—IF the thousand and one twists of political change had worked any other condition of affairs than the one that now exists—THEN could the sceptic triumphantly point the finger of derision at such an audacious forecast.

But there are no such discrepancies to be found. Ancient prophecy and modern history harmonise and blend. They are complementary the one to the other. There is here no “fitting” of events to suit the prophecy. There are no long and prolix explanations needed to show how the events fulfilled the prophecy, because history is the best explanation.

Surely there can be only *one* reason that will appeal with irresistible force to an intelligent and logical mind—“Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

“THE MIRACLE OF THE JEW”

It would seem that with the recital of the respective and diverse destinies of the ancient kingdoms of Babylon and Egypt, we should have exhausted the “startling anomalies” of history. Far from this being the case there is another anomaly of history differing from both of them and yet more remarkable than either of them. Thus the world, impressed by this unique phenomenon which we are now to deal with, speaks of “The miracle of the immortal Jew.”

We shall now consider briefly the unambiguous prophecies concerning the Jew, and, as before, only appeal to things known by you or at least very easily ascertainable.

In the event of long continued disobedience to God, Moses foretold among other things the following evils which would befall the Jews:

From Deuteronomy 28:

- (1) "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 KINGDOMS OF THE EARTH . . .
(Verse 25.)
- (2) "Thou shalt be only OPPRESSED AND SPOILED EVERMORE and no man shall save thee . . . (Verse 29.)
- (3) "And there shall be NO MIGHT IN THY HAND . . .
"Thou shalt be ONLY OPPRESSED AND CRUSHED ALWAYS . . . (Verses 32-33.)
- (4) "Thou shalt become an astonishment, A PROVERB AND A BYWORD AMONG ALL NATIONS whither the Lord shall lead thee. (Verse 37.)
- (5) "The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth as swift as the eagle flieth, a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand, a nation of fierce countenance which shall not regard the person of the old nor show favour to the young. (Verses 49-50.)
- (6) "HE SHALL BESIEGE THEE IN ALL THY GATES until thy high and fenced walls come down wherein thou trustedst . . . throughout all thy land which the Lord thy God hath given thee. (Verse 52.)
- (7) "THE TENDER AND DELICATE WOMAN AMONG YOU . . . her eye shall be evil . . . toward her young one . . . which she shall bear for she SHALL EAT THEM FOR WANT OF ALL THINGS SECRETLY IN THE SIEGE. (Verses 56-57.)
- (8) "THE LORD SHALL SCATTER THEE AMONG ALL PEOPLE from the one end of the earth even unto the other . . . (Verse 64.)
- (9) "And among these nations shalt thou FIND NO EASE, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest . . . (Verse 65.)
- (10) "THY LIFE SHALL HANG IN DOUBT before thee and thou shalt fear day and night AND SHALL HAVE NONE ASSURANCE OF THY LIFE." (Verse 66.)

From Leviticus 26:

- (11) "And I WILL MAKE YOUR CITIES WASTE and bring your sanctuaries into desolation. (Verse 31.)

- (12) "And I WILL BRING THE LAND INTO DESOLATION and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. (Verse 32.)
- (13) "And I WILL SCATTER YOU AMONG THE HEATHEN and will draw out a sword after you and YOUR LAND SHALL BE DESOLATE AND YOUR CITIES WASTE. (Verse 33.)
- (14) "Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths as long as it lieth desolate, and YE BE IN YOUR ENEMIES' LAND; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths. (Verse 34.)
- (15) "And ye shall have no power to stand before your enemies." (Verse 37.)

"WITHOUT REMEDY"

These prophecies were well over a thousand years old before they received their fulfilment. During this time Israel suffered many temporary disasters to her national fortunes, but each one was followed by divine forgiveness and restoration. At last, however, the time came, as the prophet said it would, when the wrath of God arose "without remedy". The final tragedy was impending during the life of Jesus Christ. He warned his generation that the time was almost ripe for the fulfilment of these very curses pronounced by Moses in Deuteronomy and Leviticus. He says:

"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, *then* know that the desolation thereof is nigh . . .

"For *these* be the days of vengeance, that ALL THINGS WHICH ARE WRITTEN may be fulfilled . . .

"And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be LED AWAY CAPTIVE INTO ALL NATIONS; and JERUSALEM SHALL BE TRODDEN DOWN of the Gentiles, *until* the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke 21; 20, 22, 24.

And of the beautiful temple buildings he declared at this time that:

"There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." Matt. 24, 2.

To sum up: Israel were to be besieged in all their cities until they were razed to the ground throughout the land—Jerusalem was to be desolated; not one stone was to remain upon another in the temple buildings. After

suffering terrible hardships and privations in the siege, women would be compelled to eat their own children. The Jews were to be scattered into all nations and sold into slavery—thenceforth they were to suffer untold misery in every nation under heaven—to be plundered and robbed—to be a proverb and a curse, never allowed to settle down but driven from pillar to post finding no rest for the sole of their feet—to be “Wandering Jews,” yet always to remain a separate, distinct and an easily identifiable race. Their land was to be a possession of strangers yet never cultivated by them, but to remain in a state of desolation and ruin until the times of Gentile domination should expire; then Israel were to return and re-cultivate the soil which had lain fallow for centuries.

A GRUESOME MEAL

Our first quotation as illustrative of one part of the prophecy is taken from Josephus, who was himself an eyewitness of the terrible siege of Jerusalem. The rest is an abridged copy of the history of Israel from a standard encyclopedia. These alone will admirably serve to illustrate the fulfilment of the points we have summarized.

“Now there was a certain woman . . . She was eminent for her family and her wealth . . . The other effects of this woman had been already seized upon . . . What food she had contrived to save had also been carried off by the rapacious guards, who came every day running into her house for that purpose. (When all other food was exhausted or stolen) SHE SLEW HER SON, AND THEN ROASTED HIM, AND ATE THE ONE HALF OF HIM, AND KEPT THE OTHER HALF BY HER CONCEALED . . . Smelling the horrid scent of this food (the robbers) threatened her that they would cut her throat immediately if she did not shew them what food she had gotten ready . . . (She) uncovered what was left of her son . . . they were seized with horror . . . Come eat of this food; for I have eaten of it myself! Do not pretend to be either more tender than a woman or more compassionate than a mother.”—Josephus.

“A HORRIBLE CARNAGE was terminated 70 A.D. by the conquest of Jerusalem by Titus (the Roman general), THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE and the MASSACRE AND

BANISHMENT of hundreds and thousands of the unhappy people, who were SCATTERED IN ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD.

“Their last attempt to throw off the Roman yoke in Palestine under Bar-Cochba was defeated after enormous and almost incredible butcheries. The suppression of Bar-Cochba’s insurrection, 135 A.D., marks the FINAL DESOLATION OF JUDEA, and the DISPERSION of its inhabitants.

“The whole of Judea, was MADE LIKE A DESERT; about 985 towns and villages lay in ashes, 50 fortresses were RAZED TO THE GROUND; the name of Jerusalem itself was changed into Aelia Capitolina . . . from entering which (or even viewing from a distance) every Jew was strictly forbidden on pain of death.

“In Europe the ascendancy of Christianity was baneful to the Jews. Imperial edicts and ecclesiastical decrees vied with each other in the rigour of their intolerance toward this unhappy people . . . Yet no persecution apparently could destroy the immortal race . . . Constantine (the first ‘Christian’ emperor) terms them ‘THAT MOST HATEFUL OF ALL PEOPLE.’ . . .

“In the 5th century in the Byzantine empire THEY SUFFERED MANY OPPRESSIONS; while in the 6th and 7th centuries the Franks and Spanish Visigoths inflicted on them FRIGHTFUL PERSECUTIONS.

“In Christendom few and far between were the monarchs who rose above the barbarism of the churches . . .

“Less favourable was their lot in France. Under the weaker of the Carlovingians the church advanced with imperious strides, and a melancholy change ensued: kings, bishops, feudal barons, and even the municipalities, ALL JOINED IN CRUEL PERSECUTION.

“From the 11th to the 14th century their history is a series of successive massacres . . .

“THE DETESTED RACE”

“A religious epidemic having seized the common people in . . . the central regions of France, 1321 A.D., they signalized themselves by HORRIBLE MASSACRES OF THE DETESTED RACE . . . One shudders to read what followed; IN WHOLE PROVINCES EVERY JEW WAS BURNED . . . finally in 1395 they were BANISHED . . .

“ In England (1189) a popular commotion against them broke out in London; THEIR HOUSES WERE PILLAGED AND BURNED . . . similar scenes were witnessed at Norwich, Edmundsbury, Stamford and York; in York most of THE JEWS PREFERRED DEATH to enforced baptism . . . King John IMPRISONED, MALTREATED AND PLUNDERED them in all parts of the country. Under Henry III they were mulcted enormously. Accused of clipping the coin of the realm, they had, as a penalty, to pay into the royal exchequer a third of their movable property . . . The accession of Edward I did not mitigate their misery . . . In 1253 the Jews, no longer able to withstand the constant hardships to which they were subjected in person and property, begged of their own accord to be allowed to leave the country . . . Ultimately in 1290 they were DRIVEN FROM THE SHORES OF ENGLAND, PURSUED BY THE EXECRATIONS OF THE INFURIATED RABBLE.

“ In Germany they were looked upon as the special property of the sovereign who BOUGHT AND SOLD them . . . The Crusaders kindled a spirit . . . through all Christendom, hostile to (the Jews) . . . CITIES WERE DELUGED WITH THEIR BLOOD. . . . The Jews were expelled from Vienna . . . Mecklenburg . . . Frankfort . . . Brandenburg . . . Nuremberg . . . Prague . . . Ratisbon. The Black Death occasioned a great and widespread persecution, 1348-50. They were MURDERED AND BURNED BY THOUSANDS, and the race almost disappeared from Germany.

“ Switzerland commenced to PERSECUTE them about the middle of the 14th century; in the 15th century they were EXPELLED.

“ In Spain there were HORRIBLE PERSECUTIONS by the Gothic princes in the 6th and 7th centuries . . . outbursts of priestly and popular violence took place 1391-2; IMMENSE NUMBERS WERE MURDERED AND WHOLESALE THEFT WAS PERPETRATED BY THE RELIGIOUS RABBLE. Escape was possible only by flight to Africa . . . THE FATE OF THE JEWS in Spain during the 15th century, however, BEGGARS DESCRIPTION; we read of nothing but PERSECUTIONS, VIOLENT CONVERSION, MASSACRES, AND THE TORTURES OF THE INQUISITION. THOUSANDS WERE BURNED ALIVE . . . Not less than 300,000 resolved to abandon the country . . . the incidents that marked their departure are HEARTRENDING. Almost EVERY LAND WAS SHUT AGAINST THEM. Some, how-

ever, ventured into Morocco in . . . which . . . they suffered THE MOST FRIGHTFUL PRIVATION.

“THE WANDERERS”

“In Portugal . . . SOLD AS SLAVES. In 1495 king Emanuel commanded them to quit his territories, but at the same time issued a secret order that all Jewish children under 14 years should be torn from their mothers (and) retained in Portugal . . . AGONY DROVE THE JEWISH MOTHERS INTO MADNESS; they destroyed their children with their own hands, and threw them into wells and rivers to prevent them falling into the hands of their persecutors . . .

“Russia in 1881 . . . a violent agitation against the Jews, accompanied by much OUTRAGE AND BLOODSHED, took place in the south and west of Russia.

“Frederick the Great, king of Prussia, shewed himself singularly harsh towards the Jews; his legislation almost throws us back into the middle ages . . . SCATTERED THROUGH FIVE CONTINENTS.”

“It was this (the Russian) State and its Czars that organised and even financed massacres of the Jews as late as the beginning of the 20th century, during the reign of Nicholas II. Here was the classical diversion and scape-goat manoeuvre which was to be emphasized so effectively in the thirties of the 20th century by Adolph Hitler.”

“World War I affected the Jews primarily in the Eastern European zones. Hundreds of thousands of Jews were uprooted from their homes by the Russian overlords and shipped back to the lines in the most brutal fashion.”

In 1918-20 “the Jews of the Ukraine were butchered by the thousands by invading troops and local guerrillas.”

Hitler in 1933 “immediately set out to implement his programme which included the destruction of what was probably the most distinguished Jewry in Europe. In a series of laws, confiscations and pogroms, extending from 1933 to 1938, Hitler succeeded in destroying German Jewry . . . Jews lost their citizenship completely and were forbidden to inter-marry with other Germans . . . Practically every synagogue in Germany was destroyed. Thousands of Jews were imprisoned in concentration camps, and the major part of German-Jewish wealth was confiscated. By

the time war broke out in 1939 Jews were no longer citizens, could attend no public schools, engage in practically no business or profession, own no land, associate with no non-Jew, frequent no park, library, or museum, and were ordered to live in ghettos. By 1941 boys over 12 were conscripted into munition factories, all use of the telephone and public transportation systems was forbidden, and all Jews over six years of age were required to wear the yellow badge."

"In World War II the situation of Jewry in the mass settlements of Eastern Europe was even worse (than World War I), for the national socialists set out deliberately to destroy large numbers of Polish and Russian-Jewish civilians. If but a fraction of the atrocities reported were accurate, then many thousands of defenceless Jewish non-combatants, men, women and children, were butchered after September, 1939."

"The influence of World War II was felt most strongly by Jews in those European lands which had come under German domination . . . In the conquered lands from France to Poland, practically all Jews lost their political and civil rights; their property and businesses were confiscated and their children, in most lands, were driven out of elementary and higher schools . . . The Nazis carried out a series of expulsions and deportations of Jews . . . from nearly all European states . . . Large numbers perished under the inhuman conditions under which they laboured."

UNDER THE PLOUGH

During most of this long time the land of Israel was to remain in a state of uncultivated desolation. After the Roman overthrow, which marked the commencement of the desolation, the land was successively overrun by Arab, Saracen and Turk. None of these nations exploited the fertile plains of Judea because they were mere desolators by nature: that was their mission. Their centuries of accumulated misrule at last turned Palestine into an unrecognisable desert.

Today the tide is on the turn; the land is coming under the plough—orange groves are flourishing in what, until

a few years ago, were malarial swamps; and it is a returned remnant of the Jews that are doing these things.

What does this mean? Are these ancient prophecies beginning to fail after 2,000 years' fulfilment? By no means. Indeed, it is a continuation of fulfilment in itself, for Israel's scattering, although to be of long duration, was not to be perpetual. Jesus explains it very simply in that passage already quoted. Jerusalem was to be trodden down of the Gentiles only "until" the times of the Gentiles had run their allotted course.

Current events in the Jews' partial return to Palestine self-evidently mark the termination of this "until", at least in an incipient sense.

TURN OF THE TIDE

When the waters of a tidal river reach the end of the ebb-tide, there is a short period of scarcely noticeable transition, which soon gives place to full flowing flood-tide.

The flood-tide of Israel's complete restoration to their ancient land is as clearly foretold by their own prophets as was their expulsion and punishment, and this preliminary return is a sign that the tide is just turning. For instance, God makes a comparison and gives a guarantee:

"For thus saith the Lord; like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised." (Jer. 32. 42.)

The terrible reality of the evil and its divine origin we have seen clearly. If words mean anything, then just as really and in the same tangible way will God bring all the good He has promised. The good, as we learn from the many promises made by God, will be in ratio to the evil, but of an entirely opposite nature. First, as to the restoration of Israel to their land, God says:

"Yea, I WILL REJOICE OVER THEM TO DO THEM GOOD, AND I WILL PLANT THEM IN THIS LAND assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul." (Jer. 32, 41.)

Then the changed attitude of the nations toward Israel. Instead of the Jew being despised and persecuted his company will be sought and his favour courted:

“In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, WE WILL GO WITH YOU: FOR WE HAVE HEARD THAT GOD IS WITH YOU.”
(Zech. 8. 23.)

Or again:

“The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all THEY THAT DESPISED THEE SHALL BOW THEMSELVES DOWN AT THE SOLES OF THY FEET.” (Isa. 60. 14.)

This final and complete reversal of Israel's national fortunes we have yet to see, but see it we shall; nothing is more certain. Israel has been preserved in the very fire for this purpose. That is why ALL THE ATTEMPTS TO EXTERMINATE THE JEW HAVE FAILED. HAD THEY SUCCEEDED, GOD'S WORD WOULD HAVE FAILED, for He declared:

“I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee: but I will not make a full end of thee.”
(Jer. 46. 28.)

Hence the proverb—“The immortal Jew.”

Or again:

“If those ordinances (of sun and moon, day and night) depart from before me, saith the Lord, *then* the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation . . .” (Jer. 31. 36.)

2,000 YEARS EXILE

The present turn of the tide is, as yet, unaccompanied by visible interference by God. But just as their long period of exile and persecution was apparently natural, so will the first stages of their restoration. The “until” has expired. Zionism is a growing power in the world. Palestine is awaking from her centuries' sleep of desolation and is putting on her beautiful garments. The plains and valleys are beginning to smile once more. The Jew is returning to the land which has been denied him for nigh on 2,000 years. This is only the beginning of the fulfilment of God's promises, such as:

“For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather

you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.

“And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by.

“And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited.”

(Ezek. 36. 24, 34, 35.)

This explanation is just to shew that present tendencies, far from falsifying the prophecies, are but the beginning of a fresh series—those of a predicted change, a new chapter in the fortunes of Israel. Of its significance to us, we shall have more to say in another place.

For the present, we hope that we have fulfilled our promise and justified our claim that Bible prophecy is not petty or ambiguous in its terms but clear, unequivocal, and of a nature and scope which precludes all possibility of human foresight or political sagacity. Entrenched within this threefold defence of Babylon, Egypt and the Jew, we can confidently defy all the assaults of modern scepticism. No one will suffer in these attacks unless it be the attackers. Their wisdom lies in leaving such prophecies severely alone.

FULFILLED TO THE LETTER

Let the reader quietly think over these facts which we have placed on record—simple facts, few facts, unencumbered with a host of befogging explanations and irrelevant details. Destinies more diverse than those predicted for these three peoples it would be impossible to suggest, yet they have all happened to the very letter!

THERE IS TODAY NO ROYAL HOUSE OF BABYLON. There is no Babylonian ambassador at any European court. Her once mighty capital is now a shapeless mass of mounds whose identity was unknown and whose very site was in dispute until recent years.

THE ANCIENT LAND OF EGYPT IS STILL TO BE FOUND ON EVERY MODERN ATLAS. The Egyptians are still a nation in their own land. They are still, as ever, under the rule of strangers. They have a king in name—but not an Egyptian king. They are still servile and base, as the prophecy requires.

Despite the partial restoration of the past 50 years. THE JEWS STILL REMAIN A SCATTERED PEOPLE in all nations under heaven. This will continue until the time is ripe for divine interference on their behalf.

If archaeology has proved the historical trustworthiness of the Bible beyond all question, then surely the prophecies we have just reviewed prove the divine authorship of the Bible. So we can now proceed, confident of the historical character of the Bible, and confident of the divine character of its many prophecies.

NOTE.—Since the foregoing was written, events in Palestine have marched on very rapidly. In 1948 Britain relinquished the mandate which she had held since 1921, and the State of Israel was born. This new State has made remarkable progress during her short life.

As regards Egypt, although she has now lost her King, her ruler is still not a native Egyptian.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS AND OUR MODERN BIBLE

A BIBLE CHART—SOURCES OF OUR MODERN BIBLE—THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS AND EARLY TRANSLATIONS—THE LATIN VULGATE—ANGLO-SAXON TRANSLATIONS—JOHN WYCLIFFE—WILLIAM TYNDALE—THE AUTHORISED VERSION—A FLOOD OF NEW MATERIAL USED IN THE REVISED VERSION—FRESH EVIDENCES STILL ACCUMULATE—PAPYRI “FINDS” IN EGYPT—THE TESTIMONY OF THE MANUSCRIPTS IS FINAL—OUR MODERN BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD.

“Thy Word is truth.”—Jesus.

The historical reliability and minute accuracy of the Bible has been amply demonstrated in Chapter Two, by archaeological “finds.” The nature of Bible prophecy, dealt with in Chapter Three, has also proved the Bible to be divine beyond all successful contradiction.

Our illustrations in both of these chapters, it is true, have been only *selected* from Scripture, and therefore much of the Bible has been left untouched. But the examples which we have selected are so diverse, widespread, and representative that we feel confident that the intelligent reader will accept them as guarantees of the whole.

Very few of us, however, are as well informed about the origin of our English Bible as we should be. So we purpose making a review of the transmission of the early Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament, and the transmission of the early Greek manuscripts of the New Testa-

ment, until, at last, they became embodied in our modern English Bible—The Revised Version of 1881-5.

This plan will serve to shew the reader why and how these selected illustrations guarantee the truth of the whole Bible, and why it is impossible to separate them from the general record, within which they are contained. This present chapter will serve to round off our introductory section, which deals with outside evidences of the Bible's truth, and, we hope, prepare the reader to listen with added interest and respect to the unfolding of its true doctrinal teaching.

A BIBLE CHART

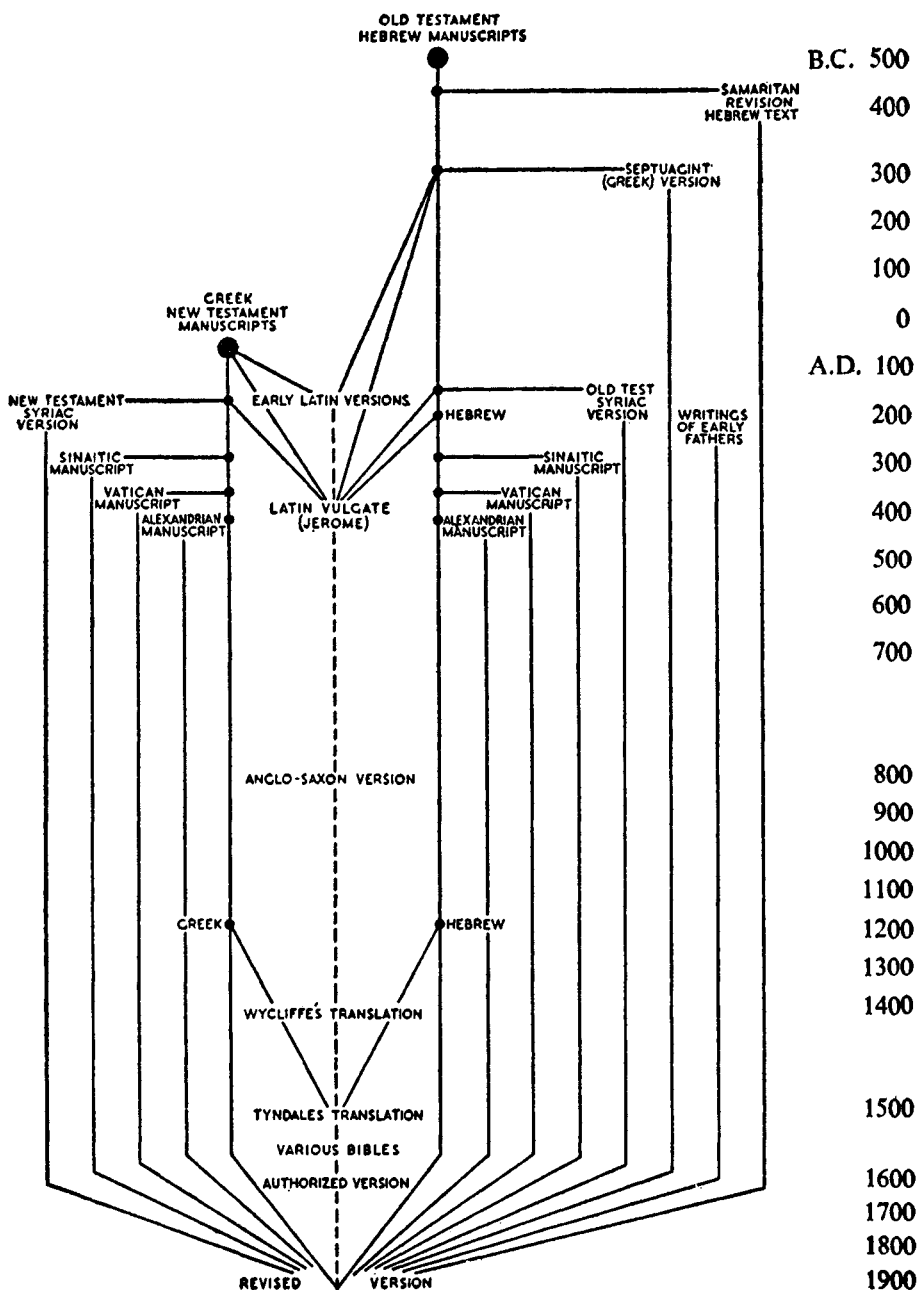
A look at our Bible chart will enable the reader to get an outline, at a glance, of our plan of approach. The two middle lines are headed, "Greek New Testament Manuscripts" and, "Old Testament Hebrew Manuscripts," respectively. They represent the long period of time from the writing of the early manuscripts until the present time. Branching off to the left of the New Testament line are shewn the translations of the Greek New Testament into other tongues. These are known as versions. Branching off to the right of the Old Testament line are shewn translations, or versions, of the Hebrew Old Testament.

The space between the two middle lines contains the pedigree of our English Bible. First, a translation into Latin from the original Greek manuscripts, and then into Anglo-Saxon from the Latin, and at last into modern English.

You will notice that the latest version, the Revised Version of 1881-5, drew on sources outside the middle lines; sources which were inaccessible at the time when the Authorised Version was made in 1611. Thus, these outside lines are shewn running down, and at last converging in the Revised Version at a later date. How all these things came about, it is now our duty to explain in more detail.

Here it would be opportune to remark that we cannot go into minute particulars in the compass of a chapter; therefore we are going to confine ourselves to a bare outline both for the purpose of brevity and for the purpose

THE SOURCES OF OUR ENGLISH BIBLE



for which we write—to convey a clear impression to the reader.

To explain all the minor exceptions to our broad statements would only serve to confuse the issue, and this is the very last thing we wish to do. Therefore, when we speak of a particular translation of the Scriptures being made in another tongue we are not staying to tell you that a few books were omitted in this, or included in that, version. Neither shall we stay to explain in detail that this, or that, translator was helped by someone else; or that there are two or more opinions about certain matters of detail. Therefore you must take all our facts and figures as statements of general, and not of particular, truths.

We mention this in order to anticipate criticism on a subject which, in details, is extremely involved, and in parts controversial; a subject which, in itself, is capable of supplying matter for a volume. Where there is doubt, or two opinions, we have always been satisfied with the modest one. Extravagant claims and exaggeration are no more necessary here than they were in our archaeological and prophetic sections.

THE SIMPLE UNDISPUTED FACTS OF THE TRANSMISSION OF THE ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS HAVE SATISFIED THE MOST COMPETENT AND EXACTING CRITICS THAT WE POSSESS TODAY, IN OUR MODERN BIBLE, THE UNCORRUPTED WORD OF THE LIVING GOD.

Having cleared the way by these preliminary explanations of our intentions we can now proceed to our subject proper—the ancient sources of our modern Bible.

THE SAMARITAN VERSION

The Jewish Old Testament was written in Hebrew by hand; for printing was then unknown. All such documents are known as manuscripts—Manu-Scriptus, *i.e.*, written by hand. These early Hebrew manuscripts were written on animal skins, made into rolls for easy reading, and were in existence B.C. 500.

Soon after this, maybe about B.C. 400, the Samaritans made a copy of the first five books of the Old Testament—The Pentateuch. Although this copy is now known as The Samaritan Version or translation it was really more

in the nature of a revision owing to a similarity of language which, at that time, almost amounted to identity.

The Jews and the Samaritans were inveterate enemies. Their animosity was well illustrated 400 years later in a conversation that the Jewish Jesus had with the Samaritan woman at the well.

Jesus said to her: "Give me to drink."

The woman replied: "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans."

No dealings with the Samaritans! Why? Well, a few centuries earlier the Assyrian conqueror of Israel, Esarhaddon by name, had transported thousands of Jews to Assyria, and replaced them by other conquered peoples from far off lands. His object, of course, was to weaken his foes. It can well be imagined what sort of reception these people, who were afterwards known as Samaritans, would receive at the hands of the Jews who remained in the land.

Remarkably enough, these Samaritans, in spite of rebuffs, claimed the right to worship the God of the Jews and to have their sacred Scriptures. But here is the point of our narrative. THE JEWISH SCRIPTURES WERE, VERY EARLY, IN THE HANDS OF A PEOPLE WHO HATED THE JEWS. They would see to it that no Jew ever interfered with their version; while the Jew would likewise zealously guard against such a happening.

This Samaritan Version was destined later to become lost to the Western world, but in still later times to come again within the ken of modern scholars and thus provide an independent means of testing other translations and the Hebrew text itself.

The need and value of such helps will be appreciated if we keep in mind the fact that all early copies of the Scriptures were transcribed by hand. However careful the scribes might be they would make errors which would be repeated by later copyists who would also add mistakes of their own.

Such mistakes should cause us no surprise; rather should we be surprised that there were not more. No two independent scribes working on separate manuscripts were

likely to commit exactly the same errors, however, and this fact later provided a wonderful means of comparison and classification which has accomplished miracles of literary reconstruction.

SEPTUAGINT VERSION

The next translation of the Old Testament Scriptures, after the Samaritan, was a very important one which has had a profound effect on the whole civilised world. It was a Greek translation of the Jewish Scriptures known as the Septuagint, and was made about B.C. 250.

The Greek language was very widely spoken at this time even in non-Greek lands. The reason is not far to seek. Greece was the dominant world empire at this time. Many Jews in Egypt spoke Greek. This, coupled, it is said, with a desire of Ptolemy, the Greek king of Egypt, to have a copy of the Jewish Scriptures in Greek for his library, resulted in the production of this Greek version of which we speak. There are several extravagant stories of how this was done, but they all lack reliable evidence, so we will leave it at that. The fact, however, of the appearance of a Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures about B.C. 250 is a well established historical event, and, therefore, not open to dispute.

The widespread circulation of the Septuagint among non-Jewish nations prepared the way among the Gentiles for the advent of the Jewish Messiah.

An illustration of this here occurs to us. There was a eunuch in the house of Candace Queen of Ethiopia, who occupied an important position, being over all the Queen's treasure. He had travelled to Jerusalem to worship, and returning to his native land in his chariot was reading from the Old Testament Scriptures. It so happened that he was reading a prophecy of the Jewish Messiah, from the Greek version, the Septuagint. He read:

“He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;”

A certain Christian named Philip enquired if he understood what he was reading. He admitted his inability to do so without help, and thereupon invited Philip to sit by

his side in his carriage and explain matters to him. Then, referring to the book in his lap, he asked Philip,

“Of whom speaketh the prophet this? Of himself, or of some other man?”

The record then informs us that Philip “began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.”

Here then is an important sidelight upon the extended use of the Greek version at this time. It was this same version which was used by Jesus and his disciples, almost to the exclusion of the Hebrew, because Hebrew had fallen into general disuse by now, and the Septuagint had become the Bible of the people. For instance, on one occasion, Jesus, as was his custom, went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and there was handed to him a roll of the prophet Isaiah. And finding a certain place we are told that he read out loud:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor.”

Here again we can tell by the rendering of the passage that Jesus was reading from the Greek translation—the Septuagint.

The wide use made of this early version has proved invaluable to scholars, past and present, and has contributed in many ways to the excellence of our present English translations.

THE SYRIAC VERSION

We have now arrived at New Testament, or Christian, times. It was about 250 years after the Septuagint was made that Jesus came, as Moses and the Prophets in the Jewish Scriptures of the Old Testament had foretold. His life and teaching are recorded by four biographers: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; while the Acts of the Apostles records the early missionary journeys of the disciples of Jesus after his death, and also of their preaching to the Gentiles, and of the wide-spread success of their labours, which one contemporary pagan said had “turned the world upside down.” The rest of the New Testament

Scripture is made up of letters to bodies of believers in Corinth, Galatia and elsewhere, and ends with the book of Revelation.

These early writings were quickly multiplied, and were in wide-spread and general use by 150 A.D. Not only so, but translations were made very early into other tongues—Egyptian, Ethiopian, Armenian, Latin and Syrian, to mention a few.

The Syrian translation appears to have been made as early as about 150 A.D. Both Old and New Testaments were translated out of their original languages into the Syrian, which translation, known as the Syriac Version, became the Bible of the Syrian Christians.

Some time later a very serious dispute arose among them. The breach grew wider, and was never subsequently healed. Both went their separate ways, and both held on to their Bible. This Syriac Bible subsequently became lost to the Western world like the Samaritan Version. But in the 16th century a Syrian priest was sent to Europe by Ignatius, Patriarch of Antioch, to acknowledge the papal supremacy; and with him, it is said, he brought a copy of the Syriac Version. This reminds us very much of the covered glories of lost cities so recently brought to light—yes, and of God's precious truth itself lost for many a long year but found again in these last days.

LATIN VERSIONS

By this time Greece had lost her place as a world empire, and Rome had now assumed the lead. Even in Christ's day Rome had annexed Palestine, and when the Roman soldiery crucified Jesus the charge against him was written over his cross in Hebrew, Greek and Latin; because Latin was the language of Rome.

Just as there had been a natural demand for the Jewish Scriptures in Greek, so there was now a need for the Bible in Latin. Thus we find that very early in the third century Latin copies had become greatly multiplied. The source of these Latin translations is clearly marked on our chart. They were translations into Latin from the early Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, and from the Septuagint Greek Version of the Hebrew Old Testament.

So many variations and mistakes were occurring in these copies, for reasons which we cannot stay to explain, that a revision became necessary. This revision was undertaken by Jerome, a scholar of the third century A.D. His revision became known as the Latin Vulgate, and has been appropriately styled the "Revised Bible" of the Western Church.

Jerome translated the Old Testament this time direct from the Hebrew, as shewn on our chart. He is said to have also used the Septuagint and the Old Testament Syriac. For the New Testament he only revised the earlier Latin copies, although there is reason to believe that he consulted the early Greek and Syriac manuscripts of the New Testament which were then extant.

THE BIBLE'S JAILERS

This Latin translation of Jerome became the standard version of Western Europe for the next thousand years. It is from this Latin Vulgate that our Anglo-Saxon and early English Bibles directly sprang. Before we pass on to shew how this happened we would have something to say about Jerome and his times.

The Christian Church by now was rapidly growing corrupt. Haughty bishops were striving for power over the flocks and over one another. The Bible, read and understood by the common people, is the biggest stumbling block in the way of men seeking power. Therefore the bishops, instead of welcoming Jerome's very necessary revision, attacked him for a "schismatic" and "heretic" as they have since done to so many others.

Later, when the hue and cry of bigotry and ignorance died down, we find that the Latin Vulgate was no longer regarded as dangerous. The Church seemed to forget that it was only a translation from the original languages of Hebrew and Greek; they began to regard it as Scripture itself. "'It is the version of the Church'; they said, 'and in her own language.' 'Why should it yield to Greek and Hebrew manuscripts, which have been for all these hundreds of years in the hands of Jewish unbelievers and Greek schismatics?'"

These were early days in the Church's history, but already she was shewing her teeth: a foretaste of things

to come for those who should afterwards aim at making the Bible available in the common tongue. From now on, as her power grew, so did her inveterate hatred of the Bible. Yet today Romanists will tell you that *they* have been the Bible's custodians!

Jailers are custodians, and they have certainly been that. A Bible manuscript in a library under lock and key does not disturb their equanimity, but a Bible in the hands of the common multitude provokes them to frenzy. A helpless frenzy now, thank God, but they were not always so impotent, as we shall see.

ANGLO-SAXON TRANSLATIONS—UREN FADER

Now to return to the Latin Vulgate. It became the standard version of all Western European translations, and its influence can be clearly traced in them. Our own English Bible, with which we are immediately concerned, also came direct from the Latin Vulgate, as a glance at the chart will shew.

In the ninth century and onward, Bede, King Alfred, and others are said to have translated some of the Latin Bible into Anglo-Saxon. The copies, of course, were few and were confined to religious houses and a few wealthy people.

These translations, like all others, became out-of-date with the passage of time and the change in our language which is always going on. At this period of history this normal change was accelerated by the introduction of Norman-French brought over by William the Conqueror. There was thus a need for continual modernisation of Bible translations.

This has provided shallow critics with one of their objections to the Bible. "It is," they say, "always being translated, revised and altered." By which they imply that, it either must be very defective to need such continual alteration, or else it must suffer corruption by such continual copying, revising, and re-copying. Shallow criticism!

How would this sticking to one final translation work out in practice? Take first our Authorised Version which seems still to refuse to give place to the more correct Revised Version. In the Authorised Version are many words which, although perfectly intelligible to our forebears in

Shakespeare's day, have now wholly changed their meaning.

The word "let" used to mean "hinder." Now it means "allow," an exactly opposite meaning. "Conversation" then meant "behaviour"; now it means "speech." "Prevent" meant "go before," now it means "to stop." "Quick," which we associate with speed, then meant "living." These are a few among hundreds of words which have either become obsolete or obsolescent in the three hundred odd years since the Authorised Version in 1611.

Thus we see that apart from fresh discovery of manuscripts and improvements in the knowledge of the ancient languages, revisions are necessary on the grounds of change in the English language alone. If an objector still feels inclined to demur let him try his hand at this from King Alfred's day:

Uren Fader dhic art in heofnas, Sic gehalged dhin noma, To Cymedh dhin ric, Sic dhin uuilla sue is in heofnas and in eardho, Vren hlaf ofer uuirthe sel us to daeg, And forgef us scylda urna. Sue une forgefan sculdgun vrum. (The beginning of the Lord's prayer.)

This surely shews the imperative need for a new translation into more modern English better than any argument of ours.

JOHN WYCLIFFE AND OUR "MODIR TONGE"

The next important step in the pedigree of our English Bible is the translation from the Latin Vulgate by John Wycliffe. Wycliffe was born in Yorkshire in 1324, and later became the parish priest of Lutterworth. He was a servant of the Church, yet he was moved with noble sentiments to which the Church herself has never aspired. He was not a product of his profession, but rather a green shoot out of a dry ground.

"He laboured on at the great work of his life, till the whole Bible was translated into the 'Modir tonge,' and England received for the first time in her history a complete version of the Scriptures in the language of the people."

This aroused the hatred of his brethren in "Holy Orders" as is seen in the complaint of Bishop Arundel to the Pope. He spoke of "That pestilent wretch, John

Wycliffe, the son of the old serpent, the forerunner of anti-Christ, who had completed his iniquity by inventing a new translation of the Scriptures."

The real character of this "pestilent wretch" comes out in the preface to his translation where he beautifully defines our duty in quaint old English:

"To ken and to kepe well Holie Writ, and to suffer joiefulli some paine for it at the laste."

John Wycliffe had good reason to believe that he himself would have to suffer at the hands of a vicious priesthood. But even while they were preparing to strike, Wycliffe died December, 1384, and his enemies could now only vent their spleen by malicious words. One monkish fulmination reads:

"On the feast of the passion of St. Thomas of Canterbury, John Wycliffe, the organ of the Devil, the enemy of the Church, the idol of heretics, the restorer of schism, the storehouse of lies, the sink of flattery, being struck by the horrible judgement of God . . ."

The frustrated fury thus expressed by those who realised that they had been cheated of their prey is thus manifest. Their curious mixture of vicious vindictiveness and utter childishness later found occasion for satisfaction when "forty years later by a decree of the Council of Constance, the old Reformer's bones were dug up, burnt, and thrown into the river."

Thus was satisfied the honour of the "custodians of the Bible," whose conduct was fitting for wilful and nasty children but unworthy of grown men.

"DEATH FIRES"—"KEN AND KEPE WELL"

The followers of Wycliffe, however, were not so fortunate. Their living flesh, not their unconscious dust, had to suffer the "paine" which Wycliffe knew was sure to come upon those whose only crime was a desire to "ken and kepe well Holie Writ." And as one writer observes, commenting on an extract from the preface of Wycliffe's Bible—"to suffer joiefulli some paine for it at the laste":

“What a meaning that prayer must have gained when the readers of the book were burned with copies round their necks, when men and women were executed for teaching their children the Lord’s Prayer and the ten commandments in English, when husbands were made to witness against their wives, and children forced to light the death-fires of their parents, and possessors of the banned Wycliff Bible were hunted down as if they were wild beasts.”

Thus acted these “custodians of the Bible” without whose good offices we should never have had the Bible! The puerile absurdity and wicked impudence of such a claim will be evident to anyone who will take the trouble to read an outline of church history through the ages.

But by now Wycliffe and other bold spirits in England and other lands had kindled the torch of religious reform which all the machinations of Rome were unable to extinguish.

Wycliffe’s Bible was the last to be handwritten, for soon after this, printing was invented, and this was to prove too great a mountain to be moved by the efforts of Bible-burning bishops. There was also at this time a revival in learning of the Hebrew and Greek languages which had been neglected for centuries owing to the domination of the Latin church in Western Europe. Here then were three things: a widespread desire for church reform—a renaissance of learning, and—the printing press!

WILLIAM TYNDALE, MARTYR, 1477-1536

Into this propitious period was born noble William Tyndale, to whom, under the hand of God, we owe so much. The secret of Tyndale’s superhuman achievements was a deep and burning determination to see the English people instructed in God’s precious word. To this end he devoted all his energies and great scholarship.

“With consistent and unswerving purpose, he devoted his whole life to this one work; and through dangers and difficulties, amid enemies and treacherous friends, in exile and loneliness, he accomplished it.”

When Tyndale’s intention became known he soon found that England was an unsafe place for him. Determined not to be turned aside from his self-imposed and sacred

mission, he chose the life of an exile by seeking asylum in Germany. Here, in the comparative, but not actual, safety of a country which was ahead of England in religious reform, Tyndale settled down to his labour of love. After many vicissitudes Tyndale produced a printed copy of the New Testament, directly translated from the original Greek manuscripts available to him.

Tyndale had thousands of copies printed and sent to his beloved England which he had so reluctantly left, and which he was destined never to see again. In order to escape detection these testaments had to be smuggled into the country hidden in bales of cloth and sacks of flour. Not all thus escaped discovery, for :

“Thousands of copies were thus seized in these various disguises and were burned with solemn ceremony at the old cross of St. Paul’s as ‘a burnt offering most pleasing to Almighty God’.”

FANATICAL FRIARS

The printing press, however, was to prove the undoing of the Church. The money paid by the Bishop of London in buying copies of Tyndale’s Bible to burn was finding its way back, through agents, to Tyndale who, thus enriched, turned out more copies than ever and was also enabled to proceed to the translation of the Old Testament from the original Hebrew. (See chart.)

Thus frustrated they could only resort to preaching sermons against Tyndale’s work—and what sermons! A sample of the ignorance of the fanatical friars at this time is the following “exposure” of Tyndale’s work :

“There was a new language discovered called Greek, of which people should beware, since it was that which produced all the heresies; that in this language was come forth the New Testament, which was full of thorns and briars: that there was another new language, too, called Hebrew, and they who learned it were turned into Hebrews.”

Another friar, Buckingham by name, is reported to have preached thus :

“When the simple man reads the words, ‘If thine eye offend thee pluck it out and cast it from thee,’ incontinent

he will pluck out his eyes, and so the whole realm will be full of blind men, to the great decay of the nation and the manifest loss of the King's grace. And thus by reading of the Holy Scriptures will the whole realm come into confusion."

A PATHETIC OLD MAN

Wycliffe had been fortunate enough to escape their clutches, but this time the Church caught their victim alive. It appears that a traitorous priest named Phillips wormed his way into unsuspecting Tyndale's confidence and then betrayed him to papal agents. He was taken to a castle at Vilvorde near Brussels, and thrown into a dungeon. During this time this pathetic old man wrote a moving letter to the Governor. It shews the straits to which he had been reduced for no other crime than a burning zeal for the word of the living God. He writes:

"To beg your Lordship, and that by the Lord Jesus, that if I am to remain here during the winter, you will request the procureur to be kind enough to send me from my goods which he has in his possession a warmer cap, for I suffer extremely from a perpetual catarrh, which is much increased by this cell. A warmer coat also, for that which I have is very thin; also a piece of cloth to patch my leggings—my shirts too are worn out."

Thus this voluntary exile was now a prisoner in a foreign land in the hands of men devoid of compassion, who, after punishing him by a protracted imprisonment, brought him to the stake where he was strangled and burnt, September, 1536.

His great work survived him, however, and today the world benefits from it. But how few shew their appreciation by treasuring and prizing this precious volume which we have in our mother tongue, and for which men like Tyndale have bled and died.

A writer many years ago declared: "The zeal of those Christian days seems superior to this our day, and to see the travail of them may well shame our careless times." If that were true in those relatively zealous days, how much more is such a statement true of these our modern times?

REFORM FEVER

At the time of Tyndale's death on the continent the reform fever was spreading throughout England and the bishops were unable to ignore the popular clamour for a free reading of the Bible in English.

Added to this, King Henry VIII's personal quarrel with the Pope led to a breakaway from Rome and the establishment of an independent Church of England. Henry, now willing to offend Rome, supported the plea for a national Bible, and he found time-serving, servile bishops, willing to help forward the project.

William Tyndale had already done the work thoroughly and well, but the odium of his name still attached to his work, and the possibility of the bishops acknowledging his translation after all they had said about it and done to it, was out of the question.

But the few Bibles which followed after Tyndale were little more than editions of Tyndale's work, and they all eventually found their final expression in our Authorised Version, which was made at the command of James I in 1611.

Although the Authorised Version is a monumental work which has profoundly influenced English life and literature as nothing else has, on account of the dignity and purity of its English style, we must remember that further study and knowledge has shewn that still much was left to be desired. Apart from the inevitable obsolescence of words, after three centuries, there is also the fact that the same Greek word of frequent repetition in one chapter is rendered by two or more English synonyms. This, while contributing to euphony, often detracts from the pointed meaning of word repetition. Again, there are a variety of Greek words rendered by only one English word, so that our knowledge of what an apostle really wrote suffers in consequence.

Another important thing to remember is the paucity of old manuscripts and versions available to the translators of 1611. The principal old manuscripts which have since become available for the scholars who gave us our Revised Version, 1881-5, are shewn on our chart. They are the VATICAN MANUSCRIPT about 350 A.D. and at present at the Vatican in Rome; THE SINAITIC MANUSCRIPT about 350

A.D. and now in the British Museum; and the ALEXANDRIAN MANUSCRIPT somewhere after 400 A.D. and also in the British Museum.

THE VATICAN, SINAITIC AND ALEXANDRIAN MANUSCRIPTS

Two of these three manuscripts were probably known to the Authorised translators, but they were not available for the work. The third, the Sinaitic, had not then been discovered.

How un-get-at-able the Vatican Manuscript must have been in 1611 is well illustrated by the efforts of recent scholars to study it. Sir Frederick Kenyon tells us:

“ In 1843 Tischendorf, after waiting for several months, was allowed to see it for six hours.

“ In 1845 the great English scholar Tregelles was allowed indeed to see it but not to copy a word. His pockets were searched before he might open it, and all writing materials were taken away. Two clerics stood beside him and snatched away the volume if he looked too long at any passage!”

In 1867, however, Tischendorf, as a result of spending fourteen days collating difficult readings or passages, was able to publish the most perfect edition of the Vatican Manuscript which had yet appeared.

Since then a photographic facsimile copy has made its contents the common property of the world's scholars (1889-90). Thus we see that the revisers of 1881 at least had the work of Tregelles to help them with the Vatican Manuscript.

“ WAITING TO BE BURNED ”

Next we have the Sinaitic Manuscript, undiscovered in the days of the Authorised but made available in time for the Revised Version. The history of this version, like that of the Vatican, reflects little credit on the “ Bible's custodians.” This time the jailers were so ignorant as not to recognise their prisoner; the reason being that it was written in the “ new language ” which had been “ invented ” —Greek!

Dr. Tischendorf, a German scholar in search of ancient

manuscripts, visited the monastery of St. Catherine at Sinai. There he saw some sheets of old vellum filled with Greek characters. He recognised what they were and, not disguising his surprise, asked what they were doing in the wastepaper basket! The reply was, "They are waiting to be burned!"

He managed to obtain possession of about forty sheets. In his fear lest others should be burned he warned the monks of their great value. This warning prevented the acquisition of the other sheets for fifteen years (1859). But eventually, with the good offices of Tsar Alexander II, some decorations, and 9,000 roubles, the monks were persuaded to part with their treasure which, apart from the labours of Tischendorf, would have stoked the fires in the monastery furnaces!

The third ancient manuscript available for the Revised Version is the Alexandrian Manuscript. This was in possession of Cyril Lucar, the Greek Patriarch of Constantinople. Cyril Lucar presented it to the English king Charles I in 1628, just seventeen years too late for the Authorised Version.

RESURRECTED MANUSCRIPTS

By this time also the Samaritan Version had come to light. So effectively had it become lost that men questioned the reliability of the references made to it by early writers, and began to disbelieve in its existence. But in 1616 a traveller, Pietro della Valle by name, found a complete copy of the Samaritan Pentateuch in Damascus. Since that time many more have been found and now contribute their share to the testimony of other resurrected witnesses. Then, in addition to the re-appearance in Europe of the Syriac Version, of which we have already spoken, there are now the voluminous writings of the Early Fathers.

"These Early Fathers quoted Scripture so largely in their controversies that it has been said, if all the other sources of the Bible were lost, we could recover the greater part of it from their writings."

Thus, you see, the Revisers had the ancient manuscripts and the recovered Syriac and Samaritan Versions, not to

mention the Egyptian, Ethiopic, etc., and the writings of the Fathers also, all of which combined to make our Revised Version a very reliable document.

There was also something else very important, and that was the enormous growth in textual criticism. This scientific comparison and study of various renderings is sometimes known as "Lower Criticism." Lower Criticism confines itself to the study and comparison of the text of Scripture, while "Higher Criticism" is applied to the "substance or contents of a book."

This "Lower Criticism" has done, and is doing, much good work, which is more than we can say of "Higher Criticism," as the reader of our Archaeological chapter will have realised. This result has been arrived at by allowing full and free debate, made possible by the religious freedom gained for us by the early reformers.

Like all enquiry, Bible criticism has had to suffer at the hands of extremists. But truth has nothing to fear from investigation; only time is required for the Bible to emerge triumphantly from the most penetrating examination.

Sir Frederick Kenyon, speaking from long and wide experience, says:

"The history of Biblical criticism, as of all ancient history and literature, is full of erroneous views confidently proclaimed, eagerly accepted by those who wish to appear in the vanguard of advance, and then disproved or allowed to sink into obscurity."

We have seen how this has been so in our Chapter Two. Then Sir Frederick, summing up the findings of modern research—a process which we believe will go on indefinitely—says:

"The tendency of modern research has been, again and again, to CONFIRM THE SUBSTANTIAL INTEGRITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE BIBLE RECORD."

Altogether then, for the reasons we have outlined, our present English Bible, the Revised Version, is a remarkable and decisive document—the finding of three very early manuscripts, the rediscovery of the Samaritan and Syriac versions, the use of the writings of the Early Fathers,

the growth in knowledge of Hebrew and Greek, and the discovery of a host of manuscripts of all ages. have made it so.

EGYPTIAN MANUSCRIPTS

Knowledge has not stood still since 1881. Many years ago Sir Frederick Kenyon expressed a belief that on account of the dryness of Egypt's climate we might yet hope to find buried papyrus manuscripts of an earlier date than our ancient vellum copies of 350 A.D. His hopes have now been realised in a great flood of literary riches. PYPYRI DOCUMENTS HAVE BEEN FOUND WHICH TAKE OUR NEW TESTAMENT TEXT RIGHT BACK TO THE DAYS OF THE APOSTLES OF CHRIST.

Speaking of this new accession of wealth Sir Frederick says:

“In 1895 only one Biblical text on papyrus was known . . . now the papyri have gone far to fill the gap between the dates when the New Testament books were written and the earliest extant vellum copies.”

Then Sir Frederick makes a very telling comparison with the very fragmentary evidence which we have for the writings of the early classical writers. He notes that critics accept them as authentic on very few manuscripts. He says:

“Scholars are satisfied that they possess substantially the true text of the principle Greek and Roman writers whose works have come down to us, of Sophocles, of Thucydides, of Cicero, of Virgil; yet OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR WRITINGS DEPENDS ON A MERE HANDFUL OF MANUSCRIPTS, WHEREAS THE MANUSCRIPTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT ARE COUNTED BY HUNDREDS, AND EVEN THOUSANDS.”

Then reverting to the modern discovery of Egyptian papyri he says:

“The last fifty years (1941) . . . The discoveries of papyri in Egypt have materially reduced the gap between the earliest extant manuscripts of the New Testament and Septuagint and the date at which the original books were written. They have established with a wealth of evidence which no other work of ancient literature can even approach, the substantial

authenticity and integrity of the text of the Bible as we now possess it."

Then in further explanation of the significance of these recent Egyptian finds of papyri Sir Frederick says:

"The Vatican and Sinaitic carry us back, as we have just seen, to about the middle of the Fourth Century—say A.D. 350—and the papyri a century earlier. But the New Testament was translated into Syriac and into Latin by about A.D. 150, and into Egyptian somewhere about A.D. 200; and the copies we now possess of these versions are lineal descendants of the original translations made at these dates . . . If we can ascertain with certainty what were the original words of the Syriac or Latin translations, we can generally know what was the Greek text which the translator had before him; we know, that is, what words were found in a Greek manuscript which was extant in the first half of the second century, and which cannot have been written very far off from A.D. 100.

OUR INCOMPARABLE VERSIONS

All things fairly considered, we can confidently affirm that in our incomparable English Revised Version we have a book which conveys the exact meaning of the original languages as far as one language can express another.

To those thoroughly acquainted with Hebrew and Greek and able to read in these tongues, the gain is doubtless great, especially when it is remembered that textual criticism is in such a sound position that men of sober judgment are quite sure that questionable readings have been reduced to a small minimum.

Sir Frederick Kenyon, formerly Director of the British Museum, after a long life devoted to these studies, and knowing all the facts as we can never hope to know them, could sum up his life-long findings by declaring:

"THE CHRISTIAN CAN TAKE THE WHOLE BIBLE IN HIS HAND AND SAY WITHOUT FEAR OR HESITATION THAT HE HOLDS IN IT THE TRUE WORD OF GOD, handed down without essential loss from generation to generation throughout the centuries."

That is the keynote of our chapter—the authenticity of our English Bible. We have it in another language, it is true, than those in which it was originally written, but we have it essentially as God gave it.

Here then, armed with a threefold assurance, we can proceed with the utmost confidence.

Archaeology has proved Bible history to be true—
Prophecy has proved the Bible to be divinely inspired—
The manuscripts prove that, in our mother tongue, we possess that Bible today.

What more can an intelligent and reasonable reader ask of us before following with keen interest and anticipation what is to follow?

CHAPTER FIVE

PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANS AND MODERN CHRISTIANITY

Part 1

THE CHURCH, THE BIBLE AND YOU—THE FOUNDER OF
CHRISTIANITY—HIS LIFE AND TEACHING—PRIMITIVE
CHRISTIANS AND THE HISTORIANS—IMMORTAL SOULISM—
THE HOLY TRINITY—HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF
THE APOSTATE CHURCH TO THE SEVENTH CENTURY.

*“The time will come when they will not endure sound
doctrine.”—Paul.*

East and West, black and white, heat and cold, good and evil, present no greater contrast than do early Christians with modern Christianity.

The object of this chapter is to demonstrate this truth, and, by it, separate once and for all the Bible from organised religion.

Organised Christianity is differently viewed by different persons. The Romanist, for instance, regards the Church as divinely sanctioned, guided, and established by God. The Protestant believes it to have been a good church gone wrong but put right again by the Protestant Reformation. The Rationalist considers it to be a lot of hocus-pocus, a religion admittedly founded on a pious Jew, but later used as an excuse to establish an autocratic system of fraud and violence, by means of which rulers have been able to impose their wills on the subservient masses with the active aid of a crafty priesthood.

We hope it won't shock you too much, but, with the

exception of the very early days of the Christian movement, we believe the Rationalist to be nearest to the truth.

Whatever your particular attitude to the Church may be, it is an institution which cannot be ignored. It must be duly considered and taken into account by every thinking man.

Our aim is to account for it, in order that we may remove it from the path as an obstacle which is in the way of our inquiry after truth. For indeed we must remove it if we would gain the ear of the intelligent sceptic, and persuade him to give the Bible an unbiased hearing, which he will never do in his present frame of mind.

Orthodox believers may say they have no wish to see it removed, for there is no such need. That is just where the orthodox are wrong. For while they are misled into believing pagan fables they are effectively excluded from every Scriptural hope; in fact—alienated from the life of God through ignorance.

The Bible can never be understood while it is in the suffocating embrace of an apostate church. The Bible and the Church are inseparably connected in the popular mind, so that the very mention of the Bible provokes powerful and immediate prejudice because of this inveterate association.

FIGS FROM THISTLES

Dr. Blunt, Bishop of Bradford, recently complained that the only *real* argument against Christianity was the conduct of the Christians, and, says he, in judging Christians:

“The ordinary man . . . tends remorselessly to apply the criterion that a tree is known by its fruits.”

How unkind of him! And this, says Dr. Blunt, is “the only really solid argument” he has. But are there not some things, my dear bishop, that only need *one* solid argument? If I pointed you to a field of healthy thistles and told you they were figs, you would doubtless reply: “Do men gather figs from thistles?” Your reply would be indisputably conclusive. The “ordinary man” is right, dear Bishop Blunt, for the “ordinary man’s” judgement has

the authority of him whose servant you profess to be. He said:

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing . . . YE SHALL KNOW THEM BY THEIR FRUITS. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit . . . WHEREFORE BY THEIR FRUITS YE SHALL KNOW THEM.” (Matt. 7. 15-20.)

But let us hasten to correct an error—the bishop’s error. The “ordinary man,” while having an unanswerable argument against the Church, does not thereby discredit Christianity, because the Church is *one* thing, while Christianity is *quite* another. We hope the “ordinary man” will be interested in the evidence we shall advance to prove our point.

SOLEMN WARNINGS

We hope to shew the “ordinary man” that far from the waywardness of the Church disproving the Christian religion, it is, on the contrary, an evidence of its truth; because in the official records of Christianity there are plain and unmistakable forecasts of this very state of affairs of which the “ordinary man” complains. In the development of this great apostate system we are provided with another opportunity to test Bible prophecy, a subject upon which we have already had something to say.

If there were no great system of corrupt Christianity in the world today; if Christians were united in their original primitive belief and practices; then many New Testament prophecies would be hopelessly and completely disproved. Then truly would the “ordinary man” have a powerful case not only against the Church but indeed against the Bible and Christianity itself. We cannot do better, before passing on, than to reproduce some of these warning apostolic expectations of which we speak.

The apostle Paul, on his way to Jerusalem, was at Miletus, and from there he sent for the elders of the Ephesian church. Having arrived, he addressed them as follows:

PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANS AND MODERN CHRISTIANITY 105

“I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more . . . Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers . . . For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also OF YOUR OWN SELVES SHALL MEN ARISE, SPEAKING PERVERSE THINGS, TO DRAW AWAY DISCIPLES AFTER THEM.” (Acts 20. 25-30.)

Such was Paul’s divine foreknowledge of the apostacy which was to come. Then in his epistles addressed to Timothy, who was an elder at Ephesus, he writes on the same subject:

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that . . . SOME SHALL DEPART FROM THE FAITH . . . Speaking lies in hypocrisy; . . . Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats . . . refuse profane and old wives’ fables.” (1 Tim. 4. 1-7.)

“In the last days . . . men shall be lovers of their own selves . . . Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.” (2 Tim. 3. 1-4.)

It is evident that Paul was not speaking of the heathen world, by which they were surrounded, for these vices were commonplace with them and not, matters which would form the subject of prophetic warning. Paul was of course speaking of men who would profess Christianity. All doubt of this is removed by the words which follow in verse 5:

“Having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof.”

Then he adds a command for those who would preserve the truth in its purity:

“from such turn away.” (2 Tim. 3. 5.)

“Shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.” (2 Tim. 2. 16.)

“EVIL MEN AND SEDUCERS SHALL WAX WORSE AND WORSE, deceiving and being deceived.” (2 Tim. 3. 13.)

“The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts (desires) shall they heap to themselves teachers . . . AND THEY SHALL TURN AWAY THEIR EARS FROM THE TRUTH, AND SHALL BE TURNED UNTO FABLES.” (2 Tim. 4. 3-4.)

Then lastly we have Paul’s letter to the Thessalonian church in which he clearly foretells the development of apostate practice which would end in the elevation of the Pope as the “man of sin”:

“That day (the return of Christ to the earth) shall not come, except there come a falling away (Gk. *apostasia*: apostacy) first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; WHO OPPOSETH AND EXALTETH HIMSELF above all that is called God, or that is worshipped . . . Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with ALL POWER AND SIGNS AND LYING WONDERS, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness . . . And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should BELIEVE A LIE.”

(2 Thess. 2. 3-11.)

The reader will learn something of the terrible significance of these terse words before our chapter concludes.

OFFICIAL RECORDS

As a preliminary to our main enquiry we now turn to the official records of the Christian movement. From these we learn that the founder of Christianity was Jesus Christ.

The detailed record of his life and teaching is contained in four biographies by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John respectively. The rest of the New Testament, particularly the Acts of the Apostles, furnishes us with similar details concerning the immediate disciples of Jesus Christ, and the early Christians.

From the New Testament we now propose to extract a digest of the nature and beginning of Christianity. In order to assist the reader's mind, by the clearness which comes from continuous narrative, uninterrupted by continual quotations, we are putting the narrative in the left-hand column, while sample proof-passages are added on the right. For the present the subjects will be merely touched upon, in order to present a comprehensive view, but later we propose to enlarge upon them.

Jesus Christ was a Jew, descended from Abraham, in a direct line through David.

Jesus was the lawful heir to David's throne as king of the Jews.

“The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, THE SON OF DAVID, THE SON OF ABRAHAM.” (Matt. 1, 1.)

“The Lord God shall give unto him THE THRONE OF HIS FATHER DAVID.”

(Luke 1, 32.)

Jesus himself claimed the distinction of being Israel's king.

This claim was believed by large numbers of Jews.

By the intrigue of the "bishops" of his day, the Scribes and Pharisees, he was put to death on a charge of treason against Cæsar.

This great tragedy was not chance, however, but part of God's plan which required Jesus to be a sacrifice for sin at his first appearing.

Thus man's wickedness did not effect God's purpose.

After being raised from the dead,

"Art thou a king then? . . . I am a king, TO THIS END WAS I BORN."

(John 18, 37.)

"Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king."

(John 6, 15.)

"Hosannah: Blessed is the king of Israel."

(John 12, 13.)

"Thou (Jesus) art THE KING OF ISRAEL."

(John 1, 49.)

"If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend: WHOSOEVER MAKETH HIMSELF A KING SPEAKETH AGAINST CÆSAR."

(John 19, 12.)

"Shall I (Pilate) crucify your king? The chief priests answered, WE HAVE NO KING BUT CÆSAR."

"BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD, which taketh away the sin of the world."

(John 1, 29.)

"CHRIST DIED for our sins ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES." (1 Cor. 15, 3.)

"(Jesus) being delivered by THE DETERMINATE COUNSEL AND FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD, ye have taken and by WICKED HANDS have crucified and slain."

"(God) RAISED UP JESUS our Lord FROM THE DEAD."

(Rom. 4, 24.)

He ascended into heaven, from whence he is to return.

Then he will raise his sleeping friends.

And reward the faithful with a share in his throne.

These things constituted the "Gospel of the kingdom of God" which Jesus preached.

Belief of this gospel and baptism followed by a righteous life were required of all Christ's disciples.

Christ's personal character was sinless.

An ideal at which he required his followers to aim.

"This same Jesus which is TAKEN UP FROM YOU INTO HEAVEN, SHALL SO COME in like manner as ye have seen him go." (Acts 1, 11.)

"The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves SHALL HEAR HIS VOICE AND SHALL COME FORTH." (John 5, 28.)

"Ye which have followed me . . . when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, YE ALSO SHALL SIT ON TWELVE THRONES."

(Matt. 19, 28.)

"Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and WE SHALL REIGN ON THE EARTH."

(Rev. 5, 10.)

"(Jesus) went throughout every city and village preaching and shewing the GLAD TIDINGS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD." (Luke 8, 1.)

"HE THAT BELIEVETH and is BAPTISED shall be saved."

(Mark 16, 16.)

"KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS." (John 14, 15.)

"(Jesus) DID NO SIN, neither was guile found in his mouth." (1 Pet. 2, 22.)

"Which of you convinceth me (Jesus) of sin?"

(John 8, 46.)

"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye

Jesus taught his disciples to preach and practise, in his absence, the virtues of love, meekness,

non-retaliation to evil,

and to observe a strict equality among themselves.

should follow his steps.”

(1 Pet. 2, 21.)

“If ye know these things happy are ye if ye do them.” (John 13, 17.)

“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye HAVE LOVE ONE TO ANOTHER.” (John 13, 35.)

“Blessed are the MEEK.”

(Matt. 5, 5.)

“LOVE YOUR ENEMIES, bless them that curse you.”

(Matt. 5, 44.)

“Whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister; and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.”

(Mark 10, 43-44.)

“One is your master, even Christ; and ALL YE ARE BRETHREN.”

(Matt. 23, 8.)

FAITHFUL DISCIPLES

The immediate followers of Jesus taught exactly the same things, that:

Jesus came as a sacrifice at his first appearing.

Jesus was the future king of Israel and eventually of the whole world.

They plainly taught his resurrection from the dead,

“At the end of the ages hath he been manifested to put away sin by THE SACRIFICE OF HIMSELF.”

(Heb. 9, 26 R.V.)

“(God) hath appointed a day in the which he will judge (rule) the world in righteousness by that man (Jesus) whom he hath ordained.” (Acts 17, 31.)

“Him (Jesus) God raised up the third day and shewed

His ascension, and return to this earth:

That there would be a resurrection of his dead friends,

and association in his throne for the faithful.

These immediate followers of Jesus were godly men, like their Master, who could invite others to follow their example, and who

would exclude all evildoers from their assemblies.

They also inculcated a strict equality among believers.

him openly . . . even to us who did eat and drink with him after HE ROSE FROM THE DEAD." (Acts 10, 40-41.)

"HE (God) SHALL SEND JESUS CHRIST, which before was preached unto you. Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution." (Acts 3, 20-21.)

"There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust."

(Acts 24, 15.)

"If we suffer WE SHALL ALSO REIGN with him."

(2 Tim. 2, 12.)

"The saints shall judge (rule) the world."

(1 Cor. 6, 2.)

"Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as YE HAVE US FOR AN ENSAMPLE."

(Phil. 3, 17.)

"BE YE FOLLOWERS OF ME, even as I also am of Christ."

(1 Cor. 11, 1.)

"We command you, brethren . . . that ye WITHDRAW YOURSELVES from every brother that walketh disorderly." (2 Thess. 3, 6.)

"All of you be SUBJECT ONE TO ANOTHER."

(1 Pet. 5, 5.)

In their general descriptions of a Christian's life and duties, we find them making repeated use of such words as: "Love, gentleness, patience, kindness, forbearance, forgiveness, mercy, meekness, pure, just, good report, honesty, virtue, faith, temperance."

PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANS

These beliefs and practices were in active operation among the early Christians. This is confirmed by outside testimony. Gibbon, the famous author of "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," who, by the way, was an unbeliever, testifies to the blameless morals of the early believers. He also refers to what was to him their peculiar doctrine of non-retaliation to evil. He speaks of:

"The pure and austere morals of the Christians."

Chapter 15.

"The Primitive Christians were dead to the business and pleasures of the world." Chapter 15.

Gibbon then comments on this puzzling doctrine of non-retaliation, which is no puzzle to the reader of Christ's commands:

"The defence of our persons and property they knew not how to reconcile with the patient doctrine which enjoined an UNLIMITED FORGIVENESS OF PAST INJURIES . . . nor could their humane ignorance be convinced that it was lawful on any occasion to shed the blood of our fellow-creatures, either by the sword of justice or that of war." Chapter 15.

Of the strict equality of Christians in the government of their churches or assemblies (for the Greek word "ecclesia" rendered "church" in our Authorised Version is an assembly of called out persons, not a building) Gibbon declares:

"Independence and equality formed the basis of their internal constitution."

"The primitive bishops were considered only as the first of their equals, and the honourable servants of a free people."
Chapter 15.

So much then for that end of our story: the beginning, the primitive, the pure.

Now what of this end, after a lapse of 2,000 years? If today the "ordinary man" asks to see the Christians, he is pointed to "The Church." Then, as Bishop Blunt complains, he insists on seeing "fruit"—meekness, love, non-retaliation. He expects to see Christians who are "dead

to the world's pleasures," separate from the world's politics; instead of which he sees pride and love of pre-eminence; archbishops living in palaces, and complaining that they have a job to make ends meet on £15,000 a year; bishops sitting in the House of Lords, and helping to make the country's laws, accepting its honours, and encouraging its armies at war in their work of killing fellow "Christians." Seeing this and much more, Bishop Blunt says, the "ordinary man" is "puzzled"; and well he might be! The Bishop doubtless dislikes the publicity which the advance of independent democratic institutions has shed upon the Church's sordid history. But the day when the light of inquiry could be quenched has passed with the rack and the faggot.

We now propose enlightening the "ordinary man" still more by enquiring into the Church's pedigree. This may serve to "explain" the church as he sees it today, and so lessen his "mystification" even if it increases his contempt, which it doubtless will.

CAREFULLY SELECTED WITNESSES

Owing to the graveness of our charge we must be careful in the selection of our witnesses. The chief one upon whom we shall rely is Dr. Mosheim, who has written an ecclesiastical history of world-wide repute. His work, as far as we are aware, has never seriously been called in question. What is more, Dr. Mosheim was a clergyman whose sympathies were with the church, and who denounces as "heretics" many dissenting bodies of the early centuries, who, we have good reason to believe, contained many primitive Christians. Be this as it may, the learned doctor does not write to please us, neither would we wish it; his testimony suits our purpose well as it stands, because he writes as an accredited historian. Century by century, beginning with the first, he unfolds the history and development of the Christian church. We cannot do better than follow him in this chronological sequence and learn how every Christian virtue was outraged, and every Christian doctrine corrupted, by the substitution of unblushing paganism.

You will recall the list of New Testament words descrip-

tive of Christians and Christianity. It will be well to keep them in mind for the purpose of making a contrast, for you will find that Mosheim finds little or no occasion to make use of them. Rather in his description of *his* "Christians" and *his* "Christianity" does he have continual recourse to such ugly words as :

"Fraud, forgery, voluptuousness, profligacy, sensual, avaricious, corruption, vice, villainy, arrogance, domination, tyranny, ignorance, crime, dissoluteness, robbery, revelry, licentiousness, debauchery, depravity, force, cunning, enormities, hatred, cruelty, bribery, rancour, violence, craftiness, murder, monsters, abandoned, poisoning."

Such words of evil import, bad in their solitary setting, are certainly not improved when placed in their historical context. To that sordid task we now apply ourselves with the able help of Dr. Mosheim. It will then be seen that if the ingenuity of the reader can add any words to our degraded list they will all be comprehended in one word—Rome!

Our pages will now be taken up largely by quotations from Mosheim. We trust that the reader will find them interesting and instructive.

"CLEAR AS THE NOON DAY"

In his description of First Century Christianity, Mosheim uses similar descriptions to Gibbon. By these he shews the early church to have been exactly what a careful reading of the New Testament would have led us to expect. Of the equality which prevailed among the early Christians Mosheim says :

"In those primitive times, each Christian church was composed of the people, the presiding officers, and the assistants or deacons . . . THE HIGHEST AUTHORITY WAS IN THE PEOPLE or the whole body of the Christians . . . THE ASSEMBLED PEOPLE, therefore, ELECTED THEIR OWN RULERS AND TEACHERS."

"THE PEOPLE DID EVERYTHING that is proper for those in whom THE SUPREME POWER OF THE COMMUNITY is vested."
(Century 1. Pt. 2, Ch. 2.)

This equality extended to their churches; they too were

equal in authority, and independent of any central jurisdiction.

“ALL THE CHURCHES in these primitive times WERE INDEPENDENT . . . It is as clear as the noonday, that all Christian churches had EQUAL RIGHTS, and were in all respects ON A FOOTING OF EQUALITY.” (Century 1, Pt. 2, Ch. 2.)

WOLVES ENTER THE SHEEP-FOLD

The inspired apostle Paul knew that this condition of affairs would not last, for already, while he lived, he had to contend with various heresies of those “who concerning the truth had erred” in different ways. How much more then would this tendency to error increase when his restraining influence was removed. Thus his prophetic utterance to the elders of the Ephesian church:

“I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you . . . Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.” (Acts 20, 29-30.)

It seems incredible that such things could happen, at least *so* soon. History, however, verifies the apostle’s prediction, for, after Paul’s departing, Mosheim says:

“Christian churches had scarcely been gathered and organised, when here and there MEN ROSE UP, who, not being contented with the simplicity and purity of that religion which the apostles taught, attempted innovations and FASHIONED RELIGION ACCORDING TO THEIR OWN LIKING . . . So long as the greater part of the apostles were alive, to watch over the churches, these innovators were not very successful.”

(Century 1, Pt. 2, Ch. 5.)

These restraints being finally removed, when the last of the inspired apostles passed off the scene, error advanced with rapid strides. None, we believe, lived to see the beginning of the next century, and of this Second Century Mosheim says:

“The philosophers and learned men who came over to the Christians in this century, were no inconsiderable protection and ornament to this holy religion” (but) “. . . the NOBLE SIMPLICITY AND MAJESTIC DIGNITY OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

WERE LOST . . . when these philosophers (brought) faith and piety under the dominion of human reason."

(Century 2, Pt. 1, Ch. 1.)

The particular philosophy here referred to was the Platonic, which takes its name from Plato, a Grecian philosopher who flourished during the Fifth Century B.C., or six centuries earlier than the time of which Mosheim here speaks. Plato, together with his brother philosopher Socrates, is responsible, more than any other, for the doctrine of the immortality of the soul being introduced into the Christian church. This was done, of course, not by Plato and Socrates, who lived centuries earlier, but by their disciples who lived in Christian times.

THE CARDINAL ERROR OF CHRISTENDOM

This pagan doctrine—yes, *pagan* doctrine—of the immortality of the soul is the cardinal error of Christendom upon which their whole superstructure of lies is built. Without this for a foundation their carefully erected and cunningly devised system of heaven-going-at-death, hell-torments; and purgatory, collapses like a child's sand-castle before the incoming tide. It is the oldest lie in the world; its real author is the serpent in Eden, when, contrary to God's declared intention, he knowingly declared:

"Ye shall *not* surely die."

Plato and Socrates did but dress it up in learned philosophic garb; the lie is still essentially the same, poetically expressed by "Christian" poets:

"There is no death, what seemeth so is transition."

This belief in a disembodied existence somewhere after death has been almost universal among the nations of antiquity. The notable exception to this rule was the Jews. And it was the Jews, mark you, dear reader, who alone had a revelation from God in their Scriptures. This is a singular and significant fact. Even Gibbon stays to remark upon it; says he:

"The doctrine of the immortality of the soul is OMITTED IN THE LAW OF MOSES." Chapter 15.

This, we unhesitatingly affirm, is also true of the New Testament. For as Jesus said when he summarised his mission and teaching, "I came not to destroy the law but to fulfil"; while Paul declared that he taught "None other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come." (Acts 26, 22.)

A HEATHEN FICTION

These truths have been strikingly confirmed by many modern scholars who have set themselves the task of finding evidence for the immortality of the soul in the Scriptures. They have all drawn a blank. One, an Archbishop, confessed :

"In the Word of God no such doctrine is found."

The truth is, the immortality of the soul is an old heathen fiction invented by benighted men to account for something they could not otherwise understand. A writer in Chambers's Encyclopedia comments as follows :

"IN THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN RELIGION THE IDEA OF IMMORTALITY FIRST ASSUMES A DEFINITE SHAPE. There is a clear recognition of a dwelling place of the dead . . . With the progress of Hellenic thought, a higher idea of the future is found to characterise both the poetry and philosophy of Greece, till IN THE PLATONIC SOCRATES, THE CONCEPTION OF IMMORTALITY SHINES FORTH WITH IMPRESSIVE CLEARNESS AND PRECISION.

"In the Apology and the Phœdo Socrates discourses of the doctrine of the soul's immortality in language at once rich in faith and beauty: 'THE SOUL, THE IMMATERIAL PART, being of a nature so superior to the body, CAN IT,' he asks in the Phœdo, 'as soon as it is separated from the body, BE DISPERSED INTO NOTHING AND PERISH?' . . .

"THE SOUL DEPARTS INTO THAT INVISIBLE REGION which is of its own nature, the region of the divine, the immortal, the wise, and then its lot is to be happy in a state in which it is freed from fears and wild desires, and the evils of humanity, AND SPENDS THE REST OF ITS EXISTENCE WITH THE GODS'."

Chambers's Ency. Vol. 6, page 88.

"SOMETHING MUST BE SOMEWHERE"

Surely a modern churchman could describe *his* beliefs

no better nor any differently. The reason? Pagan philosopher and modern churchman are akin. And now here are the findings of another famous philosopher, Aristotle, whose teaching has profoundly influenced the theologians:

“Aristotle declares that all men have a conception of gods, and that all agree in placing their habitation in the most elevated region of the Universe. The Egyptian, the Scandinavian, the Assyrian, and ALL PRIMITIVE RELIGIONS MAINTAIN THE EXISTENCE OF A HEAVEN AS THE PLACE OF REWARD AFTER DEATH FOR VIRTUOUS LIVES LIVED ON EARTH; and indeed it may be taken as the universal corollary to the UNIVERSALLY HELD BELIEF IN THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.”

Chambers's Ency. Vol. 5, page 612.

That is it. A “Universal corollary”: the one implies and indeed demands the other. If a soul is immortal it *must* therefore always exist. When the body dies the immortal soul, ejected from its house of clay, is homeless; and as something must be somewhere, a place of new abode must be found for it. Hence heaven has become the “universal corollary,” to the “universally held belief in the immortality of the soul.” Here then is the origin, and here are the fathers of the gospel-nullifying error: Plato, Socrates, and Aristotle.

Summing the matter up, Mosheim declares:

“This (Platonic) philosophy was adopted by such of the learned at Alexandria as WISHED TO BE ACCOUNTED CHRISTIANS AND YET RETAIN THE NAME, THE GARB, AND THE RANK OF PHILOSOPHERS.” (Century 2, Pt. 2, Ch. 1.)

PHILOSOPHY PREVAILS

A faithful section of the Christians earnestly contended against this dangerous innovation. They knew to where it would lead, by the warnings they had received. Not being flattered by the learned condescension of heathen philosophers who would, at a price, pay court to Christianity, they strenuously opposed and denounced the growing apostacy. Thus began an unequal warfare which has continued to this very day.

What could be more telling, in illustration of the warnings of the apostles, than this extract from Mosheim?

“ THIS CULTIVATION OF PHILOSOPHY by Christian teachers greatly DISPLEASED THOSE WHO WERE ATTACHED TO THE ANCIENT SIMPLE FAITH, as taught by Christ and his apostles, for they feared what afterwards actually happened, that the purity and excellence of divine truth would suffer by it. Hence the Christians were divided into TWO PARTIES, THE FRIENDS OF PHILOSOPHY and human learning, and THE OPPOSERS OF THEM.”
 Century 2, Pt. 2, Ch. 1 (footnote).

Then is added this significant sentence :

“ The issue of the long contest between them was, that the advocates of PHILOSOPHY PREVAILED.”

They “ prevailed ” not by the weight of Scripture testimony, for there was none, but by the decrees of councils; just as they did in the dispute about the nature of Christ, at the Council of Nicea. The Council proclaimed its judgment and henceforth all dissenters were hunted down as heretics. We have an illustration of this method in a declaration of a canon passed by the Council of Lateran :

“ Some have dared to assert, concerning the nature of the reasonable soul, that IT IS MORTAL; we, with the approbation of the sacred Council, do condemn and reprobate all such, seeing ACCORDING TO THE CANON OF POPE CLEMENT THE FIFTH, THE SOUL IS IMMORTAL; and we strictly inhibit all from dogmatising otherwise; and we decree that all who adhere to the like erroneous assertions shall be shunned and punished as heretics.” (Caranza, page 412, 1681.)

“ THE POPE CONSENTETH UNTO HEATHEN DOCTRINE ”

Nothing is so calculated to open one’s eyes to the true character of the church than an intelligent grasp of what happened in these early days of Christianity of which Mosheim treats. It makes one exclaim, “ Ah, now I can see how it all happened, the Christianity of Christ and his apostles simply became overwhelmed by a flood of heathen philosophy.” Mosheim further declares :

“ THIS NEW SPECIES OF PHILOSOPHY, imprudently adopted by Origen and other Christians, DID IMMENSE HARM TO CHRISTIANITY. For it led the teachers of it to involve in philosophic obscurity many parts of our religion, which were in themselves plain and easy to be understood; and to ADD TO THE PRECEPTS OF

THE SAVIOUR NOT A FEW THINGS OF WHICH NOT A WORD CAN BE FOUND IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES . . . It recommended to Christians various foolish and useless rites, suited only to nourish superstition, no small part of which we see religiously observed by many even to the present day . . . (it) produced a heterogeneous species of religion, consisting of Christian and platonic principles combined." (Century 2, Pt. 2, Ch. 1.)

This is exactly the charge made by William Tyndale, the reformer and translator of the Bible. He says:

"In putting departed souls in heaven, hell, and purgatory, you destroy the arguments wherewith Christ and Paul prove the resurrection . . . The heathen philosophers denying (the resurrection) did put that souls did ever live. And the Pope joineth the spiritual doctrine of Christ, and the fleshly doctrine of philosophers together—things so contrary that they cannot agree . . . And because the Pope consenteth unto heathen doctrine, therefore he corrupteth the Scriptures to establish it."

Where are the William Tyndales today? They have ceased to be found in the ranks of the clergy. Nevertheless they do still exist.

Mosheim testifies that this and other foolish beliefs caused Christianity to be treated with contempt by the intelligent pagans of the time. He says:

"It alienated the minds of many, in the following centuries, from Christianity itself." (Century 2, Pt. 2, Ch. 1.)

CHRISTIANITY RENDERED INCREDIBLE

This revolt is still to be seen today, and is expressed in a reported remark of the Duke of Grafton:

"It is apparent to me that the Christian religion has been corrupted from very early times, and that these corruptions have been mistaken for essential parts of it, and have been the cause of rendering the whole religion incredible."

That sums up our quarrel with the Church today. They have brought true religion into disrepute by their own counterfeit which masquerades as Christianity. Our task is to expose them and so clear away one of the biggest stumbling blocks in the way of the "ordinary man's" acceptance of the Bible.

Mosheim next deals with the practice of calling councils, which began in the second century, and which resulted in so much evil. These councils were composed of representative delegates from the various churches. They met together and formed ecclesiastical laws, or canons. What they really accomplished is best described in his own words:

“These councils . . . changed nearly the whole form of the Church. For in the first place, the ANCIENT RITES AND PRIVILEGES OF THE PEOPLE were, by them, very much ABRIDGED; and on the other hand, the influence and AUTHORITY OF THE BISHOPS WERE NOT A LITTLE AUGMENTED.” (Century 2, Pt. 2, Ch. 2.)

By the THIRD CENTURY, one great fundamental truth of Christianity, *i.e.*, Christ's reign on earth, which we briefly demonstrated at the opening of our chapter, was discarded by many Christians. Mosheim's testimony is:

“That the Saviour is to reign a thousand years among men before the end of the world, had been believed by many in the preceding century . . . In this (third) century the Millennarian doctrine fell into disrepute, through the influence especially of Origen, who opposed it because it contravened some of his opinions.” (Century 3, Pt. 2, Ch. 3.)

A “REIGNING SENTIMENT”

Gibbon offers similar testimony concerning this primitive belief of Christ's reign on earth:

“THE ANCIENT AND POPULAR DOCTRINE OF THE MILLENNIUM was intimately connected with the second coming of Christ . . . Though it might not be universally received, it appears to have been THE REIGNING SENTIMENT OF THE ORTHODOX BELIEVERS . . . But, when the edifice of the church was almost completed, the temporary support was laid aside. The doctrine of Christ's reign upon earth was at first treated as a profound allegory, was considered by degrees as a doubtful and useless opinion, and was at length REJECTED AS THE ABSURD INVENTION OF HERESY AND FANATICISM.” (Decline & Fall, chapter 15.)

With this renunciation of plain Scripture testimony came the adoption of unscriptural ceremonies and unheard-of doctrines. Of the ceremonies Mosheim says:

“All the monuments of this (third) century which have

come down to us, shew that there was a great increase in ceremonies." (Century 3, Pt. 2, Ch. 4.)

While, as an illustration of the adoption of heathen doctrines, we have that of the "Holy Trinity", of which the historian writes:

"The controversies respecting the divine Trinity, which commenced in the preceding century, FROM THE TIME WHEN GRECIAN PHILOSOPHY GOT INTO THE CHURCH, had a wider spread in this century and produced various methods of explaining that doctrine." (Century 3, Pt. 2, Ch. 5.)

This foolish and self-contradictory doctrine persists to this day, and is defended by nearly every sect of non-conformity as well as by the church "by law established." It is defended but never explained, universally admitted to be "inexplicable" and "above reason," incapable of demonstration—a "holy mystery."

From now on the pace of declension accelerated. Of the FOURTH CENTURY Mosheim writes:

"THE BISHOPS . . . gradually subverted and changed the ancient principles of church government. For they first EXCLUDED THE PEOPLE ALTOGETHER FROM HAVING A VOICE IN ECCLESIASTICAL AFFAIRS . . . so that *they* now controlled everything at *their* discretion." (Century 4, Pt. 2, Ch. 2.)

PAGANISM ENCOURAGED

Next we have the beginnings of shrine and relic worship in which the Roman Church still specialises. Says Mosheim:

"Next from Palestine . . . portions of dust or earth were brought, as if they were the most powerful protection against the assaults of evil spirits: and these were bought and sold everywhere at great prices. Further, THE PUBLIC SUPPLICATIONS, BY WHICH THE PAGANS WERE ACCUSTOMED TO APPEASE THEIR GODS, WERE BORROWED FROM THEM AND WERE CELEBRATED IN MANY PLACES WITH GREAT POMP. To the temples, to water consecrated in due form, and to the images of holy men, THE SAME EFFICACY WAS ASCRIBED . . . as had been attributed to the pagan temples, statues and lustrations *before* the advent of Christ."

(Century 4, Pt. 2, Ch. 3.)

Thus was Christianity becoming openly pagan. Indeed

pagan practices were now encouraged to attract more readily the pagans, and so swell the numbers of the Christian ranks. Incredible—but true. Listen again to Mosheim :

“The Christian bishops introduced . . . into the Christian worship, those rites by which, formerly, the Greeks and Romans . . . had manifested their piety and reverence towards their imaginary deities; SUPPOSING THAT THE PEOPLE WOULD MORE READILY EMBRACE CHRISTIANITY . . . There was, of course, LITTLE DIFFERENCE in these times BETWEEN THE PUBLIC WORSHIP OF THE CHRISTIANS AND THAT OF THE (PAGANS) . . . IN BOTH there were splendid ROBES, MITRES, TIARAS, WAX TAPERS, CROSIERS, PROCESSIONS, LUSTRATIONS, IMAGES, GOLDEN AND SILVER VASES, and innumerable other things alike.”

(Century 4, Pt. 2, Ch. 4.)

Or, as Professor John William Draper declares, it was simply Grecian mythology revived, for the Greeks had,

“Statues of Minerva that could brandish spears, paintings that could blush, images that could sweat, and endless shrines and sanctuaries at which miracle cures could be performed . . . In short, almost the whole of paganism is converted and applied to popery.”

The Conflict between Religion & Science, page 39.

In the FOURTH CENTURY many began to press their trinitarian beliefs upon their resisting brethren. Such a ridiculous spectacle did they present in arguing how three could only be one, and one could truly be three, each and all co-equal and co-eternal, that comedians were presenting burlesques of the controversy on the stage at Alexandria in Egypt. Thus the whole foolery, of a son being the same age as his father, was held up to ridicule, and religion brought into contempt.

Those who denied this absurd doctrine were styled Arians by their opponents. And in illustration of the fanatical superstition into which men had at this time fallen, we have the Trinitarians bringing forward dead men's bones to help confound the Arians. Mosheim says:

“Ambrose, in controversy with the Arians, brings forward persons possessed with devils (insane) who are constrained when the relics of Gervasius and Protasius are produced, to cry out, that the doctrine of the (Trinity) is true and divine, and the doctrine of the Arians false and pernicious.”

(Century 4, Part 2, Ch. 3.)

ARIAN CONTROVERSY

This "Arian controversy," as it was called, reached such alarming proportions that the Roman Emperor, Constantine the Great, called a council to settle the matter. The outcome of this famous Council of Nicea, A.D. 325, was the Nicene Creed which was intended to define authoritatively the teaching of Scripture upon this abstruse subject of the Trinity. Here are one or two extracts from it:

"I believe in . . . one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, Begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God, Begotten not made, Being of one substance with the Father . . ."

All dissentients from this jargon were now treated as heretics. Later, about the fifth century, this creed was further elaborated by the production of the Athanasian Creed. Its folly will best be seen by reproducing the first half, which is relevant to our subject:

"Whosoever will be saved: before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholick Faith.

"Which faith except everyone do keep whole and undefiled: without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.

"And the Catholick Faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity;

"Neither confounding the Persons: nor dividing the Substance.

"For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son: and another of the Holy Ghost.

"But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one: the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal.

"Such as the Father is, such is the Son: and such is the Holy Ghost.

"The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate: and the Holy Ghost uncreate.

"The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible: and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible.

"The Father eternal, the Son eternal: and the Holy Ghost eternal.

"And yet they are not three eternal: but one eternal.

"As also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated: but one uncreated and one incomprehensible.

“ So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty: and the Holy Ghost Almighty.

“ And yet they are not three Almighties: but one Almighty.

“ So the Father is God, the Son is God: and the Holy Ghost is God.

“ And yet they are not three Gods: but one God.

“ So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord: and the Holy Ghost Lord.

“ And yet not three Lords: but one Lord.

“ For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity; to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord;

“ So are we forbidden by the Catholick Religion: to say, there be three Gods, or three Lords.

“ The Father is made of none: neither created, nor begotten.

“ The Son is of the Father alone: not made, nor created, but begotten.

“ The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son: neither made nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.

“ So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts.

“ And in this Trinity none is afore, or after other; none is greater or less than another;

“ But the whole three Persons are co-eternal together; and co-equal.

“ So that in all things, as is aforesaid: the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped.

“ He therefore that will be saved: must thus think of the Trinity.”

It is interesting to read a Catholic apologist's defence of the framing of this and similar metaphysical nonsense. The Rev. E. R. Hill, S.J., says:

“ NEW DOCTRINES WERE PERIODICALLY ADDED TO THE CHURCH'S TEACHING. Certainly MORE DOCTRINES ARE TAUGHT AS FAITH TODAY THAN WERE TAUGHT AS OF FAITH BY THE APOSTLES. The question leads to the idea of the development of doctrine. Catholics believe that the Church never develops into a doctrine anything that was not originally a part of Christ's revelation. But a development can take place in clearness and definiteness of expression. Peter would have told us that our Lord was God and man but, he would hardly have been able to express his doctrine in the terms of the . . . Athanasian Creed because that kind of language was not in use in St. Peter's day.”

(“ What the Catholic Church is and what she teaches,” page 12.)

“MUDDLE-HEADED APOSTATES”

How thankful we are that “that kind of language was not in use in Peter’s day”! Fancy a Bible written in the gibberish of the Athanasian Creed; a book of such a size would be absolutely unreadable. Then the sublime self-assurance of “Father” Hill! Peter, an inspired apostle and companion of Jesus, was unable to express himself with “clearness and definiteness of expression” although speaking by the power of the Spirit of God. So it is left to muddle-headed apostates of the fifth century to make his meaning clear to poor mankind!

Indeed men *must* believe it if they would be “saved,” yet it is admittedly “incomprehensible.” How a man can believe what he cannot understand, even if he were willing, we have yet to learn. But there, this is but one of the countless follies and inconsistencies of this nonsensical religion.

Thus men accept and defend man-made creeds which they confess their inability to understand, and yet will reject, out of hand, clearly defined Bible doctrines. Take the following extract, attributed to Bishop Beveridge, as an example of the blind unreasoning assent to childish dogma of the benighted church of earlier times. He says:

“I ever did and ever shall, look upon those apprehensions of God to be truest, whereby we apprehend Him to be the most incomprehensible . . . I think myself the more obliged to believe: especially this mystery of mysteries, The Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity, which I am far from being able to comprehend . . . That the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, should be Three, and yet One; but One and yet Three! O Heart-amazing, thought-devouring inconceivable mystery! Who cannot believe it to be true?”

What logic, to be sure! The more *unbelievable* it is the more *likely* it is to be true. “Inconceivable,” even “incomprehensible,” yet it *must* be so—“who *cannot* believe it to be true?” Knowing what we do we feel more inclined to enquire in amazement—“who *can*?”

Passing along now to the FIFTH CENTURY we find the ambitious Church, not satisfied with converting individuals to “Christianity,” now begins to make converts of tribes and nations by the conversion of the nation’s leaders.

The first of these was Clovis, king of the Franks. In order to impress his barbaric followers with the divine character of this occasion, "lying wonders" were unblushingly employed:

"The miracles reported on this occasion (the baptism of Clovis) are unworthy of credit,"

says Mosheim, and continues:

"In particular the greatest of them, the descent of a dove from heaven with a phial full of oil . . . is either a fiction, or, as I think, more probable, a deception craftily contrived for the occasion. For such pious frauds were much resorted to in that age . . . to captivate more readily the minds of the barbarous nations." (Century 5, Pt. 1, Ch. 1.)

When we realise that the "Christian" clergy had descended to such depths of deceit, we are less surprised when we read the testimony of the historian concerning their low personal morals at this time:

"Of the vices of the whole clerical order, their luxury, their arrogance, their avarice, their voluptuous lives, we have as many witnesses as we have writers of integrity and gravity in this age whose works have come down to us."

(Century 5, Pt. 2, Ch. 2.)

We have now travelled far from the "pure" and "austere" lives of early Christian leaders; and "like priest like people" is a saying well illustrated in this case, for, says Mosheim:

"These stains on the character of the clergy would have been deemed insufferable, had not most of the people been sunk in superstition and ignorance, and had not all estimated the rights and privileges of Christian ministers by those of the ancient priests." (Century 5, Pt. 2, Ch. 2.)

PRIMITIVE SIMPLICITY GONE

The primitive simplicity of Christianity had now gone beyond recall. The people had "heaped to themselves teachers" who had turned them from truth to the most childish and ridiculous "fables."

Indeed, to be a primitive Christian now, in faith or practice, was to be condemned by the dominant party of Christians, that party which had prevailed owing to the evil work of the philosophers. So says Mosheim :

“ That devout and VENERABLE SIMPLICITY OF THE FIRST AGES OF THE CHURCH, which taught men to believe when God speaks and to obey when God commands appeared to most of the doctors of this age to be UNPHILOSOPHICAL AND BECOMING ONLY IN THE VULGAR.” (Century 5, Pt. 2, Ch. 3.)

Thus, as foretold, “ evil men and seducers ” had completely obscured the truth, and in its place substituted “ fables.” Mosheim says of them :

“ They did not so much explain, as INVOLVE IN GREATER OBSCURITY and DARKEN WITH AMBIGUOUS TERMS AND INCOMPREHENSIBLE DISTINCTIONS, the deep mysteries of revealed religion.”

These men preferred mysteries. And what was plain and easy to be understood was soon turned into a mystery, for it was the mysteries which paid the big dividends. By a skilful handling of these with “ feigned words ” they were able, true to the apostolic forecast, to “ make merchandize ” of the people.

“ Most of the interpreters . . . DESPISING THE GENUINE AND OBVIOUS MEANING of the Scriptures, SEARCH AFTER ABSTRUSE SENSES, or what the Latins of that age called mysteries, in the plainest passages and sentences of the Bible.”

(Century 5, Pt. 2, Ch. 3.)

Religious fanaticism now ran riot. Men sought notoriety and a reputation for peculiar sanctity by “ behaving,” as Mosheim says, “ like madmen.” Many became what are known as pillar saints. They spent their lives, like Lord Nelson in Trafalgar Square, perched on the tops of specially erected columns. Mosheim tells us of one :

“ Simeon of Sisan . . . who was first a shepherd, and then a monk; who, in order to be nearer heaven, spent thirty-seven years in the most uncomfortable manner on the tops of five different pillars, of six, twelve, twenty-two, thirty-six, and forty cubits elevation; and in this way procured for himself immense fame and veneration.” (Century 5, Pt. 2, Ch. 3.)

—a reward which no reasonable mind will begrudge him, we feel sure. As for getting him “nearer to heaven,” we must demur. The extent to which men will ignore what God requires in order zealously to follow their own misguided dictates is truly wonderful.

Each surprise seems to prepare us for the next, although we sometimes feel that we are reading the diary of an asylum attendant instead of the sober narration of actual happenings. We are told that “Christianity conquered Paganism”; we wonder when we read the following:

“AS NO ONE IN THOSE TIMES OBJECTED TO CHRISTIANS RETAINING THE OPINIONS OF THEIR PAGAN ANCESTORS, respecting the souls, heroes, demons, temples, and the like, and then transferring them into their devotions; as NO ONE PROPOSED UTTERLY TO ABOLISH THE ANCIENT PAGAN INSTITUTIONS, BUT ONLY TO ALTER THEM SOMEWHAT, AND PURIFY THEM; it was unavoidable that the religion and worship of Christians should in this way become corrupted.” (Century 5, Pt. 2, Ch. 3.)

Of course it was “unavoidable.” As unavoidable as a barrel of bad apples turning a good one bad. For whoever yet heard of a good apple turning a barrel of bad ones good? This same error was manifest later during the period of the Reformation. Then the reformers did not seek to “abolish” Catholicism but only to “alter it somewhat” and “purify” it. To such an experiment we can add the comment of Mosheim, “It was unavoidable that the religion and worship of Christianity should in this way become corrupted.”

Mosheim, now overwhelmed by the evidence of wholesale apostasy which he had collected of this fifth century, says:

“To recount all the regulations made in this century respecting the mode of worship and religious rites and institutions would require a volume of considerable size . . . Public worship everywhere assumed a form more calculated for show . . . The magnificence of the temples had no bounds. Splendid images were placed in them . . . the image of the Virgin Mary holding her infant in her arms, occupied the most conspicuous place.” (Century 5, Pt. 2, Ch. 4.)

Thus began “mariolatry,” practised to this day in the Catholic Church. Something more sinister also made its

appearance at this time, a doctrine which has since caused untold mental misery to millions, a doctrine which could never have survived apart from the universal acceptance of the great lie—the immortality of the soul. We refer to the doctrine of Hell torments and Purgatory.

Thus Mosheim concludes his review of the fifth century with these words:

“This also will I add, that the doctrine of the purification of souls after death by means of some sort of fire . . . obtained, in this age, a fuller development and greater influence.”
(Century 5, Pt. 2, Ch. 3.)

EMERGENCE OF THE “POPE”

The competition among the bishops for pre-eminence and priority, had by this time resolved itself into an unhallowed contest between the remaining two for supreme headship of the Church.

With the advent of the SIXTH CENTURY, circumstances favoured the elevation of the Bishop of Rome to the coveted position of headship at the expense of his only remaining rival, the Bishop of Constantinople. In this century the ambitions of the lesser clergy continued to grow upon what they were fed. Thus Mosheim declares:

“The clergy were previously in possession of high privileges and great wealth, and the superstition of this century added considerably to both. For it was supposed that sins might be expiated by munificence to churches and monks; and that the prayers of departed saints, which were most efficacious with God, might be purchased by presents offered to them, and by temples dedicated to their names. This increase in wealth and privileges was accompanied with an equal increase of the vices usually attendant on affluence, in the clergy of all ranks from the highest to the lowest.” (Century 6, Pt. 2, Ch. 2.)

Then we have a reminder of the apostle’s warning that “evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving” (the people) and themselves “being deceived” (by God), for, as another prophecy foretold, in consequence of wilfully perverting God’s truth, God would send them judicial blindness that “they should believe a lie.” And so it is, as Mosheim testifies:

“THE BARRIERS OF ANCIENT SIMPLICITY AND TRUTH BEING ONCE VIOLATED, THE STATE OF THEOLOGY WAXED WORSE AND WORSE; and the amount of impure and superstitious additions to the religion of Christ is almost indescribable . . . Those who instructed the people at large, made it their SOLE CARE TO IMBUE THEM MORE AND MORE WITH IGNORANCE, SUPERSTITION, REVERENCE FOR CLERGY, AND ADMIRATION OF EMPTY CEREMONIES . . . Nor was this strange; for the blind—that is, persons for the most part grossly ignorant and thoughtless—were leaders of the blind.” (Century 6, Pt. 2, Ch. 3.)

Then Mosheim, continuing his, or rather Christ’s, telling analogy of “blind men,” declares of this sixth century:

“AN ACCURATE KNOWLEDGE OF RELIGIOUS DOCTRINES and a simple lucid exposition of them, NO ONE WILL EXPECT FROM TEACHERS OF THESE TIMES. MOST OF THEM REASONED AS BLIND MEN DO ABOUT COLOURS.” (Century 6, Pt. 2, Ch. 3.)

And these men, dear reader, are the august ancestors of the Catholic Church, through whom “infallible judgment” on divine revelation has been transmitted to the present occupant of “St Peter’s Chair” in Rome! Mark it and consider it well, now, and in the more telling evidence to follow, and ask yourselves as men of sense and reason, *Can it be so?* Has God chosen such foul conveyers of his pure revelation? Can heavenly wisdom spring from such tainted sources of gross error and foolishness? Do men gather figs from thistles? Answer these questions by the help of Mosheim’s testimony:

“To endure hunger and thirst without repining and go naked about the country like mad-men . . . this was accounted holy and glorious. The less anyone resembled a man of rational and sane mind, the more confidently might he hope to obtain an honoured place among the heroes and demi-gods of the Church.” (Century 6, Pt. 2, Ch. 3.)

So closes the history of the Sixth Century.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANS AND MODERN
CHRISTIANITY

Part 2

HISTORY OF DEVELOPMENT OF APOSTATE CHURCH FROM THE SEVENTH CENTURY TO REFORMATION—INDULGENCIES—THE REFORMATION—PURGATORY—VAGARIES OF MODERN PROTESTANTS—CHURCH CONFLICT WITH MODERN PROGRESS—
THE BIBLE AND THE CHURCH SEPARATED.

“Signs and lying wonders.”—Paul.

Of the SEVENTH CENTURY in general Mosheim observes :

“During this century, TRUE RELIGION LAY BURIED UNDER A SENSELESS MASS OF SUPERSTITION. The earlier Christians had worshipped only God and His Son, but those CALLED CHRISTIANS in this age WORSHIPPED THE WOOD OF A CROSS, THE IMAGES OF HOLY MEN, AND BONES OF DUBIOUS ORIGIN.”

“Did anyone hesitate to believe? Two irrefragable arguments were at hand: the authority of the Church, and miracles.”
(Century 7, Pt. 2, Ch. 3.)

The “authority of the Church”: the main plank in Catholic propaganda to this day; their last word on all things is the authority of the Church. But with such ancestors, what a church! and, with such a church, what authority!

Of these alleged “miracles,” Mosheim, with the best of reason, declares that to work them in “these times of ignorance but a moderate share of dexterity was requisite.”

They were in fact clerical legerdemain—conjuring tricks

or, to describe them scripturally and prophetically, they were "lying wonders."

Of the EIGHTH CENTURY Mosheim records a waxing "worse and worse":

"Suddenly . . . the idea became universally prevalent, that the PUNISHMENTS FOR SIN which God threatens . . . MAY BE BOUGHT OFF BY LIBERAL GIFTS . . . in order to avoid the . . . penances . . . and yet be secure against the evils that threatened to overtake them after death."

(Century 8, Pt. 2, Ch. 2.)

This pernicious teaching, as we shall see later, led to the scandalous traffic in indulgences. Of the wealth that accrued to the avaricious church Mosheim says:

"This was the principal source of those immense treasures, which from this century onward flowed in upon the clergy, the churches, and the monasteries."

These rich suppliants of divine mercy, such as "Emperors, kings and princes,"

"Transferred to bishops . . . whole provinces, cities and castles . . . Thus persons whose business it was to teach contempt for the world, both by precept and example, unexpectedly became Dukes, Counts, Marquesses, Judges, Legislators, Sovereign Lords, and . . . even marched out to war at the head of the armies."

If we do not allow its gradual growth to obscure the facts, but keep in mind the early picture of Christianity with that with which we are now making a contrast, then it indeed presents an amazing spectacle. Of religion itself during this period, Mosheim observes:

"THE TRUE RELIGION OF JESUS CHRIST, if we except a few dogmas contained in their creeds, WAS WHOLLY UNKNOWN . . . even to the teachers of the highest rank; and all orders of society . . . neglecting the duties of true piety . . . fearlessly gave themselves up to every vice and crime, supposing that God could easily be appeased . . . by the intercession and prayers of the saints and by the kindly offices of the priests."

(Century 8, Pt. 2, Ch. 3.)

Of the NINTH CENTURY Church history, a characteristic extract from Mosheim declares:

“How great were the ignorance and perverseness of this century appears from the single fact of the extravagant and STUPID VENERATION PAID TO SAINTS, AND TO THEIR BONES AND CARCASSES . . . The priests and monks were most successful in . . . fabricating the names and histories of saints that never existed; so that they might have patrons enough for all the credulous and senseless people . . . (these saints were) phantoms of their own creation, or . . . delirious persons who they supposed had led very holy lives, because they had lived like fools or madmen.” (Century 9, Pt. 2, Ch. 3.)

A TERRIBLE RECORD

Of the TENTH CENTURY, Mosheim witnesses to the moral degradation into which bishops, and even the bishop of bishops, had sunk: men in whom was supposed to reside the Holy Spirit guiding them into all truth, and who were supposed to perpetuate, and pass on, an infallible headship over the pure Church of Christ. The utter blasphemy of such claims is horrifying to a mind read in Scripture truth. As well might a city sewer claim to be the fount of a pure mountain stream. “Successors of Peter,” “vicars of Christ,” indeed! Consider the testimony of the historians. Mosheim:

“Nothing is more incontrovertible, than that the clergy . . . was composed principally of men who were illiterate, stupid and ignorant of everything pertaining to religion, libidinous, superstitious and flagitious . . . NOTHING CERTAINLY CAN BE CONCEIVED OF, SO FILTHY, OR SO CRIMINAL AND WICKED, THAT THESE SUPREME BISHOPS (popes) OF THE CHURCH WOULD DEEM INCOMPATIBLE WITH THEIR CHARACTERS; nor was any government ever so loaded with vices of every kind as was that which bore the appellation of the most holy.”

“That the history of the Roman Pontiffs of this century is a HISTORY OF MONSTERS, A HISTORY OF THE MOST ATROCIOUS VILLAINIES AND CRIMES, is acknowledged by all writers of distinction, and even by the advocates of popery.”
(Century 10, Pt. 2, Ch. 2.)

This last statement of Mosheim, if true, is very important, for if apologists are forced to recognise it, then we can depend that it happened beyond any possible shadow of doubt. Doubt would be seized upon and weaved into a plausible defence. But the truth of Mosheim's remark can easily be demonstrated by actual quotations from modern

Catholic writers. Mr. S. Lilley, an English Roman Catholic, is quoted by A. E. Barnett as declaring of these popes:

“They lived for the most part rather like monsters or wild beasts than bishops, is Mabillon’s judgment of them . . . John XII, accused publicly, and apparently on too good grounds, of homicide, perjury, sacrilege, of incest with his relations and two sisters, of drinking wine in honour of the devil, and of invoking in gambling, Jupiter, Venus, and other demons . . . But violence and impurity were not the only scandals which disgraced the chair of Peter. Simony was no less conspicuous; and it passed into a proverb that everything in Rome had its price . . . John XIX, who had himself, when a mere layman, purchased the Popedom upon the death of Benedict VIII, offered to confer the title of Universal Bishop upon the Patriarch of Constantinople for a pecuniary consideration. His successor, Benedict IX, who is stated to have been ordained at the age of twelve, after a career of which, according to the chronicles, the chief incidents were ‘many vile adulteries and murders perpetrated by his own hand’, resolved to wed his first cousin, and finding that public opinion would not tolerate a married pontiff, sold the papacy to John Gratian . . . in 1044.”

No one can suspect *this* evidence of being coloured to attack Catholicism.

HARLOTS AT THE VATICAN

Indeed it often happens that a Catholic’s exposure of his Church is more complete than that of Protestant writers. For instance, Mosheim, when dealing with the control that public harlots once exercised at the Vatican, says:

“Theodora, a very lewd woman who controlled all things at Rome, made John X . . . succeed to the papal chair. For at this time, nothing was conducted regularly at Rome, but everything was carried by bribery and violence.”

Or again from Mosheim:

“When (pope) Stephen died . . . Marozia procured for her son, John XI, whom she had by the Roman Pontiff Sergius III, elevation to the chair of St. Peter, and the government of the Church.” (Century 10, Pt. 2, Ch. 2.)

Now, on the other hand, is the quoted testimony of Dr. William Barry, a distinguished English Roman Catholic historian. A. E. Barnett quotes from Dr. Barry’s work, “The Papal Monarchy”, as follows:

“ We shall see the Papacy going down as into the Valley of the Shadow of Death. The Papacy could not have sunk lower at this period. Two wicked women, Theodora and Marozia, made and unmade popes, and feminine usurpation of the Holy See, under whose rule the pontiffs are chaplains, and who might have founded a succession in St. Peter’s Chair could public opinion have looked with favour on a married clergy . . . a pope at sixteen outraged every rule of his order . . . Such is the ignominious period we have now to sketch as rapidly as possible. Intrigue, unreason, violence and murder furnish its dominant notes.”

(*Vide* “ Is the Pope to Rule America?” P.18.)

It is very evident that these evils are open to no whisper of doubt for a *Catholic* historian to write thus. This is a point we wish to impress, and perhaps the best way of impressing it will be to give one more quotation from Dr. Barry; this time from his book, “ The Papacy and Modern Times ”:

“ We come to the election, bought with money and promises, of Rodrigo Borgia, who took, as he said, the ‘ invincible Alexander ’ (Aug. 10, 1492) . . . This Borgia left his name hanging like a thundercloud over the Vatican. He has a legend so black that to relieve it of a single stain may be deemed apologising for iniquity. Yet no pontiff could have dared such crime or earned such an infamous reputation had the Rome, the Italy of his day, not condoned or even admired his ‘ magnificence in sin ’ . . . He was an open profligate who turned the sacred palace into a Pompeian house of pleasure: that he made his bastard son a cardinal, and entrusted the government of the Vatican to his bastard daughter Lucrezia; that murder seemed to dog his footsteps; and that the foulest wickedness was thought credible of him—who is there that has not read these things?”

No wonder these times are historically designated “ The Dark Ages.” And, be it noted, they were the *darkest* while the Church was at the plenitude of her power. Not until her light began to wane by her power being broken did the light of civilization and freedom from intellectual thralldom begin to dawn on Europe.

Of the ELEVENTH CENTURY Mosheim testifies:

“ The licentiousness of this age in buying and selling sacred offices, exceeded all bounds and almost all credibility . . . there seems to be almost nothing appertaining to the church which

is not put upon sale . . . all ecclesiastical offices were at this time as much accounted things vendible, as merchandise is in a common market." (Century 11, Pt. 2, Ch. 2.)

"It is not necessary to be minute in describing the state of the public religion of this age. For who can doubt that it was debased and corrupt when the guardians of it were alike destitute of sacred and secular knowledge, and void of virtue; and even the first men in the church exhibited examples of the grossest vices? The people at large were wholly absorbed in superstition; and concerned themselves with nothing but statues, and images, and relics, the futile rites which the caprice of their priests enjoined upon them."

AN "AUDACIOUS CLAIM"

Thus, another century of tyranny and darkness ran its weary course, bringing us to the TWELFTH CENTURY. This century seems to mark a definite step in the direction of remission of purgatorial sentences called indulgences; a doctrine which has caused mental anguish to poverty-stricken millions who have impoverished their meagre and insufficient resources to secure an imaginary alleviation of the sufferings of their dear ones who had died and were in purgatory.

Thus well-fed priests have fattened upon the poverty of peasants, and still do. Words fail to describe our utter abhorrence of this detestable and God-dishonouring invention.

During this twelfth century, Mosheim says:

"THE BISHOPS . . . ALLOWED TRANSGRESSORS TO BUY OFF THE PENALTIES ENJOINED BY THE CANONS . . . that is they published indulgences . . . The Roman pontiffs, perceiving what advantages the inferior bishops derived from their indulgences . . . began to publish . . . the entire and absolute, or the plenary, remission of all finite or temporal penalties; and THEY CANCELLED . . . THE PUNISHMENTS . . . TO BE ENDURED AFTER DEATH." (Century 12, Pt. 2, Ch. 3.)

In order to make this audacious claim more credible, the popes resorted to a novel and unheard-of explanation of their power thus to remit the purgatorial consequences of people's sins. The popes had the unblushing effrontery to declare:

"There is an IMMENSE TREASURY OF GOOD WORKS, which holy men have performed, over and above what duty required, and

that THE ROMAN PONTIFF IS THE KEEPER AND DISTRIBUTOR OF THIS TREASURE; SO THAT HE IS ABLE, OUT OF THIS INEXHAUSTIBLE FUND, TO GIVE AND TRANSFER TO EVERY ONE SUCH AN AMOUNT OF GOOD WORKS AS HIS NECESSITIES REQUIRE, or as will suffice to avert the punishment of his sins."

THE POPE'S "LEGACY"

Shameful as this is, worse was to come. When Martin Luther was later protesting against this very doctrine of indulgences he was opposed by Cardinal Cajeten, who was said to have declared:

"Thou must believe that ONE SINGLE DROP OF CHRIST'S BLOOD IS SUFFICIENT TO REDEEM THE WHOLE HUMAN RACE, and THE REMAINING QUANTITY that was shed in the garden and on the CROSS WAS LEFT AS A LEGACY TO THE POPE, to be A TREASURE FROM WHICH INDULGENCES WERE TO BE DRAWN." Prof. Draper, 'The Conflict between Religion and Science.' P. 211.

In the THIRTEENTH CENTURY Mosheim tells us of the progress of the claims of papal supremacy over all kings and magistrates:

"They (the popes) perseveringly urged, and with violence, with menaces, and frauds, and force of arms, that fundamental principle of the papal canon law, that THE ROMAN PONTIFF IS THE SOVEREIGN LORD OF THE WHOLE WORLD."

(Century 13, Pt. 2, Ch. 2.)

A HOUSE THAT FLEW!

We are reminded of another notable event of this century by what we recently read of the allied campaign in Italy (during World War II):

"A special correspondent with the Polish forces in Italy reported today that German bombers attacked Basilica of the House of the Holy Family in Loretto on July 5 in moonlight. The Church, which belongs to the Holy See, was damaged, while the House of the Holy Family, reputed to have been brought from Nazareth by angels in 1291, was also hit." News Report.

This House of the Holy Family, which has been a very paying "lying wonder," has an interesting "history." It is dealt with by the Roman Catholic Bishop Kenrick and quoted by A. E. Barnett in "is the Pope to Rule

America?" p. 139. The book is entitled, "The Holy House of Loretto." Mr. Barnett says:

"The authorship of such a book would expose any man, except a priest, to the charge or suspicion of lunacy. This work 'proves' that Queen Helena in 300 A.D. found the house at Nazareth in which Mary was born, lived, received the message of Gabriel and conceived the Son of God.

"In May, 1291, angels carried this house (it is thirty-two feet long, thirteen feet wide, eighteen feet high, with chimney, belfry and walls of stone) through the air, and laid it down on an eminence in Dalmatia, where it attracted wonderful attention and performed miracles of healing.

"On the 10th of December, 1294, the house took another journey. On that night, we are gravely informed by the bishop, 'some shepherds,' who were watching their flocks, beheld a house, surrounded by uncommon splendour, flying across the Adriatic, which separates Dalmatia from Italy. The shepherds waked their companions to see the 'mysterious object' and they all testified that 'it was of a supernatural character.' It pleased 'the Holy House' to rest in a district called Laurentum . . . and hence the name 'the House of Loretto.'

"But the restless little house moved again; . . . in the language of the bishop, 'most extraordinary to relate, this miraculous house was once more transferred, and placed in its present site, a very short distance beyond the property of the unworthy brothers' (who had quarrelled about the rent they were to receive). And there it remains 'to this present.'"

To which we are tempted to add, in true fairy story manner, "and they lived happily ever after"! Surely they are incurably demented to this very day. They live bodily in a modern age but mentally with medieval witches on broomsticks, hobgoblins, and bogey men.

In the FOURTEENTH CENTURY, following the death of Gregory VI, the Roman Church ceased to have one head; indeed,

"During fifty years the Church had two or three heads; and the CONTEMPORARY PONTIFFS ASSAILED EACH OTHER WITH EXCOMMUNICATIONS, maledictions, and hostile measures. The calamities and distress of those times are indescribable. For beside the perpetual contentions and wars between the pontifical factions, which were ruinous to great numbers, involving them in the loss of life or of property, NEARLY ALL SENSE OF RELIGION WAS IN MANY PLACES EXTINGUISHED, and wickedness daily acquired greater impunity and boldness; THE CLERGY, previously corrupt, LAID ASIDE EVEN THE APPEARANCE OF PIETY and godliness, while those who called themselves CHRIST'S

VICEGERENTS WERE AT OPEN WAR with each other; and the conscientious people, who believed no one could be saved without living in subjection to Christ's vicegerent, were thrown into the greatest perplexity and anxiety of mind."

(Century 14, Pt. 2, Ch. 2.)

"In this century also Innocent V commanded Christians to observe festal days, in memory of the spear that pierced Christ's side, of the nails that fastened him to the cross, and of the crown of thorns which he wore at his death."

(Century 14, Pt. 2, Ch. 4.)

CLERICAL TOMFOOLERY

In the next, the FIFTEENTH CENTURY, Mosheim says, "religion was made to consist chiefly in mimic shows and trifling." He then quotes the following to illustrate his point:

"Among the statutes of the cathedral church of Toul, there is an article with the title *Sepelitur Halleluia*. It is well known that, during the seasons of fasting, *Halleluia*, as being an expression of joy, was not sung in the ancient church. Hence, to honour this *Halleluia*, which, in the time of the fasts, was, as it were, dead, a solemn funeral was instituted. On the Saturday night before *Septuagesima Sunday*, children carried through the chancel a kind of coffin, to represent the dead *Halleluia*. The coffin was attended by the cross, incense, and holy water. The children wept and howled all the way to the cloister, where the grave was prepared."

(Century 15, Pt. 2, Ch. 5.)

It was the accumulation of evil practices and the excesses of the clergy that precipitated the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century. As illustrative of the exceeding wickedness of these times we again quote Mosheim on this period:

"A book published in this century contains the tariff of dues to be paid to the papal chancery for all absolutions, dispensations, etc. According to this book, a dean may be ABSOLVED FROM MURDER FOR TWENTY CROWNS. A bishop or abbot may, for 300 livres, commit a murder whenever he pleases. And for one-third of that sum any clergyman may be guilty of unchastity under the most abominable circumstances." (Century 16, Sec. 1, Ch.1.)

A French Catholic divine, Claude Espence, contemporary with the book's publication, writes:

“There is a book extant . . . and is now on sale . . . from which more crimes can be learned than from all the writings concerning the vices; and in which licence is promised to very many, and absolution offered to all purchasers.”

Of the public worship at this time, Mosheim says it

“consisted wholly in a round of ceremonies; and those for the most part vain and useless, being calculated not to affect the heart but to dazzle the eye. Those who delivered sermons (which many were not able to do) filled or rather beguiled the ears of the people, with pretended miracles, ridiculous fables, wretched quibbles, and similar trash, thrown together without judgment.” (Century 16, Sec. 1, Ch. 1.)

As a result of such leadership Mosheim testifies:

“There was, among all classes and ranks, in every country, an amazing ignorance on religious subjects; and no less superstition united with gross corruption of morals.”

WICKEDNESS ENCOURAGED

Mosheim then adds this significant sentence:

“THOSE WHO PRESIDED OVER THE CEREMONIES WILLINGLY TOLERATED THESE EVILS; AND INDEED ENCOURAGED THEM IN VARIOUS WAYS . . . well knowing that their own interests were depending on them . . . for they could see, that IF THE CRIMES and sins of the people WERE DIMINISHED, THE SALE OF INDULGENCES WOULD ALSO DECREASE and they would derive much less revenue.”

Of the extent of the riches accruing to the bishops, from this and similar practices, Mosheim says:

“For the bishops, by corrupt artifices, had gotten possession of so much wealth, so many castles, such revenues, and so great authority, that they were far more powerful than the kings, and were able to govern the whole realm at their pleasure.”

This was the period which witnessed the stirring of Church reformation throughout Europe. It was the period connected with the names of Wycliffe and Tyndale, already noticed in our chapter on the Manuscripts.

The greatest weapon in the hands of the Protestants, as the reformers became known, was undoubtedly the

Bible translated into the common tongue. We have seen how these new versions were stigmatized, by the papal party, in our chapter on Bible Manuscripts. Mosheim says that at that time:

“Unable to face the mortifying and embarrassing fact that men were won over from the papal church by reading the Bible, because they could not find Romish peculiarities in it, the clergy took refuge under the charges of inaccuracy against existing versions.” (Century 16, Sec. 1, Ch. 5.)

The reader will remember how the ignorant friars spoke of the “new language” which had been “invented” (Greek). That such charges exerted a great influence upon those under the papal spell we have no doubt. Indeed the mass of Catholics today still repeat the fallacy of the untrustworthiness of our versions. What their objections are worth in the light of modern investigation and scholarship you already know from our evidence in Chapter Four.

The design of such antiquated charges must be obvious, and they constitute damning evidence against “Christians” who have to resort to such base and medieval falsehoods.

Another typical manœuvre of the wily church at this Reformation period was one savouring of the “lying wonders” of the apostle’s allusion.

At the time when Queen Elizabeth was effecting the Reformation of the Church in Ireland, Mosheim tells us of a service which was being conducted on reformed lines at Christchurch, Dublin. During the reformed service a large image of Christ was observed to be bleeding from the crown of thorns upon his brow.

“The pavement became crowded with prostrate worshippers violently moved; ‘Our Saviour (they said) could not help sweating blood, on seeing heresy thus come into his church.’”
(Century 16, Sec. 3, Pt. 2, Ch. 5.)

But upon investigation of this phenomenon, “a sponge thoroughly soaked in blood was dislodged from the hollow of the figure’s head”—a monk had been responsible for the trickery.

THE REFORMATION

Having thus briefly traced the uprise and development

of the church until the days of the Reformation, it will be interesting to consider briefly the cause which principally precipitated this great upheaval.

Although for many years there had been a smouldering discontent at the more blatant evils of the Roman church, open opposition had been successfully suppressed by means of the infernal secret tribunals of Rome known as the Inquisition.

But at last, in Germany, Martin Luther was able to raise successfully the standard of revolt. He was moved to his great reforming efforts by the activities, in Germany, of a mendicant monk of the Dominican order, named Tetzel. The pope was hard-up for money with which to rebuild the great church at Rome, known as St Peter's, so he commissioned this hardened scoundrel Tetzel to tour Europe selling indulgences to raise the necessary funds. Tetzel's activities are well known to readers of history. The arguments he used in order to sell his nebulous wares for hard cash have been preserved by many writers. The following is an abridged record from various writers:

“ If the earthly treasury of the pope was empty, his spiritual treasury was full; and there was wealth enough there to rear a temple that would eclipse all existing structures, and be worthy of being the metropolitan church of Christendom. In short it was resolved to open a special sale of Indulgences in all the countries of Europe . . . FROM THE SEVEN HILLS OF ROME WOULD FLOW A RIVER OF SPIRITUAL BLESSING. TO ROME WOULD FLOW BACK A RIVER OF GOLD . . . They sought out a suitable person to perambulate Germany and preach up the Indulgences . . . found a Dominican monk named John Tetzel. Tetzel lacked no quality necessary for success in his scandalous occupation. He had THE VOICE OF A TOWNCRIER AND THE ELOQUENCE OF A MOUNTEBANK. This latter quality enabled him to paint in glowing colours the marvellous virtues of his wares . . .

“ When he entered a city Tetzel and his company went straight to the Cathedral. The crowd pressed in and filled the church . . . He bade the people . . . ‘PRESS IN NOW; COME AND BUY WHILE THE MARKET LASTS; should that cross be taken down, the market will close, heaven will depart, and then you will begin to knock, and to bewail your folly in neglecting to avail yourselves of blessings which shall then have gone beyond your reach. INDULGENCES ARE THE MOST PRECIOUS AND THE MOST NOBLE OF GOD'S GIFTS’; then, pointing to the red cross which stood in full view of the multitude, he would exclaim, ‘This cross has as much efficacy as the very

cross of Christ. Come, and I will give you letters all properly sealed, by which even THE SINS YOU *intend* TO COMMIT MAY BE PARDONED. I would not change my privileges for those of St. Peter in heaven, for I HAVE SAVED MORE SOULS BY MY INDULGENCES THAN THE APOSTLE DID BY HIS SERMONS . . . INDULGENCES AVAIL NOT ONLY FOR THE LIVING BUT THE DEAD . . . Priest, noble, merchant, wife, youth, maiden, do you not hear your parents and your other friends who are dead, and who cry from the bottom of the abyss: WE ARE SUFFERING HORRIBLE TORMENTS! A TRIFLING ALMS WOULD DELIVER US; you can give it and will not '."

"GOD HAS RESIGNED; THE POPE REIGNS"

"AT THE VERY INSTANT," continues Tetzels, "THAT THE MONEY RATTLES AT THE BOTTOM OF THE CHEST THE SOUL ESCAPES FROM PURGATORY AND FLIES LIBERATED TO HEAVEN. Now you can ransom so many souls, stiffnecked and thoughtless man; with twelve groats you can deliver your father from Purgatory, and you are ungrateful enough not to save him! . . . I declare unto you, though you have but a single coat, you ought to strip it off and sell it, in order to obtain this grace . . . THE LORD OUR GOD NO LONGER REIGNS; HE HAS RESIGNED ALL POWER TO THE POPE."

These proceedings, although they deceived many, shocked and angered others. Luther pertinently enquired:

"To open the gates of that doleful prison in which so many miserable beings live in flames, and for once make Purgatory tenantless, would be a more sober monument of the grace and munificence of the pope than the most sumptuous temple that he can by any possibility rear in the Eternal City."

"Why does not the pope deliver at once all the souls from Purgatory by a holy charity and on account of their great wretchedness, since he delivers so many from love of perishable money?"

To which the echoes answered, but not the pope—Why?

Purgatory, where souls are supposed to finish off the punishment for their sins committed before they died in order to be purified and made fit for heaven, is dependent for its truth on the generally accepted doctrine of the immortality of the soul. If there is no such thing as an immortal soul; if it is purely an invention of the human mind; if death is an end of all consciousness and (for a time at least) the end of all existence; then, of course, Purgatory simply becomes a monstrous invention of de-

signing priests, used for their own profit, as well as an admirable means of keeping their ignorant devotees in superstitious fear of their power; for men who could get them out of the cleansing and painful fires of Purgatory were not to be lightly offended.

“ BRIBING A POLICEMAN ”

There is no evidence for the existence of such a place as Purgatory. A modern Catholic writer modestly declares :

“ We know nothing with certainty about purgatory, except the fact of its existence, and that it involves a delay in entering heaven till the last relics of sinfulness are purged away.”

How he “ knows ” these things he doesn’t explain, and perhaps it is as well, for him, that he doesn’t. “ Simply affirm and discourage questions ” is a good Catholic motto. In the same strain he continues :

“ We are told nothing of the amount, kind or duration of its purgative processes.”

In which case, you see, you could go on praying *and paying* for the release of someone who had left for another place many years ago. The honest admission that they know nothing of certain aspects of the subject, craftily implies that certain other things *are* known. But *what* other things, and *how* they are known is never mentioned. There is, of course, an excellent reason. From the Roman pontiff to the parish priest they know exactly as much as I know, exactly as much as anyone ever can or ever will know, of something which has absolutely no existence; and that is—nothing! In spite of this, Father E. R. Hill continues :

“ We know, however, that by our intercessions and other good works we can help those detained there. Hence the practice of prayers for the dead, and the application of indulgences to the souls of the departed.”

(“ What the Catholic Church is and what she teaches,” page 30.)

It savours of bribing a policeman to mitigate the sufferings of one of our relatives whom legally constituted

authority has sentenced to certain pains and penalties. But I for one, were I to stoop to bribery, would want to be quite sure first that my relative was really in the Police custody, even if I had doubts about the benefit the cash was really conferring. But to go on paying good money when the said relative is really somewhere altogether different—well, only poor, deluded creatures, victims of papal superstition, could ever be persuaded to part with money for such nebulous benefits.

LOOSING THE PURSE-STRINGS

But other Jesuit writers are not quite so modest in disclaiming knowledge of Purgatory. Things need warming up a little sometimes to melt the heart, fire the imagination, and, above all, loosen the purse-strings.

Quoting from "Two Ancient Treatises on Purgatory," republished in 1893 by the Jesuit Father Morris, A. E. Barnett reproduces the following:

"You must then conceive Purgatory to be a vast, darksome and hideous chaos, full of fire and flames, in which the souls are kept close prisoners until they have fully satisfied all their misdemeanours . . . For God has made choice of this element of fire wherewith to punish souls, because it is the most active, piercing, sensible and insupportable of all others."

Then, as if encouraged by their own fiendish idea of what God would do, and warming to their subject, they continue:

"Good God, how the great saints and doctors astonish me when they treat of this fire, and of the pain . . . (IT) SURPASSES ALL THE TORMENTS THAT ARE TO BE FOUND IN THIS MISERABLE LIFE OF MAN . . . out of which assertion it clearly follows that . . . all the horrible convulsions of the worst diseases—nay, THOUGH YOU JOIN RACKS, GRIDIRONS, BOILING OILS, WILD BEASTS AND A HUNDRED HORSES DRAWING SEVERAL WAYS AND TEARING ONE LIMB FROM ANOTHER . . . ALL THIS DOES NOT REACH TO THE LEAST PART OF THE *mildest* PAINS OF PURGATORY."
(Page 135.)

What a lurid imagination! What nice men, to be sure! The introduction of the "rack," "gridiron" and "boiling oil" seems to reveal the cloven hoof and betray a more

than passing acquaintance with the persuasive measures of fiendish inquisitors who used such things to make men good Catholics and save them from a worse fate in hell.

Doubtless they describe what *they* would do, were they in charge of Purgatory; but to attribute such a place to a just and holy God is a species of blasphemy we can find no words to describe.

But for whom, we enquire, is this delectable place prepared? For the vilest and most abandoned criminals? For manslayers and adulterers? By no means. It is prepared for the overwhelming majority of pious Catholic Christians, for only an infinitesimal few go straight to heaven. Even the Holy Fathers, the popes, have to do time there. Most are probably still there, for Purgatorial fires burn very slowly.

TETZEL'S SPIRIT LIVES ON

This being so, the fate of the wicked in Hell must beggar description. How these Jesuit writers could now describe their sufferings after exhausting their vocabularies on Purgatory it would be interesting to know.

The great difference, we suppose, is that the patient purgatorial penitents are sustained in the fire by the knowledge that it will not be for ever; just a few thousand years, more or less; more in the case, for instance, of the erring popes, whilst the *real* sinners in Hell have no such happy expectation.

However this may be, having got the faithful well primed with the idea, they can now play upon and harrow their maternal, paternal, or filial feelings. Tetzal is dead, but his spirit lives on. We cull the following from Mr. Barnett's book—"Is the Pope to Rule America?":

"I clipped from last week's Catholic Standard and Times the following paragraph. Anything more horribly depressing or better calculated to drive a soul, that can be pitifully stupid enough to accept it, to despair I have never read:

THE POOR SOULS

'The apathy of many Catholics towards the dead would lead one to conclude that they regard purgatory as a place of probation and not of purgation. The souls there detained can gain no new merits for themselves; the time for that

PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANS AND MODERN CHRISTIANITY 147

closed at the moment of death. They are helpless as far as assisting themselves is concerned; and they must rely upon the suffrages of their relatives and friends. The Catholic who is not mindful of the needs of the poor souls has a heart devoid of Christian charity for the most helpless of God's creatures.'

What does all this mean? It means that the apostolic prophecies have come true. It means that before your eyes you have the apostate system which the apostles foretold. It means that here is a practical illustration of the divine forecast:

"Shall they with feigned words make merchandize of you."
(2 Pet. 2. 3.)

Or, in the more prosaic language of our modern world, they are telling lies—for cash!

SWEEPSTAKE FOR SOULS

From this same book and writer we cull the following:

"This notice is taken from a Roman Catholic church in Mexico, where Romanism has all its own way, and shows what it is, apart from all the checks of Protestantism and freedom;

RAFFLE FOR SOULS

'At the last raffle for souls the following numbers obtained the prize, and THE LUCKY HOLDERS MAY BE ASSURED THAT THEIR LOVED ONES ARE FOREVER RELEASED FROM THE FLAMES OF PURGATORY.

TICKET 841: The soul of the lawyer, James Vasquey, is RELEASED FROM PURGATORY and ushered into heavenly joys.

TICKET 41: The soul of Madame Calderon is MADE HAPPY FOREVER . . .

'Another raffle for souls will be held at the same blessed Church of the Redeemer on January 1, at which FOUR BLEEDING AND TORTURED SOULS WILL BE RELEASED FROM PURGATORY, according to the four highest tickets in this most holy lottery. Tickets, one dollar, to be had of the Father-in-charge. Will you for the sum of one dollar leave your loved ones to BURN IN PURGATORY for ages?' (Page 72.)

Thus salvation, which God offers "without money and

without price" (Isa. 55, 1), is made dependent on tickets drawn out of a hat in a low-down sweepstake. Even then only the few "lucky" ones benefit and the rest stay where they are, "bleeding and tortured souls." And the price of a slender chance of release—one dollar!

Leaving Mexico for America the tale is still the same. The spirit of Tetzal still lives, but his methods are a little more refined. The same writer says:

"I received the other day by mail a copy of the St. Vincent's Visitor, published with the approbation of the Right Reverend Charles Edward McDonnall, D.D., Bishop of Brooklyn.

"Here is the attractive, bargain-counter advertisement in large type:

'St. Vincent's Purgatorial Society. For the Living and the Dead.

5508 Masses Offered each Year for its Members.

With the kind permission of the Rt. Rev. Charles E. McDonnall, D. D., Bishop of the diocese of Brooklyn, the Perpetual Membership fee in St. Vincent's Purgatorial Society has been reduced to ten dollars.

This means that all who become members of our Purgatorial Society, whether living or dead, will have read for them each year Five Thousand Five Hundred and Eight Masses.'

"One is tempted to observe here that one mass must be of very small efficacy, or else their members must lead shocking lives to need approximately fifteen masses per day."

HEAVEN ON EASY PAYMENTS

Even poverty must be no excuse. Let poverty sell her rags to gratify avarice. So from the United States of America, the reputed home of purchase by deferred payments, we should expect the appeal to add, for the benefit of its poor devotees—

"Those not in the position to pay the amount of ten dollars in cash may make weekly or monthly payments to suit their own convenience." (Page 72.)

Then after dilating on the merits of the living paying for the dead, the writer suggests that it would be unwise to take chances. Our living relatives may forget us when we die. So now is the time to make personal provision, and put a bit away for the coming rainy day:

“ Even in life and health,” says modern Tetzels, “ there is no better way of providing for the future than by becoming members of the Purgatorial Society. Do not depend upon those whom you may leave after you. Be sure that *you* will not be forgotten after death by becoming a Perpetual Member of the Society at once . . .

Address all communications to:

Rev. William L. Blake,
St. Vincent's Home for Boys,
Brooklyn, N.Y. (P.O. Box 174).”

Although we do not remember seeing anything quite like this in English Catholic periodicals, we do find regular advertisements in them, week after week, promising to say a stated number of masses “ for ever ” for those who forward a cash donation to various causes. Usually it is the building of new churches or the restoration of old ones. Whilst inside the porch of Catholic churches in England you will find an offertory box marked with the words:

“ For the Holy Souls.”

Money is deposited in these boxes, by the well-disposed, to pay for masses to be said for the dead in Purgatory, “ The most helpless of God's creatures ” who cannot pay for themselves. What “ souls ” eventually get the benefit of the cash, we must leave the reader to guess. But whether they be “ holy souls,” we must beg leave to doubt.

By this time the Catholic will feel pretty uncomfortable at these exposures. We are sorry his feelings cannot be spared but the vindication of truth necessitates the exposure of error. If the Catholic be God-fearing, then let him be ashamed of his associations and renounce them; and not be like the thief who is sorry when he is caught, not because of his misdemeanour, but because his crime has been detected.

NEW MANAGEMENT BUT THE OLD BUSINESS

By this time the Protestant may be feeling complacent. He will say, “ Oh yes, we knew all that, but of course our glorious Reformation abolished all these excesses as far as our church in this country is concerned, for the Reformation was designed to re-establish primitive Christianity.” The Protestant has no cause for complacency, however, for

whatever the Reformation aimed at it certainly never accomplished.

The Reformation, begun with such good intentions, was soon exploited for political ends by temporal princes who desired to break the power of Rome. Dissolute rulers became its champions; sanguinary wars were fought to ensure its success. In England Henry VIII made use of the spirit of reform to further his private interests. The pope was dethroned in England, and Henry became the head of a reconstituted Church of England. But let the reader carefully note that, apart from the removal of a few glaring evils and outrageous doctrines, such as Indulgences, Image-worship, and Transubstantiation, it was still the same old business in spite of its change of management; carried on in the same old buildings, largely by the same old priests, preaching the same old fables.

Let us not be misunderstood, however. Every liberty-loving man, and especially that small remnant of apostolic Christians, can truly thank God for the Reformation as a restorer of religious liberty. But as a means of really reforming the church, and re-establishing primitive Christian worship, it was a dismal failure.

The Church of England still retains, as its cardinal doctrine, the heathen belief of the immortality of the soul, made popular by the philosophers Socrates and Plato, and introduced into the Christian church by their followers. Mr. Roberts, the author of "Christendom Astray from the Bible," truly observes:

"The doctrine of the immortality of the soul must be removed from the mind before gospel truth can obtain a proper entrance; for it nullifies the whole system by obliterating its foundation doctrine that 'by one man came death' . . . In fact, its effect is to pervert, vitiate, poison, nullify, and destroy everything pertaining to God's truth. It sends its jarring vibrations through the entire system of revelation, introducing confusion and absurdity where otherwise reign peace, order, harmony and beauty." (Chap. 17.)

Then, when we realise that without this doctrine the church has nothing to excuse her existence (for she pretends to cure souls and fit them for heaven) it becomes apparent that WITH ITS FOUNDATION DESTROYED THE WHOLE EDIFICE OF DECEIT MUST TUMBLE TO RUIN.

The zeal of many early reformers, though largely mistaken, was at least refreshing. They at least had a zeal for God and a deep reverence for his resurrected word—the Bible. But today this has all given place to a liberal vagueness in all matters religious. The Bible is belittled by the men who are earning their livings for professing it, and its real teaching is lightly laid aside. Yet strange to relate, while manifesting apathy and veiled hostility towards the Bible and its doctrines, they are most energetic in their defence of heathen dogmas inherited from the early apostacy.

“PUZZLED AND MYSTIFIED”

The Bishop of Bradford is a good illustration of this peculiar mentality. His excuse for writing his recent book (“What the Church Teaches”) is that it would benefit men and women

“who, because they are interested and intelligent, find that they cannot ignore religion, but who declare themselves unable to understand the church’s teaching . . . They are puzzled and feel mystified about what it all means.”

He says further that in conversation with many he had helped them and “found them grateful . . . to have Christian doctrine explained to them in ordinary language.” This emboldened Bishop Blunt

“to write for people like these a simple book which will be a guide to the Christian faith.”

And what a guide! On the subject of Eden, which Jesus and Paul treat as historical, the learned Bishop informs his “grateful” readers,

“The Bible tells us THE LEGEND OF ADAM AND EVE . . . WE NEED NOT TREAT THIS AS HISTORICAL . . . it was a PRIMITIVE GUESS . . . it is A PIECE OF MYTHOLOGY.” (Page 21.)

That’s that; the Bishop has spoken! Encouraged by this pen victory he next gives his scholarly attention to the clearly revealed doctrine of Christ’s second coming, upon which the whole purpose of God hinges, and terms it

“ a piece of PICTURE THINKING.”

The effrontery of the man is amazing. THAT WHICH IS CLEARLY REVEALED is “ MYTHOLOGY ” and “ PICTURE THINKING.” Yet what happens when it *really* becomes a matter of “ mythology ” and “ picture thinking,” such as the doctrine of the Trinity, and heaven-going of souls at death? Why, the Bishop seems to feel that here he is on solid ground. And although he has the blasphemous impudence to brand God’s Word “ mythology,” he himself feels very hurt because someone unkindly called his pet doctrine of the Trinity, a “ metaphysical rodomontade.”

“ I shall hope to show,” says he, “ that it is nothing of the sort.” (Page 54.)

That he fails to do so need hardly be stated in view of the despairing and unsuccessful efforts of divines of all ages to explain the “ inexplicable,” define the “ indefinable,” or comprehend the “ incomprehensible.” This the bishop virtually admits in the words with which he closes his “ explanation ”:

“ Finally, be it noted that THE CHRISTIAN FAITH IS *not* THAT WE *understand* the doctrine of the Trinity, *but* THAT WE *worship* ONE GOD IN TRINITY and Trinity in Unity . . . THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY IS A MYSTERY.” (Page 58.)

We should just think it is! Thus do Bishop Blunt and his Church of England confreres tenaciously cling to man-made “ incomprehensibles ” and “ indefinables,” and yet have the audacity to dismiss with contempt Christian truths revealed by him they call Lord and Master, and term them “ myths ” and “ picture thinking.”

“ IF YOU WOULD ONLY NOT EXPLAIN ”

This same perverse spirit is evident in the Bishop’s defence of the pagan doctrine of heaven-going at death. The Bishop of course believes this, and, to his own satisfaction, if not to that of his “ grateful ” readers, demonstrates its truth. Where from? Not the Scriptures; that is not possible. He demonstrates it from his own reasoning. One very

telling argument he employs as a reason for this erroneous belief at once exposes the poverty of his "evidence":

"because somewhere in God's Universe God's music must be played properly. That never happens here. Somewhere it must happen, and man, because he is the child of God, must have a place in God's orchestra." (Page 89.)

Hence reasons this amazing logician—Heaven-going at death!

Earlier in his book he recounts the story of a little boy who, bewildered by his mother's explanation of the Holy Sacrament, said:

"I think I could understand if you would only not explain."

What happens, Dr. Blunt, when the blind undertake to lead the blind? The Master says, they both fall into the ditch. Believest thou this, self-appointed expounder of Christian doctrine? We are sure that your readers would all understand Christian doctrine so much better if only clever but illogical men like you "WOULD ONLY NOT EXPLAIN."

Well, the "puzzled" and "mystified" should have been helped by a reading of our previous pages to get a better idea by now of "what it all means." We have yet to show them a more excellent way.

INTELLECTUAL REVOLT

And now a word or two about the more definite opponents of the Church and, as they think, Christianity itself. Side by side with the political-religious revolt against Rome, there has developed an intellectual revolt by many scientists and thinkers of all classes against Christianity itself.

At the hands of these men the Church has received a rough handling, but it has asked for it. Very early in the scientific era the Church began dictating to the scientists, and then persecuting them and burning them for the "good of their souls." An example of this is quoted by a modern opponent of the Church, Professor Draper. Of the Church's persecution of Bruno, an astronomer who taught the

“plurality of worlds” and was condemned by the Church, he ironically comments that he was

“delivered to the secular authorities to be punished, ‘as mercifully as possible, and without the shedding of his blood,’ the horrible formula for burning a prisoner at the stake.”

It was by such things as this that the Church was brought into conflict with Science. Never learning her lessons she has continued to meddle in things too high for her to understand.

While science has been forging her big guns the Church has been opposing her with antiquated bows and arrows and medieval pikestaffs and has, as a result, fought a losing battle as knowledge of the sciences has grown. One by one the outworks of the Church’s defensive system have collapsed and they have had to retreat within their central citadel.

Some theologians, alarmed at the collapse, have shown an indecent haste to renounce the faith of their fathers and seek to atone for past errors by joining in the work of demolition. We have already referred to some of them when we dealt with the Higher Critics in chapter two. What they fail to see is that it is their unscientific dogmas that are being attacked, which they have for so long believed to be in the Bible.

Even the Catholic, the most conservative and reactionary of them all, now only contests his inner citadel, which is, that church teaching in certain matters is “above science and reason.” Notably is this the case with the doctrine of Transubstantiation, when, by the muttering of a magic formula by the priest, a wafer is turned into the literal and physical flesh of Christ; a doctrine which is grossly unscientific as well as an outrage on reason. But the Church from within her inner citadel pronounces it a revelation of the Church which is “beyond scientific enquiry.” But on many other demonstrable scientific truths, which the Church once opposed, she has changed out of all knowledge in spite of her motto, *Semper Idem*.

As science has widened its circle of discovery, so has the circle of church dogma been narrowed down, and each conflict of the Church with scientific progress results in a defeat for the Church.

Now unfortunately the Church has, in the past, appealed to the Bible to support her in her conflict with science. And in a book so diverse, full of parables, figures, and similes, it would be surprising if *something* could not be found to press into service in support of any preconceived idea. We shall have occasion to refer to this later. Therefore when the Church appealed to the Bible in support of a position that later became untenable the defeat of the Church's position carried with it the implication of defeat for the Bible.

THE CHURCH'S "PROOFS"

But when we know somewhat of the Church's "proofs" in support of her foolish contentions, which are designed to hinder all enquiry and block all progress prejudicial to her interests, then we can see how careful one must be before convicting the Bible of the Church's errors.

You will remember, for instance, how the Church quoted Scripture in order to oppose the translation of the Bible into English. They then declared that if the common people once knew that Christ commanded us to pluck out eyes that caused us to offend, then the nation would soon be composed of blind people.

Then again, in order to silence Copernicus, who taught that the earth moved on its axis, they again quoted the Scripture which says,

"(God) laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever." (Ps. 104, 5.)

An unbiased reading will show that the permanence of the earth is here affirmed by semi-figurative language which most of us use every day of our life. This interpretation is explained and confirmed by other Scriptures, for instance:

"One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever." (Eccles. 1, 4.)

In the introduction to our Authorized Version of the Scriptures we read of Queen Elizabeth being a "bright

Occidental Star," but we have yet to read of someone scanning the heavens with a telescope to find her. When enemy forces "hammer" each other it is not done with hammers. Neither do defending soldiers sally forth in diving suits to roll back the "flood" of invasion.

But in the days of which we speak anything was good enough to press into service, for the masses were even more ignorant of Scripture than their leaders, if that were possible.

Had Copernicus been as good a Bible student as he was an astronomer, he could have put his opponents in a terrible dilemma by quoting Scripture to support his "heresy"—

"He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing." (Job 26, 7.)

Thus we see the need to let the Bible be its own interpreter, and to discern between figure of speech and plain statement. The infallible way is not to take a passage out of its context but diligently to compare it with other Scriptures of like import; in other words, to reason out of the Scriptures, and compare Scripture with Scripture. Always remember that.

"A text, without its context, is a pretext."

Today, when Churchmen have the hardihood to contest the opinions of modern philosophers, we find that the arguments of philosophy cut through pagan church dogmas like a hot knife through butter.

This was particularly noticeable in a recently published debate between a well-known Catholic controversialist and a well-known philosopher. The Church arguments were made to look absurd. The Church apologist had to shift his ground and change his mind so many times in order to escape polemical annihilation that the philosopher was moved to declare that he felt as though he was fighting a feather bed, with the consistency of a jelly, and the characteristics of a chameleon—a feeling with which any reader of the debate must sympathise.

But it is very interesting to note that there were some

hard lumps in the butter, sufficiently hard to turn the edge of the knife. This occurred when the defender of the Church retreated behind the evidence for the resurrection of Christ, and the consequent truth of early Christianity. Here he was in an invulnerable position, and the philosopher knew it. The catch, of course, which the philosopher was slow to perceive, is that the Church claim the early Christians as their brethren in faith and practice. That is an error into which we feel our readers will not fall, in view of the exposure of the Church in this chapter.

ACQUITTED OF COMPLICITY

The object of our present chapter has been to make a separation between current Christianity and the Bible, for these two are inextricably bound together in popular misconception. UNTIL THIS MISUNDERSTANDING IS FINALLY REMOVED THE TRUTH CAN MAKE NO HEAD-WAY, either with the Rationalist, the unbeliever, the indifferent, or the orthodox Christian.

Our aim has been to clear the Bible from an association which has provoked the blasphemy of the infidel, the cynicism of the thoughtful, and the bewilderment and bemuddling of "the ordinary man" who is, as the Bishop says, "mystified" by it all;

Our aim has been to make the Bible stand out clearly against the sordid background of Church doctrine and practice, and to acquit it of complicity in the Church's guilt;

Our aim has been to prepare your minds to consult the Bible alone as the authoritative and final source of information on all matters pertaining to God, His purpose, and His wishes.

We trust that, within the limits of such an abridged history, we have succeeded in demonstrating to you that *organised* CHRISTIANITY IS NOTHING MORE THAN A PAGAN CORRUPTION OF *primitive* CHRISTIANITY, and that the early Christian faith became corrupted exactly as the apostles foretold. This in itself, we would remind you, not only exonerates the Bible from guilt for "Christian" errors, but is a powerful evidence of the Bible's divine inspiration. For did we witness no such wholesale departure, but rather

a growth and continuance of pure religion, then the Bible would have been falsified.

For the purpose of demonstrating this great apostasy from primitive Christianity, and in order to expose the apostate church, we have resorted to history: not our interpretation of history but that of a universally accredited historian, Dr. Mosheim, whose evidence has been reinforced by out-and-out Catholic writers who have been unable to evade the plain facts of history.

NOT "JUST ANOTHER RELIGION"

Sufficient has been written to prove that the Church has no claim upon, or kinship with, the Bible. The Bible exposes her doctrines as pagan fictions, and demonstrates her to be the foretold apostasy.

In the evidence adduced in this chapter the Catholic should see proof of his Church's guilt. The Protestant should see that, abstractly admirable as his attitude is, his dissent from Rome is not sufficient if he continues to hold Romish doctrines such as the Trinity and the immortality of the soul. The "ordinary man" can realise that his judgment is just and that "by their fruits" we do know them. While the hostile man must realise that his repudiation of the Church by no means condemns Christianity: the two things are entirely different, and if we have succeeded in our task he will see this clearly by now.

The Bible is responsible for *primitive* Christianity; it is not responsible for *modern* Christianity. Thus as we proceed to examine the Bible in order to ascertain its teaching, we can rule the Church right out of our consideration. What the Church *says*, what the Church *believes*, what the Church *teaches*, just doesn't count. As well might an astronomer seek the aid of an artificial fog manufacturer.

So while the objector is right in regarding modern Christianity as "just another religion" like all great world religions, his argument leaves *real* Christianity unaccounted for; indeed it is more than probable that, being the victim of the common misconception, he never even knew of its existence.

THE LAST OF THE "SNOW-MEN"

Thus our fourth and last snow-man, of which we spoke

PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANS AND MODERN CHRISTIANITY 159

in chapter one, now follows his three predecessors into watery dissolution, as we promised. The way is at last clear for us to enquire in enlightened confidence, "What saith the Scripture?"

CHAPTER SIX

WHAT THE BIBLE REALLY TEACHES

THE NATURE OF MAN—NO INHERENT IMMORTALITY—THE NEED OF SALVATION FROM DEATH. THE COVENANT IN EDEN—THE SEED OF THE SERPENT—THE SEED OF THE WOMAN—THE DEVIL AND SATAN—HELL. THE COVENANTS TO ABRAHAM AND DAVID—RELATION OF COVENANTS TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD. THE KINGDOM OF MEN AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD—THE APPROACHING TIME FOR THE KINGDOM—ZIONISM A SIGN. WHAT DOES GOD REQUIRE OF MAN?

As the primitive glory of the ancient cities of the past has become covered over by the rubbish of centuries until their original form has become distorted or altogether hidden, so it is with ancient Christianity. The primitive beauty and simplicity of the gospel of Jesus and his fishermen disciples became buried under elaborate ritual and ceremonies which were often transferred from pagan rites.

The "dark ages" effectually buried for centuries all Bible knowledge, ignorant and superstitious priests perpetuated image and relic worship, so that Christianity was as effectually buried as the cities of Assyria and Babylon.

The work of the Reformation, followed later by the French Revolution, resulted in the establishment of democratic freedom of thought and religious worship, and facilitated Bible reading and study among the common people. Thus although this freedom resulted in a multiplicity of religious sects, so much deplored by Rome, it resulted also in an increase in Bible knowledge.

But this uncovering of the riches of wisdom and understanding has only been partial, as we have endeavoured to

show. And like partial excavation, which reveals some only of the hidden city, its finds have been a mixture of truth and error.

The Liberalism of the Church of England is far in advance of Papal darkness and thralldom; but it is not far enough. There are other considerations which discourage complete liberty of search and investigation. Men might find that episcopal palaces for bishops, "benefices" and "callings" for others, were all a wicked imposition. Thus, enough has been excavated for the liking of the clergy; enough to excuse them throwing over Rome; but more research and digging on the part of the laity is discouraged lest the result would cause men to throw them over also. Thus they jealously guard this preserve of Bible exposition which they regard as peculiarly their own, maintaining that educational attainments and scholarship are vitally necessary for a right understanding of Bible exposition.

HIDDEN TREASURE

Some, however, undeterred by their learned opposition and discouraging frowns, have gone direct to the only source of the knowledge of God and have dug therein as for hidden treasure. What they have found is strangely at variance with the findings of these clerical archaeologists. In company with others we have been to this buried city of Bible Truth and have been so bold as to take pick and spade with us to find what the Church still left uncovered or covered again lest others should find. We are going to lay before you the great things we have found, that you too may examine them. This is most important, for you will have seen the foolishness already imposed by the councils and decrees of the Church when unsupported by scriptural evidences. We are going to the site itself to show you the exhibits. The verdict will be left to you.

The pagan world was revolutionised and "turned upside down" in early Christian days by "unlearned and ignorant" men. It was the learned who again brought it into bondage and darkness, often for their own behoof. True Christians living in this modern age, likewise unlearned in the teaching of the schools and seminaries, but

learned by much reading and study in the wisdom which is from above, undertake to expose the foolishness of the learned and of their traditions, which have made of none effect the Word of God.

This subject—the true teaching of the Bible—is one upon which we could write at indefinite length. But we remember that we write for modern readers, and modern readers, however much we may deplore the fact, are intolerant of long books. In the hope that this present effort may encourage you to further and more exhaustive reading concerning Bible doctrines, we shall bear your prejudices in mind and be as brief as the claims of clarity will allow.

THEME OF THE BIBLE

The theme of the Bible is grand and majestic. It is a revelation to man of the attributes and purposes of God. This is its uniqueness, for no other source of this knowledge can be found among all the literature of the world. Not even the evidences of a supreme designer found in the world of nature testify to the attributes of the great "first cause," nor reveal the final purpose of the thing designed. It is in the Bible alone that the Creator and Sustainer of the universe proclaims that He "ordered" the earth in all its manifold riches and wonders as a habitation for man:

"The heaven, even the heavens are the Lord's: but the earth hath He given to the children of men." (Ps. 115. 16.)

"For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it; He hath established it. He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited." (Isa. 45, 18.)

"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created." (Rev. 4, 11.)

But even this world of beauty and of wonder was not to be the final state. In due time and in process of time the earth is to "be full of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea," the desert is to "blossom as the rose," the "leopard shall lie down with the kid," "nation shall not lift up sword against nation," and eventually "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is

death." Though the Church has decreed that at some future time the earth will provide the fuel for a huge bonfire, God has declared otherwise.

Now this complex, living world was not created as a static order of things. God's arrangement permitted to man a freedom of choice between obeying and serving Him, and disobeying and ignoring Him. When Adam in the exercise of this free will brought evil into the good, and through disobedience brought death, God set before him a divine plan whereby he might *ascend* to the divine nature of incorruptibility.

"By one man sin entered into the world and DEATH BY SIN, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."
(Rom. 5. 12.)

"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in ADAM ALL DIE, even so IN CHRIST SHALL ALL BE MADE ALIVE." (1 Cor. 15. 21-22.)

"We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who SHALL CHANGE OUR VILE BODY, that it may be fashioned LIKE UNTO HIS GLORIOUS BODY, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." (Phil. 3, 20-21.)

It is the knowledge of this Divine Plan and the hope of becoming partakers thereof that is the "pearl of great price" for which a man will "sell all that he hath and buy."

OUR SEARCH FOR GOD

In our search for the whole counsel of God we cannot—must not—ignore any portion as being unnecessary or redundant, mythical or legendary. How imprudent of the archaeologist to ignore any stratum and its evidence, positive or negative. The exposition in Chapter II set forth the evidence for believing implicitly in the historical truth of the early books of the Bible—a truth corroborated by the spade of the archaeologist. Chapter III set forth the claim for the Divine inspiration of the record and proved it through the evidence of fulfilled prophecy. The word of God is therefore a wholly infallible guide: unique in its origin; alone in its proclamation of "the end from the beginning." We believe, then, in Genesis I as we believe

in Rev. 22, and we appeal to all scripture in our search for a knowledge of God and of His purpose with man.

“Canst thou by searching find out God?” This is the question addressed by Zophar to Job, and in a measure we have answered it. In the realm of nature we find His power: “Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth,” but we cannot find God. In the world of human philosophy we find speculation, but we cannot find God. In the Bible He reveals Himself—“the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple,” “the entrance of thy word giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.” It is of the utmost importance that we know this testimony, and gain understanding therefrom, for it is Jesus who says “This is life eternal, that they might KNOW THEE THE ONLY TRUE GOD, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” (John 17, 3.) It requires but little delving into God’s testimonies to find many declarations concerning Himself: but even so we shall find that modern Christians, like the ancient Athenians, ignorantly worship Him, and like the Pharisees have made the word of God of none effect through their traditions; for God has declared of Himself:

“Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.” (Deut. 6, 4.)

Nor is there any variation of or addition to this testimony of Himself throughout His revelation to man. Centuries later the prophet Isaiah was inspired to write:

“I am the Lord and THERE IS NONE ELSE, there is no God beside me.” (Isa. 45. 5.)

Israel so believed and worshipped: and when the successive sway of Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece gave way to that of Rome, we find Jesus proclaiming to his countrymen: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.” At no time during his ministry does he testify otherwise. Moreover, his testimony is clear and emphatic in establishing the relationship between himself and God. This relationship was enunciated by the angel to Mary in the words, “He shall be called the Son of the Highest” (Luke 1, 32), and repeated by Christ himself when he said

“I am the Son of God” (John 10, 36); and when Peter testified—in answer to the question, “whom say ye that I am”—“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God”, Jesus replied, “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 16, 17). It is relevant and pertinent to ask why that church which is supposed to be founded on Peter should proclaim otherwise. If this same question were asked of a Roman Catholic, would he answer as Peter did or would he not rather proclaim, “Thou art Christ, God the Son”? He must indeed answer thus lest he “without doubt be eternally damned” by his church.

THE FATHER AND THE SON

Jesus was born that he might “bear witness to the truth,” and that witness includes a definition of his relationship to God—a relationship which is found in our common understanding of the term “father” and the term “son.” The term “son” implies a beginning—a period of non-existence in actuality (though not necessarily of intention). And so “the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise”—“The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee (Mary), and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” (Luke 1, 35.) Before this birth Jesus had not existed except in the mind of the Father. When we read in Gen. 1, 26, the words, “Let us make man in our image,” we are not reading the declaration of two equal gods, nor yet of three, but, as we shall show later, of a multitude of mighty ones; and when we read in Dan. 3, 25, the exclamation of Nebuchadnezzar, “Lo, I see four men loose . . . and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God,” we are not reading a divinely inspired message given through the lips of a pagan king relative to Christ, but a faulty translation of the original. This is corrected in the Revised Version in the words “and the form of the fourth is like a son of the gods.” It will be more convenient to deal later with passages from the New Testament sometimes quoted by those who maintain the doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ, and to continue

now with those sayings of Jesus which establish his position as the son—the beloved son—the only beloved son—of God, and contradict that which is implied in the appellation “God the Son.” Jesus said :

“I can of mine own self do nothing.” (John 5, 30.)

“My Father is GREATER than I.” (John 14, 28.)

“The Father which SENT me.” (John 12, 49.)

“I ascend unto MY Father and your Father, and to MY God and your God.” (John 20, 17.)

There is here no claim to equality in power, just as in the former statements there was no claim to equality of existence.

Do we then maintain, as some do, that Christ was but as we are? On the contrary, we would point to the record of the manner of his birth as proving a difference. We are born of the will of the flesh and of an earthly father; he was born of the will of God and through the operation of the power of God. Though he could be “in all points tempted like as we are,” he was found “without sin.” This cannot be said of any one of us, for John writes, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” (1 John 1, 8.) There was found in Christ one whose character was divine, for “He did no sin neither was guile found in his mouth,” and he was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.”

As a beloved son of perfect character he could say, “I and my Father are one.” (John 10, 30.) But this “oneness” was asserted prospectively of the disciples. Jesus prayed that “they all may be one; as thou Father art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.” (John 17, 21.) It was never asserted of co-equality, or co-eternity, as the above testimonies show. If it should be contended that the oneness of Christ and the Father does imply co-equality and co-eternity it must be conceded also of the disciples.

How did the apostles understand and preach the “Only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.”? Peter certainly could not endorse the Trinitarian doctrine, for he says, “Ye men of Israel, hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a MAN APPROVED of God, . . . whom God HATH RAISED UP.” (Acts 2, 22-4.) Paul preached “For though there be that are called gods . . . to us there is but ONE

GOD, THE FATHER, of whom are all things and we in him; and ONE LORD JESUS CHRIST, by whom are all things and we by him." (1 Cor. 8, 6.) And again:

"There is ONE GOD, and ONE MEDIATOR between God and men, THE MAN CHRIST JESUS." (1 Tim. 2, 5.)

And again:

"One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in you all." (Eph. 4, 5-6.)

and therefore:

"When all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall THE SON also himself BE SUBJECT unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." (1 Cor. 15, 28.)

THE TRINITY NOT A BIBLE DOCTRINE

If we would find any reference to or enunciation of the doctrine of the Trinity—so widely accepted in Christendom today—we must seek elsewhere, for the Bible is silent. Even Trinitarians will admit this:

"It must be allowed that there is no such proposition as this, that one and the same God is three different persons, formally and in terms to be found in the Sacred Writings, either of the Old or New Testament; neither is it pretended that there is any word of the same significance or importance with the word Trinity used in Scripture with relation to God." (Dr. South—"Considerations on the Trinity," p. 38.)

If we delve into the religious beliefs of Egypt we can certainly find trinities of gods. The Vedas of India affirm that Agni, Indra, and Surya are three gods, who are yet one god. The Greek philosopher, Plato, "marvellously anticipated one of the most surprising discoveries of the Christian revelation" (Gibbon, "Decline and Fall") and "St. Augustine confesses that he was in the dark about the Trinity until he read some Platonic writings which the providence of God 'had thrown in his way'." (Collected Charges, p. 130). It was indeed providential for the fourth century Trinitarians that four centuries *before* Christ a Greek philosopher should have propounded a trinitarian doctrine, for the Bible did not.

Then consider the "history" of the Trinity. The first century passes and no mention is found. In the second century the word Trinity is introduced by Theophilus, A.D. 169—but he did not apply this to God, to Jesus Christ, and to the Holy Ghost, but to the Attributes of God. Neither Tertullian (A.D. 192), nor Clement (A.D. 215), nor Origen (A.D. 230), were trinitarians. Origen writes: "The Father is alone God, and greater than him who was sent." By the time the fourth century is reached trinitarian doctrines are in the ascendant and to oppose Arius (Presbyter of a church in Alexandria A.D. 320), who attacked these doctrines, the Council of Nicea was convened by Constantine. There, not without much disputation and then only by a majority vote, was the nucleus of the famous Nicene Creed formulated. But the Council of Nicea mentioned the Holy Ghost in general terms only, not stating any relationship with God nor demanding any appropriate worship; so the Council of Constantinople (A.D. 381) and, later, the Council of Toledo (A.D. 589), supplied these "deficiencies" and commanded a belief in the Holy Ghost "who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified." We ask you to judge whether or not this doctrine, if it had been a Bible doctrine, would have taken nearly six centuries to evolve!

This has been no idle digression—this refutation of the Trinity as a Bible doctrine. Its acceptance nullifies the plan and purpose of God, one aspect of which is expressed in the statement of Paul: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." (Heb. 2, 14.) If Christ were "very God"—consubstantial with the Father—how could he truly die? Yet this was essential in order that he might destroy death—the ultimate triumph in God's plan. How could he be tempted in all points like as we are? Yet this was necessary also, for only by a true victory over real temptation could he manifest his perfect obedience to the Father, be found without sin, and thus destroy in himself that which had the power of eternal death. Because he did not sin "death could not hold him."

“THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS”

This purpose of God—to destroy death in the earth—is also enunciated in God’s revelation of Himself. The apostle Paul calls it the mystery of godliness—“great is the mystery of godliness.” It may prove to be a new doctrine to you—it is not to be found in the tenets of any of the names and denominations of Christendom. It is nevertheless found in the Scriptures and is revealed that we may truly know “thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent” (John 17, 3).

When God revealed Himself to Israel. He did so by a “memorial name” which carried a meaning. It was a name by which He would be known (Exod. 3, 13-14) and it was a name which indicated a purpose. God said, “I will be who I will be” (Rev. Version) thereby affirming that He would be manifested in whom He would. A manifestation of God was not unknown to Moses or to Israel. Moses had witnessed in the desert the bush that burned with fire and was not consumed and had learned that he stood in the presence of an angel of the Lord—one of those ministering spirits “that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word” (Psalm 103, 20; 104, 4.) These are possessors of the divine, or incorruptible, nature; for Jesus testifies “they die no more.” In them God has been pleased to manifest Himself. They are mighty ones, or “Elohim,” and as such obeyed God’s behest to prepare the earth for man. It was these, “the morning stars who sang together and all the sons of God who shouted for joy” (Job 38, 7) when the foundations of the earth were laid, who said: “Let us make man in our image”; and so “in the image of God (the Elohim) created he him” (Gen. 1, 26, 27).

It will be at once apparent that these were not the manifestations of God foretold in the memorial name. The latter were to be selected from the Adamic race and primarily from the nation of Israel. We are not left without guidance in this matter. Paul declares that Jesus was “the beginning, the firstborn from the dead” (Col. 1, 18), and Jesus testifies of himself after his death and resurrection, “I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore” (Rev. 1, 18). The divine, incorruptible,

immortal nature has been given to him. God is manifested in him—the first from among those of Adamic race. But the purpose indicated in the memorial name is not thereby completed. It is written: “Christ the firstfruits, afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming” (1 Cor. 15, 23). Others too will receive this gift of immortality—“to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality (God will render) eternal life” (Rom. 2, 7)—and thus they will be manifestations of Deity. They are symbolised in the Revelation by 144,000 virgins “which are redeemed from the earth” (ch. 14, 3), who “hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes” (Rev. 7, 16-17). Thus will God be manifested in those in whom He will be manifested and the purpose indicated in the memorial name will be accomplished.

WHICH THEORY DO YOU BELIEVE?

We have already stated that we believe Genesis 1 as we believe Revelation 22. In thus believing the creation record we believe that man was the result of a definite act of creation and not of an evolutionary process. This we know may sound both old fashioned and unscientific. We may be dubbed “fundamentalists” in scorn and derision. We are prepared to be so called, for both Jesus and Paul were fundamentalists. Jesus said: “Have ye not read that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female” (Matt. 19, 4). Will our Trinitarian friends who hold that Jesus is Very God now say he was mistaken? Paul said: “The first man Adam was made a living soul . . . the first man is of the earth, earthy” (1 Cor. 15, 45, 47). Did Paul err in thus testifying to the record in Genesis wherein it is stated that “the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul”? (Gen. 2, 7). Before asserting that he did err, let us ask those who believe in the theory of Evolution a question. Which theory of evolution do you believe? For you must

know that there are many theories. Perhaps you have heard that Darwin's hypotheses (not proofs) of "natural selection" and "sexual selection" are in reality no explanation at all (Evolution—Prof. MacBride, p. 19). and therefore have turned to one of the more recent theories. You may have heard of the "Mutation Theory" of Dr. Vries, and that "there are insuperable objections to this theory" (ibid, p. 25), and so you may follow Weismann, for "Weismann's work is popularly supposed to be conclusive" (ibid, p. 50). But Weismann's theory was experimentally tested, and with this result: "Weismann's theory therefore fails at all points where it is experimentally tested" (ibid, p. 59). It would be possible to extend considerably this list of theories, but these will suffice to give point to our question, "Which theory do you believe?"

SEVEN FUNDAMENTALS OF EVOLUTION

What, then, are the grounds for belief in this theory of evolution so widely accepted today? Though it is not really our duty to set them out—that surely is the task of those who hold the theory—yet we will do so very briefly in order to comment upon them. The theory is based upon seven fundamentals, together with some experimental evidence and the findings of anthropology. We will state each of the fundamentals and then add a comment by an eminent scientist.

1. Comparative Anatomy. Nature abounds in examples of a progression from simple to complex forms of life. It is argued that these illustrate a process of evolution which can be applied to the evolution of man. But the late Professor William Bateson, of Cambridge University, says: "every theory of evolution must be such as to accord with the facts of physics and chemistry, a primary necessity to which our predecessors paid small heed"—and most scientists agree that the universe is in process of devolution and not evolution. The theory of ascent from lower to higher forms is contrary to this fact and not in "accord with the facts of physics and chemistry."

2. Embryonic Recapitulation. This theory is based on the hypothesis that every species during its gestation period

passes through its evolutionary history. It is stated by those who advance the theory that the embryos of mammals resemble in turn the fish and the amphibian. But Professor Waldo Shumway, of Illinois University, says: "There is never a time in the history of the mammal when it could be taken for a fish or a reptile." (Introduction to Vertebrate Embryology—1942), and Professor Adam Sedgwick, of Cambridge, writes: "It must therefore be admitted that one outcome of the progress of embryological and palaeontological research for the last fifty years is negative. The recapitulation theory originated as a *deduction from* the evolution theory and as a deduction it still remains." (Darwin and Modern Science—1909). Instead, then, of proving evolution, it is a deduction from the theory to be proved.

3. The Geological Record. The rocks of the earth contain fossils of living creatures of former ages. If evolution is true, then there should be fossils of many, if not all of the stages of the development of the different species. We should be able, for example, to trace the development of such a peculiar species as the kangaroo. Darwin confidently predicted that the rocks would yield fossils of half-formed men and whales. Though they have yielded 100,000 different species of fossils, they have given no such record. The record of the rocks runs counter to the claim of the evolutionist. Fossils commence abruptly in the rocks of the Cambrian period, and there they commence in great variety. In the rocks below there are none—and yet in many places those rocks have not been altered nor disturbed, for they bear the imprint of ripple marks of waves and could equally well have preserved the print of animal forms and have been the home of fossils. So Dr. Austen Clark, of the United States National Museum, states: "The complete absence of any intermediate forms between the major groups of animals . . . brought out by the study of zoology has hitherto been overlooked, or at least ignored." (The New Evolution Zoogenesis—1930).

4. Blood Precipitation Tests. About thirty years ago tests of the blood serum of different species were made by Dr. George Nutall, of Cambridge University. From a close similarity in some of these it was assumed that confirmation was found for the theory of evolution. But the

primary factors of heredity do not lie in the blood serum but in the germ cells.

And what are the facts of blood relationship as shown by blood transfusion? The blood serum of a rabbit may be injected into man without harm, whilst that of an ox would be very dangerous. Yet the evolutionist places the ox nearer to man than the rabbit.

5. Vestigial Organs. At one time it was stated that about 150 structures found in man and in the higher forms of life were remains of organs once required by ancestral forms. But the passage of time has shown that the greater number are very necessary and some essential to life, so that the number of so-called unnecessary structures has already diminished to about half a dozen. Speaking of one of them, the appendix, Prof. W. E. Le Gros Clark, of Oxford, writes: "The significance of the vermiform appendix is still obscure, but in view of its rich blood supply it is almost certainly correct to regard it as a specialized and not a degenerate organ." (*Early Forerunners of Man*—1934). It might be noted that monkeys have no appendix, and from the above remarks it would certainly appear that no structure of the human body may be accounted useless, nor do they afford any proof of an evolutionary process.

6. Experimental Evidence. In the fields of botany and zoology scientists have conducted experiments with the object of producing, if possible, new species. They have brought into being hundreds of variations—the effect of the alteration of existing characteristics—but no new species. Many of the variations show less vigour and resistance, and many have organisms which function less satisfactorily than in the originals, so that the late President of Leland Stanford University writes: "None of the created 'new species' (his inverted commas) of plant or animal I know of would last five years in the open, nor is there the slightest evidence that any new species of field or forest or ocean ever originated from mutation, discontinuous variation, or hybridization." (*D. S. Jordan—Science*—1922).

There does indeed seem to be an extraordinary stability of species, having each a "sphere of variation," but a sphere which is constant and non interacting.

7. Anthropology. The fact that evolutionists are constantly hoping to find fossilized skeletons of "missing links" has caused much attention to be paid to fragments of skeletons found in various parts of the world. Each "find" was proclaimed to be a missing link and scientists vied with each other in reconstructing the elusive creature. The results were entertaining—but most conjectural and therefore unscientific. The classic reconstruction was that from the molar tooth found in Nebraska. Claimed to be the tooth of an ape-man (*Hesperopithecus*) and reconstructed into such a creature, it proved eventually to be the tooth of a pig (or peccary). How scientists have quarrelled over the cranial capacity of these reconstructed ape-men! How they have ignored the evidence of those fossil human skulls found at Calaveras in N. America, and at Castenedolo in Italy, which show that man has existed throughout the ages, according to geologists' calculations, without physical change!

And so Dr. Alen Hrdlicka, Curator of the Anthropological Section of United States National Museum, the only man prior to 1943 who had visited and examined every site of an anthropological find of importance in the world writes: "Of speculations there have been indeed enough, but most of them so far have led not into the sunlight but rather into a dark blind alley" (*Skeletal remains of Early Man*, 1930); and Professor Hooton, of Harvard University writes: "Some anatomists model reconstructions of fossil skulls by building up the soft parts of the head and face . . . put not your trust in reconstructions." (*Up from the Ape*, 1931).

Yes! "Put not your trust in princes nor in the son of man in whom there is no help." (Psalm 146, 3). How can one trust the speculations of men upon the origin of man when enunciated in so many contradictory theories! Then wherein shall we find the truth of the matter? Did not Christ say: "Thy word is Truth" (John 17, 17)? And have not the preceding chapters of this book amply demonstrated it?

THE BIBLICAL ORDER OF CREATION

The word of God sets forth an order of creation. Is it

an order likely to be given by the philosophy and pride of man? Would man (nearly four thousand years ago) have placed the creation of man last? Would man of that age have spoken of the creation of light before the creation of sun, moon and stars? Consider the possible number of ways in which the order of creation could be given and then marvel at the fact that nearly 2,000 years B.C. an order was described which accords with the findings of modern science. The modern scientist will speak of the infiltration of light upon this globe through the envelope of thick cloud; of the lightening and lifting of this cloud upon an atmosphere; of the vigorous growth of plant life in this heated and steamy atmosphere; of the dissipation of the cloud layer so that the source of light could be observed; of the appearance of life first in the waters, then in the air, and finally upon the land. And this is how Moses was caused to write; it is the order of creation which he records.

The creation of man is given in greater detail. It is written:

“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” (Gen. 2, 7.)

A dust-formed body was quickened and became a breathing and living creature—no more, nor less, in this respect than the beasts of the field, for they, too, were living creatures, or souls (Hebrew, *nephesh chaiyah*—Cp. Gen. 2, 7; 2, 19; 7, 21-22).

These two Hebrew words are used when the record speaks of the creation “of every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly after their kind and every winged fowl after his kind,” (Gen. 1, 21.) Nor did man obtain a pre-eminence over the rest of creation by virtue of having had “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life,” for the same record contains also this statement: “And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth and every man: all in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died.” (Gen. 7, 21-22.) It is Solomon who proclaims by inspiration:

“That which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath, so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast: for all is vanity.

“All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.” (Eccles. 3, 19-20.)

THE DOCTRINE OF THE SOUL

Now we have set forth this teaching concerning the creation of man in some detail because it is a foundation doctrine. An understanding and belief of it makes possible an understanding of God's plan of salvation. It will have been noticed that in this teaching is found no mention of the possession by man of an immortal soul—no inherent immortality. It stated only that man became a living creature. It neither stated nor implied that man possessed an ever-living essence, a never-dying soul; nor is it enunciated elsewhere in the Scriptures.

As we have seen, the word ‘soul’ itself indicates a living creature, and throughout the Bible it is used to express either this or the attributes of creatures living. It is therefore not inconsistent to speak of a soul being subject to death, as it does in Ezekiel 18, 4: “the soul that sinneth it shall die;” and in Acts 3, 23: “. . . every soul . . . shall be destroyed from among the people.” Of the 754 places in the Old Testament when the word occurs it is said to be subject to death or liable to death 652 times, and of the 106 places in the New Testament where the equivalent Greek word “psuche” occurs it is said to be subject or liable to death 90 times.

Since the word soul of itself carries with it no implication of immortality it must be qualified by such words as “ever living,” “never dying,” “immortal,” to support any such contention. NOT ONCE are these qualifying words attached to it. A reference to a concordance will show that the word immortal occurs in the Bible once only, and then in reference to God (1 Tim, 1, 17) and immortality is said to be possessed only by God (1 Tim. 6, 16) to have been brought to light by the Gospel (2 Tim. 1, 10) and to be bestowed *as a gift* and reward upon the righteous (1 Cor. 15, 53, 54; Rom. 2, 7). If man does possess such an immortal soul then Christ did not bring immortality

to light, for Egyptians, Babylonians and Greeks believed in it centuries before; nor could it be said to be possessed only by God; nor could it possibly be a gift.

The closer one studies the doctrine of an inherently immortal soul the more one can detect the signs of its human origin. On the one hand such a soul is claimed to be unaffected by the frailties and disabilities of the physical body, not dependent upon the organic life of that body, an essence in every way superior to and independent of a physical structure; whilst on the other hand it is stated to be capable of experiencing exquisite torture in hell fires, of suffering an unsatiated hunger, of thirsting an unassuageable thirst. How like this mortality is this supposed immortality! And what a cohort of doctrines it has brought in its train! An infant of a few hours or days must be sprinkled with water and have pronounced over it a formula to save its so-called immortal soul from hell. Has the water, "holy" or otherwise, any efficacy save that of cleansing a *physical* body? Have the words pronounced any magic or charm—uncomprehended as they are by the immature subject over whom they are spoken? Has the officiating priest or minister any power (inherent, delegated or bestowed) to charm away the forces of the Christian hell? Ask him to substantiate any such claim, if he be rash enough to make one, by exorcising the least of human pains, and judge, by his inability to do so, any claim to have any power over "the powers of darkness," or any effect upon that superior essence, the supposed immortal soul!

The doctrines of hell and its fires, of heaven and its golden harps, of purgatory and its anxious multitudes, of masses sung, of intercession of saints, all follow logically (but how unscripturally) from this most pagan of all doctrines—for pagan it is. Here is the evidence:

"The Egyptians say that Ceres (the goddess of corn) and Bacchus (the god of wine), hold the chief sway in the infernal regions: and the Egyptians also were the first who asserted the doctrine that the soul of man was immortal."

(Herodotus, Bk. ii, Sec. 123.)

This evidence is multiplied a thousand times in the museums of the world. The walls of the tombs of Egypt,

the paintings on the sarcophagi, the Book of the Dead, all subscribe to this doctrine.

And as for being a Christian doctrine, hear what Justin Martyr wrote as long ago as A.D. 150:

“For if you have conversed with some that are indeed called Christians, and do not maintain these opinions, but even dare to blaspheme the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob and say that there is no resurrection of the dead, but that the souls as soon as they leave the body are received up into heaven, take care that you do not look upon these. But I, and all those Christians that are really orthodox, do know that there will be a resurrection of the body.”

(Dialogue with Trypho the Jew, Sect. 80.)

It may be that because some of these enormities and contradictions are seen and appreciated, emphasis is sometimes placed not upon the “soul of man,” but upon the “spirit of man.” The original words used in the Old Testament (*ruach*) and the New (*pneuma*) signify breath, life, energy, disposition. These are necessary attributes of living creatures and are possessed in measure by all.

“Thou takest away their breath (*ruach*) they die.” (Ps. 104, 29.)

“Man giveth up the ghost (*gava*=breath) and where is he?” (Job 14, 10.)

“Who knoweth whether the spirit (*ruach*) of man goeth upward or the spirit (*ruach*) of beasts goeth downward to the earth?” (Ecc. 3, 21; R.V.)

To assert the existence of a never-dying spirit entity for man would entail a never-dying spirit entity for the beasts. Moreover, if such an entity is possessed what should be done with it when separated from the body? In this matter the Christian Evolutionist is sorely pressed. The Bible says that man and animal possess a spirit of life and Christendom says this signifies an inherent immortality. As an evolutionist he must account for it in the evolutionary process. As a member of Christendom he must therefore ascribe immortality in some measure to the animals; and as a believer in heaven and hell (and one cannot believe in one place of abode of departed spirits without the other) he must find a similar, if not identical, place for them.

Finally, the doctrine makes of none effect and of no

account the plan and purpose of God. God has never promised heaven to any man. Christ proclaims that no man hath ascended thereto (John 3, 13). Peter proclaims that David—"a man after God's own heart"—had not ascended there (Acts 2, 34).

"But the earth hath he given to the children of men," (Psalm 115, 16) and it is the earth that Christ promised to his disciples in the well-known words: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5, 5). It is God's plan that the earth "filled with His glory," "shall give him pleasure." It is His purpose that some from among mankind shall receive the *gift* of immortality and shall live and reign as "kings and priests on the earth" (Rev. 5, 10).

When God through the agency of the angels (Elohim, or mighty ones) created man (Gen. 1, 26) and from him formed woman they were pronounced "very good". In respect of their physical creation this was so, but no similar statement could be made concerning their characters. They had not been tested, and when a test was applied they failed. They disobeyed, they transgressed, they sinned—"for sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3, 4). They had been warned that failure to obey would bring death, and from the time of their fall this began to operate in their members. So it is written:

"By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom. 5, 12.)

SALVATION CONDITIONAL

Exactly contrary to human speculations and philosophies, the Scriptures set forth man as an erring and dying creature:

"What man is he that liveth and shall not see death?" (Psalm 89, 48). And by death the Scriptures mean the complete cessation of being.

"In death there is no remembrance of thee, in the grave who shall give thee thanks." (Ps. 6, 5.)

“There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest.” (Ecc. 9, 10.)

Because of the fall man finds himself in the position of requiring salvation, and the Bible is the only source of knowledge of God's plan for giving this. “Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me” (Isa. 45, 11). “I have even from the beginning declared it to thee, before it came to pass I showed it thee” (Isa. 48, 5).

Yes! at the very beginning—at the time of the transgression in Eden—an indication of this plan was given. The promise of God to the woman that she should bear children brought with it an indication that from these should arise one—the seed of the woman—who should by his perfection of character gain the victory over that which caused sin—the promptings of the flesh.

In the record in Genesis a conflict between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent is outlined with a consequent bruising in each case:

“I will put enmity between thee (the serpent) and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel.” (Genesis 3, 15.)

It is necessary for an understanding of the covenant in Eden that we consider for a moment this term “seed of the serpent” and other terms associated with it. It will probably be easiest if we take a passage from the last book of the Bible first. In chapter 20 of the Revelation, verse 2, we read: “And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.” Now the Revelation is a book of sign (ch. 1, verse 1) and these terms are used symbolically—as indeed they are in many parts of the Scriptures. We quote the verse, however, to place before the reader the association of the terms—“that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan,” and we do so in order that we may fully understand the term “seed of the serpent.”

MEANING OF “DEVIL” AND “SATAN”

What is the Bible “Devil” and “Satan”? Do they bear

any relation to the Devil and Satan of Christendom—an evil monster who for ages has tempted men and lured them from the paths of righteousness, or, as some aver, a fallen angel who would seem to be more successful even than God in taking the “souls” of men?

For answer, we would point out in the first instance that these are Bible words and that, therefore, they should be interpreted by and understood in connection with the Bible; they should not be associated with Teutonic or any other mythology. In the second instance we would point out that the words “Devil” and “Satan” are untranslated words—they have been transferred to our English Version and used in many cases as if they were proper nouns. This action may be understood when we remember that the English Versions were made from the time of Wycliffe (1382) to the time of the Authorised Version (1611), when the idea of the existence of evil spirits and of the arch fiend was widely and firmly held; but it does not help in understanding the Bible terms.

The word Satan is from the Hebrew through the Greek *Satanas*, and means a hater, an accuser, an adversary. The word is so translated in many places in our English Bible and should be so understood in all others. Let us take some interesting instances of this use in both Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament we find that when Balaam decided—against the warnings of God—to go to Balak, the way was blocked by an angel of God. It is recorded in Numbers 22, 22, in the words “. . . and the angel of the Lord stood in the way for an adversary against him,” and in this case the translators rendered the word *Satanas* by the word “adversary.” It no doubt seemed inconceivable to them, and incompatible with their doctrines, that an angel of the Lord should be satan. There is no difficulty at all in the matter if the Bible doctrine is accepted. Anything, anyone, who is an adversary or an accuser is a satan. This is why Peter is so styled by Christ. In the New Testament, in Matt. 16, we have the record of the incident when he resisted the testimony of Jesus concerning his death at Jerusalem and the rebuke administered to him by Christ: “Get thee behind me Satan; thou art an offence unto me.”

When the civil power became an adversary to the dis-

ciples and apostles and persecuted and hindered them it constituted a satan. The apostle Paul refers to such an adversary when writing to the Thessalonians (1 Thes. 2, 18) to explain that he had been hindered in coming to them. It is for the same reason that Jesus addressed the ecclesia at Pergamos as those who dwelt "where Satan's seat is" (Rev. 2, 13). We do not know whether those who believe in an all powerful arch-fiend appoint to him any particular place of residence other than "hell," yet they must find one for him, for he certainly is not the overseer of the Bible "hell." The keys of hell and of death are held by "the Son of man . . . he that liveth and was dead" and is "alive for evermore" (Rev. 1, 13, 18); that is, by Jesus Christ (Rev. 1, 1). Yet if he exists he must have some place of residence. Perhaps those who believe in this personal Satan might direct their attention to Pergamos in Asia Minor. For ourselves the matter presents no difficulty. Pergamos had become under the Attalic kings the most splendid city in Asia—a city of temples devoted to a sensuous worship. Here also existed a great altar to Zeus. The Romans inherited this splendid dominion, and down to apostolic times Pergamos remained the centre of Roman administration, and a great pagan religious centre. Pergamos was indeed the seat of the adversary to the followers of Jesus, and the Satan in this case was no other than the civil and religious bodies politic existing there.

The associated term—the Devil—is also an untranslated word. It is an anglicised form of the Greek word *diabolos*, which means "a false accuser." Here again anyone who brings or makes a false accusation is a devil, and here again there are instances where the translators departed from their usual custom and translated the word. When Paul gives advice to Timothy concerning the qualifications of those who should guide the ecclesias of that time he says: "Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things" (1 Tim. 3, 11). The word translated "slanderers" is *diabolos*, and to be consistent the translators should have written: "Even so must their wives be grave, not devils . . ." If the reader of the Scriptures bears in mind the fact that anyone who slanders or falsely accuses is a devil, there is no harm in retaining the word untranslated, but to make this word to mean the "tempter

of mankind, enemy of God, *superhuman* malignant being” (Oxford Dictionary) is neither a true interpretation nor agreeable to Bible doctrine.

PROMPTINGS OF THE FLESH

What is really our great enemy, whereby we do contrary to God’s command, whereby we sin against our neighbour? The apostle Paul declared that “in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing” (Rom. 7, 18), so that “when I would do good evil is present with me” (Rom. 7, 21). James shows the operation of this evil propensity. He says:

“Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his *own* lust and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death.”
(James 1, 14-15.)

It is, therefore, logical to regard these promptings of the natural mind, these fleshly lusts or desires, as the great enemy, the adversary, the false accuser or slanderer of those things that are good. These constitute the Bible Satan or Devil, whether in personal, political, civil, or religious manifestation. Therefore the Bible sets forth these as having the power of death, for they bring sin and sin brings death. It proclaims that the devil has the power of death and that Jesus

“was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death . . . Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that *through death* he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.” (Hebrews 2, 9, 14.)

How difficult it must be for Christendom to reconcile the belief in a “superhuman malignant being” with the teaching of the Scriptures that Christ was made like us, so that he could taste death and by death destroy this devil. The association of ideas is not only illogical; it is unscriptural.

Because Christ was of our nature it was possible for him to die. But when he died it was not a sentence passed

upon him because of sin. With us it is: "death passed upon all men for that all have sinned." Of Jesus, however, it is written that "he did no sin," and therefore he "tasted death," for God "loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it" (Acts 2, 24).

Can the *diabolos* or the *satanas* of the Bible, the evil propensity of the flesh, have power over such? No, it was through death that Jesus destroyed in himself "him that had the power of death", and thereby became "the resurrection and the life," "the *author* of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5, 9).

IMMORTALITY THROUGH CHRIST

Does this not show once more how unscriptural and illogical are Christendom's doctrines of immortal soulism, of heaven-going, of purgatory, of hell, of the Devil and of Satan? Does it not show how logical the Scriptural doctrines are—that man fell through disobedience; that apart from the plan of redemption there was no escape from eternal death; that in due time God sent His son "made of a woman"; that through his obedience the enmity in him was conquered and a way opened for a multitude who believe in him and obey him to escape from this mortality by a resurrection from the dead; that he will return to this earth to awaken those that sleep in the dust and gather them, together with those who "are alive and remain", to his judgment seat, there to reward every man as his works shall be; that then will "that old serpent, the devil and satan" be bound, or restrained, by reason of the righteous reign of Christ and those accepted by him; and that finally the last enemy, death, shall be destroyed (1 Cor. 15, 26; Rev. 20, 13, 14; 21, 4)?

Because death will be destroyed the Bible "hell" will exist no more, for the hell of the Bible is merely a covered place, a pit, the grave, the place of the dead. With it is associated no excruciating torture. It is true that Christ speaks of certain ones being cast "into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched." The word "hell" here is a translation of the word *Gehenna*, and *Gehenna* was

the valley of Hinnom, the place outside Jerusalem where the bodies of criminals were cast, together with the waste of the city, and where fires were continually burning to consume the refuse. Did Christ mean that those who offended should be cast here? He is clearly using it as a figure, signifying thereby utter destruction: the destroying agents, worm and fire, continuing their work so long as there remained anything to be destroyed. This is the work of the grave, and all mankind are and will be subject to it apart from the salvation offered through the Scriptures. This is the reward of the wicked: “. . . death shall feed on them . . . and their beauty shall consume in the grave, for it is a habitation to every one of them” (Ps. 49, 14 margin). This is the reward of those found unworthy by Christ at his judgment seat. To them is given no gift of life eternal, so that in due time they pass a second time into the grave (styled the second death—Rev. 20, 6) and are punished with everlasting *destruction* from the presence of the Lord (2 Thess. 1, 9).

THE COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM

From what we have written it will be clear that the plan and purpose of God concerning man and this world was not completed by the death of Christ, neither was the work of Christ completed. Christendom errs in assuming that this was so, and in this assumption they ignore or overlook two other great promises God made in His Word to mankind. What place in the doctrines of Christendom does “the holy covenant, the oath which he swore to our father Abraham” hold? It is true that many recite these words (found in Luke 1, 72-73), but how many could explain their meaning? The covenant to Abraham was made when at the age of seventy-five he left Haran at the invitation of God to go to a land which God would show him. This is the covenant:

“And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great: and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee and curse him that curseth thee, and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” (Gen. 12. 2-3.)

“And the Lord said unto Abraham . . . Lift up now thine eyes

and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.” (Gen. 13. 14-15.)

It is a covenant which has never been fulfilled—

“ And God gave him (Abraham) none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on, yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child.” (Acts 7, 5.)

Nor can it be fulfilled apart from the further work of Christ. It is a work which he will perform when he returns to this earth according to *his* promise—

“ If I go . . . I will come again.” (John 14, 3.)

and the promise of the angels who witnessed his ascension—

“ This same Jesus . . . shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” (Acts 1, 11.)

Then will the dead who “ sleep in the dust ” “ hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live ” (John 5, 25). Then will Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, “ heirs with him of the same promise ” (Heb. 11, 9) be raised and rewarded with that change of nature, the gift of immortality, and an eternal inheritance in the Kingdom of God.

Though the promise—“ ye shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of God ”—has not yet been fulfilled it does not make it of none effect. On the contrary, it makes the future bright with expectation. The future yet contains the further unfolding of the divine purpose when Jesus Christ—“ the son of Abraham ”—shall return

“ to perform the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant: the oath which he swore to our father Abraham.” (Luke 1, 72-73.)

Now in the same place of Scripture the birth of Christ is associated with yet another covenant. It is one recorded in the Old Testament, and like that made with Abraham is

still unfulfilled. Concerning it Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, prophesied:

“. . . the Lord God of Israel . . . hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David.” (Luke 1, 68-69.)

The birth of Christ is hailed as a fulfilment of a promise to David; and this is the promise:

“And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee . . . I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever . . . and thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever *before thee*: thy throne shall be established *for ever*.” (2 Sam. 7. 12-16.)

It is clear that this threefold promise: the establishment of David's kingdom, its continuance for ever, and his own participation therein, is contingent upon resurrection and immortalisation, and this, as we have seen, is the prerogative of the Son of God. It should, therefore, occasion no surprise that this is associated with the birth of Christ. Does it not explain clearly the meaning of the words:

“He (Jesus) shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”
(Luke 1, 32-33.)

CHRIST TO RETURN

Surprise is occasioned, however, by the fact that Christendom should regard these promises as no longer of any practical import: that they are either fulfilled or will not be fulfilled. But have they been fulfilled? Christ has never reigned upon the throne of David, nor has the house of Jacob existed as a corporate body since 722 B.C. They are to be fulfilled when Christ, “the root and offspring of David,” returns to this earth to take unto himself his great power and to reign (Rev. 11, 17); when the Lord

“will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.”

“In his days Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell safely . . . they shall dwell in their own land” (Jer. 23, 5-8);

when he that was born in “Bethlehem Ephratah . . . shall come forth to be ruler in Israel” (Micah 5, 2), and when Jerusalem shall shout and rejoice greatly, for “behold, thy king cometh unto thee” (Zech. 9, 9).

The three great covenants—the covenant in Eden, the covenant to Abraham and the covenant to David—thus focus attention upon the great purpose of God with the earth. They speak of a great world-wide kingdom to be established by Christ when he returns to this earth, wherein Abraham and David and many others who had faith in these promises will be blessed.

But the blessing is not confined to those only who are of the natural seed of Abraham. It is not a tribal or even a national blessing; it is a blessing for all nations. It is to be universal. How may this be, and what is the evidence for it?

When God outlined, through Daniel, the historical sequence of the four great empires of the past which have included in their domains the land of His choice—Palestine—He particularised concerning the last. He showed, through the vision of the great image composed of divers metals (Dan. 2, 31-32), that the Babylonian Empire—“Thou, O King (Nebuchadnezzar, verse 28) art a king of kings . . . Thou art this head of gold”—should be followed by an inferior kingdom (the Medo-Persian), then by the Greek Empire, and finally by the Roman Empire. This fourth empire, though “strong as iron” (verse 40)—and the Roman Empire exceeded in extent, and in duration, any of the preceding empires—should eventually suffer a change. It should be divided (verse 41), and in its divided state part should be strong and part weak; neither should there be cohesion between the parts. This exactly describes the condition of that part of the earth formerly ruled from Rome. Europe became a divided continent with its many nations asserting themselves, one against another. The history of Europe from that time is a record of the strong seizing the weak; of the weak forming alliances to resist the strong. It is a condition which has persisted unto the present day—a remarkable proof of the testimony of the prophets—of the infallibility of God’s word.

GREAT CHANGES COMING

This divided, incohesive condition is not to continue indefinitely. But the change will not come by man's device. It will come from God. This vision was given to Nebuchadnezzar and interpreted by Daniel in order that man might know "what shall be in the latter days"; that man might understand that God "ruleth in the kingdom of men and giveth it to whomsoever he will" (Dan. 4, 25); that He "removeth kings and setteth up kings" (Dan. 2, 21). It was given to show that:

"In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."
(Dan. 2, 44.)

Dynasties will no longer rise and fall, empires will no longer follow empires, for this kingdom is universal. And because it is God's Kingdom it will be a kingdom wherein dwelleth righteousness, wherein is found everlasting peace. It is written by the prophet Isaiah (chap. 9, verse 7):

"Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever."

Here we would note not only the peaceful nature of the kingdom and its long continuance, but also its association with the throne of David. Let us, therefore, add to this testimony that of the preceding verse:

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Verse 6.

All who are familiar with the libretto of "The Messiah" will know that therein these words are applied to Christ. We agree, and would also add as corroboration of this the words found in chapter 11 of the same prophet:

“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 . . . 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 . . . The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid . . . and a little child shall lead them . . . They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.”

This one who comes out of the stem of Jesse, upon whom the spirit of the Lord rests, who smites the earth with the rod of his mouth, can be no other than Jesus. He is the stone, rejected by the builders, which will break in pieces the kingdoms of men and upon their ruin build the Kingdom of God (Dan. 2, 34-35; 44-45).

CHRIST PREACHED A LITERAL KINGDOM

But was this teaching concerning a literal kingdom upon this earth the subject matter of Christ's teaching? When “he went about all Galilee teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom” was this his theme, or did he not rather preach, “the Kingdom of God is within you”? The evidence is conclusive that at all times he preached the first and at no time did he preach the second. Note, for example, the effect of his teaching upon his disciples and the people. It is written (Luke 19, Verse 11), “And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, *because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the Kingdom of God should immediately appear.*”

This, then, was the response to his teaching: they associated Jerusalem with the Kingdom of God and looked for its establishment immediately. Nor did the parable negative this teaching, but rather confirmed it, for it set forth the nobleman as going away and after long time returning “having received the kingdom.” But it did teach that this return should not be immediate.

Similar teaching was given when the disciples asked a question upon this very matter after Christ's resurrection: “Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to

Israel?" (Acts 1, 6). In his answer Christ does not deny the fact of the kingdom nor its association with Israel. What is denied to them is the exact time for its establishment. Christ himself had given signs whereby they might know when the Kingdom of God was nigh at hand, but they had been told that "of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the son, but the Father" (Mark 13, 32). It was future to that time even as it is to this, and so could not possibly be "within them."

Still less could the Kingdom of God be within those to whom the words were addressed. The record in the Gospel of Luke (chapter 17, verse 20) shows that he was replying to the Pharisees, whom he had described as hypocrites and white-washed sepulchres, and who should find no place in the kingdom. "Ye shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of God and ye yourselves thrust out." How then can we understand these words? The alternative rendering of the original words found in the margin makes it plain: "The Kingdom of God is *among* you." And was it not so? Was not the prospective King there with them—the one who, when charged with making a claim to this honour, denied it not before Pilate, but said: "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world" (John 18, 37)?

Forasmuch then as it had been covenanted to him, and inasmuch as he had been obedient to the Father in all things and was willing to obey even to the extent of yielding up his life, the Kingdom could be given to no other. He, then, was in this sense the Kingdom. And in due time he should be manifested to be the King of this Kingdom of God, reigning in its capital (Jerusalem—Matt. 5, 35), with princes and rulers (the redeemed from among men—Rev. 5, 9), over a people (the nations, Ps. 2, 8, Rev. 2, 26), and a territory (the whole world, Ps. 72, 8), and bringing all the world to God (Isa. 2, 2-4; Ezek. 40-48).

WHEN WILL IT COME?

"Our Father who art in heaven. Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in

heaven." When will the Kingdom come? Man may not know "the day nor the hour," but he may heed the signs that herald its approach. The apostle Paul says that these times and seasons should be known:

"Of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night . . . but ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief." (1 Thess. 5, 1-4).

Of the many signs relative to these times and seasons which have been given, let us consider one mentioned by Christ. It was given in reply to a question which the disciples addressed to him upon this matter. Jesus answered them:

"Behold the fig tree, and all the trees: when they now shoot forth ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass (and he is referring to signs which he had just given them) know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand."
(Luke 21, 29, 31.)

In this parable concerning all the trees why does Jesus separately mention the fig tree? Is it not because in the Scriptures there is a nation likened to a fig tree, and one therefore which might be called the fig tree nation? In the prophecy by Joel we read:

"A nation is come up upon my land (the land of Israel, chapter 2, verse 1)—he hath laid my vine waste and barked my fig tree; he hath made it clean bare and cast it away"
(chapter 1, verses 6, 7).

What was God's vine? Psalm 80 leaves the matter in no doubt, for there Israel is likened unto a vine brought from Egypt and planted in a new land. And Israel is the vine and fig tree of Joel's prophecy.

In addition to the symbolic use of trees for nations, the Bible contains many examples of the state or condition of those nations being represented by the state or condition of the trees. The 17th chapter of Ezekiel may be cited in this connection. The kingdoms of Judah, of Egypt, and of Babylon are brought under review, and the prophet concludes:

“ All the trees of the field shall know that I, the Lord, hath brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish; I, the Lord, have spoken and have done it.” (Ezek. 17. 24.)

It will thus be seen how the prophet uses the condition of the trees to represent the varying fortunes of these nations. In the same way, when Christ asks us to consider the budding of the trees of the parable he is calling attention, first, to the time aspect of the signs he has given: just as the budding of the trees heralds summer, so the fulfilment of the signs heralds the coming kingdom; and second, to the state or condition of the things symbolised. The budding of the fig tree indicates a stirring of national life in the fig tree nation, just as the budding of the other trees indicates the growth of national consciousness—a development of modern times.

RESTORATION OF ISRAEL

For many centuries Israel has been a dry tree. Her nationality has been submerged beneath that of other nations, her people scattered and her land a desolation in the hands of strangers. Yet the last fifty years have witnessed a remarkable quickening of the national aspirations of the Jews. The movement known as Zionism has taken hold of Jewry in all countries and they clamour to be allowed to go back “to their own land.” Those who have gone—and over 600,000* are settled there—have made “the wilderness to blossom as the rose,” exciting the envy and alarm of the Arabs. We interpret this as a fulfilment of the words of Christ; but lest it be deemed we build too much upon a single statement we ask you to read what the prophets have said concerning Israel in the latter days.

We would especially direct your attention to the 37th chapter of Ezekiel, where the prophet speaks of a valley full of bones representing “the whole house of Israel” (v. 11). We would ask you to note the process of regathering them from among the nations and their establishment in their land:

* In 1962 about 2 million.

“Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land. And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel: and one king shall be king to them all: . . . and they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant: . . . and my servant David shall be their prince for ever” (vv. 21, 22, 25).

Is not the budding of the fig tree nation a sign of the nearness of these things—the coming of the Son of Man—the establishment of the Kingdom of God? It is Christ who gives the sign. Shall we heed it and be among those to whom that day does not come as a thief, or shall we ignore it, reject it, despise it and be taken by it unawares?

This book has been written that you may be enabled to answer that question.

It has set before you the reasons why you should take up the Bible again and read and study it.

Scientific theories and clerical fables combined with modern indifference may have caused you to regard it as of no account.

But in this book unproved theories and human fables have been put to the test, placed side by side with the Scriptures, with the result, we trust, that you are assured that the latter form an impregnable rock upon which we can build our hopes.

The history of the nations has proved the truth of Bible prophecy, an undeniable testimony to the fact that it is the Word of God. With these assurances we have examined the message the Bible brings—God’s plan of salvation for man and His purpose with the earth.

A FINAL QUESTION

We are brought, then, finally and inevitably to the question:

“WHAT DOES THIS MESSAGE MEAN TO ME? MAY I PARTAKE OF THIS GREAT SALVATION, AND OF THIS GLORY WHICH SHALL COVER THE EARTH?”

The answer is quite simply “Yes,” for God “is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” (2 Pet. 3, 9).

Yet the act of repentance involves some effort, some response, on the part of the seeker. To whom shall he come, from what shall he repent, and what shall be required of him? "He that cometh to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11, 6).

The searcher can find evidence of God in His handiwork, for "the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork," but cannot find there a revelation of God or His purpose. He must search in God's Word, for this is a lamp to the feet and a light to the path, inasmuch as "the entrance of thy word giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple."

It will give all the knowledge necessary for a firm belief that God is, and for an understanding of God's revelation of himself.

It will show that, apart from God's plan of redemption, the seeker will pass into the endless silence of the grave; but it will also unfold to him the hope and promise of an escape from this doom.

THE CHOICE

It will show that a means has been provided whereby his former life may be covered by a baptism into Christ; that by his complete immersion in water, by a symbolic death, he publicly confesses his guilt and figuratively dies, and that after the same symbol he rises to a newness of life (Rom. 6), having "an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous," who shall be "a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God to make reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Hebrews 2, 17).

The Seeker now stands in the strait and narrow way that leads to life; he heeds the word of God; he keeps His commandments; for he believes that God is the "rewarder of them that diligently seek him." He believes that by so doing he will be numbered among those who will receive eternal life; that he will stand among the redeemed who sing: "Thou . . . hast made us unto our God kings and priests and we shall reign on the earth"; that he will be among those of whom it is said: "They shall hunger no

more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

“Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

“Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”

HAVE YOU READ IT ?

3 Reasons Why You Should Do So

1. BECAUSE the awful calamities which afflict the world today demand a reason why man has been unable to achieve ordered progress and peace on the earth. The failure to appreciate the true nature of Christian teaching will be found responsible for the misrule and despotism of Church and State.

2. BECAUSE the object for which Christ came into the world has been obscured by human ideas concerning the origin, nature and destiny of man. Immortality is not an inherent possession, but the gift of God and conditional on faith in the Divine promises and a willing submission to the law of Christ.

3. BECAUSE it is necessary to know how to escape the fiery judgments that soon will engulf the world for its continued wickedness and rebellion against Divine law. The Bible clearly foreshadows the long period of darkness and evil that soon will usher in the perfect day of joy and peace.

CHRISTENDOM ASTRAY FROM THE BIBLE

By ROBERT ROBERTS