

The . . .
FUNDAMENTALS
of the
CHRISTIAN FAITH

.....
... BY ...
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CHAPTER I.

Preliminary.

ONCE on a time the attack on the Christian faith came from the *outside*, from avowed enemies of the Bible, who refused to believe in the God of revelation. Their work was openly destructive, leaving nothing behind but moral wreckage and the destruction of faith. Generally speaking, their attack on the Bible was couched in ribald and obscene language, and found acceptance among the dregs of society. Men of impure lives, and not too particular about uprightness and honesty, were attracted to a system which put no restraint on the conscience. The doctrine of no heaven, to which they were not particularly attracted, was more than compensated in their minds by that of no hell—no responsibility to God and no punishment for their evil deeds.

That attack has failed. Tactics have changed. The assault now is from the *inside*. Where open onslaught has failed TREACHERY is succeeding.

It reminds us of the siege of ancient Troy. For ten long years the Greeks besieged the city without avail. In the end what they could not achieve by *outside* attack they secured by stratagem.

Picked warriors were secreted within a monstrous wooden horse. The Greek army retired from before the walls of Troy. The Trojans, believing that the horse was a miraculous gift from their gods, dragged it within their walls, treating it with the honour a gift from the gods should command.

At nightfall the Greeks again approached Troy, whilst their comrades, emerging from the horse, opened to them the gates of the city, and by this means Troy was captured.

In a similar way the enemy has sought to undermine and destroy the Christian faith.

Beginning with Higher Criticism, emanating in the main from German scholars, who one and all disbelieved in the Deity of the Lord Jesus and refused the inspiration of the Bible, the attack has been proceeding in an underground, insidious fashion, till scarcely a theological chair is sound in its teaching.

The teachings of the out-and-out infidel, Thomas Paine, once refused as blasphemous, are now being unblushingly proclaimed from many a pulpit under the heading of "the assured results of scholarship."

The attack is on Christ and the Scriptures—Christ, the *living* Word, and the Scriptures, the *written* word. One thing is certain, a fallible Christ cannot be the Saviour of mankind, and a fallible Bible cannot be the foundation of anything Divine. The success of the Higher Critics means, to be logical, the utter destruction of faith.

Lord Tennyson was fond of saying: "It is hard to believe; it is harder not to

believe." And certainly Higher Criticism or Modernism demands far more credulity on the part of their followers than the Bible demands faith on the part of the humble believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In truth the conflicting forces are now in deadly grips. The believers in the infallible Bible and the infallible Christ are termed Fundamentalists, and the rest are termed Modernists, and between the Modernists and Fundamentalists no quarter is asked, and no quarter given.

Send an earnest Christian young man to a theological college to-day, and it will be a miracle if he comes out unscathed.

Said a young man, who had been to a celebrated university city: "I've attended the university preachers during my undergraduate days, and, thank God, in spite of that, I'm still a Christian."

Can anything be more pitiable than such a state of things as this reveals?

A young man, imbued with infidel notions, and what often accompanies this—a fair conceit of his own powers of mind—asked his minister to recommend him books which would prove to him that the Bible was inspired.

His reply was: "*Read the Bible.*"

The young man answered, "You misunderstand me, sir. I want you to recommend me to books which will prove the Bible to be true."

The minister replied: "I made no mistake. Read THE BIBLE."

So it is to the Bible itself we turn. The Bible is its own defence. The Bible itself prepares us for the situation in which we find ourselves to-day. In Matthew xiii., an outstanding chapter, containing the parables of the kingdom of heaven, which were given by the Lord to His disciples, we have outlined with prophetic vision the trend of the Christian profession, arriving finally at the condition of the present day.

First there is the parable of the wheat and tares, illustrating the first great device of Satan, seeking to corrupt and undermine the things of God. At first the Christian assemblies were only composed of true believers. By-and-by "while men slept"—while the Christian assemblies declined from "first love" and got careless—mere professors, answering to the tares, found an entrance into the circle of true Christians.

What a master-move of Satan, and what bitter fruit it has borne ! The point is too patent to be laboured. What condition can true believers be in when they can knowingly associate in full church membership with unbelievers ?

In full *Christian* fellowship—these words cannot be used in such connection, for no believer can receive another believer into that. That must be the act of a higher power than ours—even the act of God Himself by the Holy Ghost. Oh ! the shame of seeing mere professors openly acknowledged as

Christians, and occupying high and influential positions in the professing Church of God.

The next parable was that of the mustard seed—the smallest of seeds—growing into a monstrosity—the greatest among herbs, a tree, the birds of the air lodging in its branches. In this is delineated the next move of Satan in his scheme of corrupting, defiling, debasing, and, if possible, destroying Christianity.

With unconverted, ambitious professors of Christianity carrying along with them sleepy, unspiritual Christians, Satan set out to make Christendom a great world power—such an idea contravening the whole spirit and essence of Christianity.

Did not our Lord say of His own, “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world” (John xvii. 16); did not the apostle Peter beseech the believers as “strangers and pilgrims” (1 Peter ii. 11); did not the apostle Paul say of the saints of God, that their “conversation [Greek *politeuma*—citizenship] is in heaven”? Yet we find the professing church of God clamouring for a place in this world; whether it be the church of Rome, whose chief bishop, the Pope, claims superiority and jurisdiction over emperors and kings; or the Establishment, which unblushingly is united to the State; or other denominations, while each in its way strives for acknowledgement as a great and influential body in this world. And yet their Lord and Master is rejected, whose followers’ highest privilege is to suffer with

Him as they hope to reign with Him, when the hour of His supremacy arrives, as it surely will.

Then we have the parable of the woman hiding the leaven in the three measures of meal, thus prophesying that little by little the leaven of evil doctrine should permeate the profession of Christendom till the whole is leavened. Has this process not been going on since the apostolic age, till now we are face to face with an unthinkable state of affairs? Would it be believed that professors in theological chairs should be denying the Inspiration of Scripture, the Virgin Birth, the Deity of Jesus, and that in some cases even the Resurrection of Christ is questioned?

Moreover, we have the presence of crank religions, mostly hailing from America, and whilst presenting strange and differing details, betraying their Satanic origin in uniformly denying the Deity of the Son of God and His *true* manhood and the Atoning character of His work of suffering on the cross.

The Bible, too, prophesies the approaching apostasy of Christendom, the complete abandonment of the Christian faith, which only needs the withdrawal of the true Church to heaven at the second advent of Christ, to bring it within very measurable distance of fulfilment. We are told by the apostle Paul: "The mystery of iniquity doth already work" (2 Thess. ii. 7), and the apostle John tells us: "Even now are there many

antichrists; whereby we know it is the last time " (1 John ii. 18).

The question is asked in Luke xviii. 8, "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?"

It says something for the inspiration of the Bible that many hundreds of years ago it delineated so accurately the trend of things, and how they will culminate in the last days—these things on every hand shaping themselves with startling fidelity before our very eyes.

Is there any other book in the world of which this can be said?

CHAPTER II.

The Bible: the Wonder of the Book.

THE theme is so profound—the ground to be covered so immense—the avenues of thought inviting exploration are so numerous, that the difficulty is to know where to begin. The difficulty does not arise from paucity of matter, but from a veritable *embarras des richesses*.

If you were to ask a hundred men and women to name an Eastern book, the majority would not be able to give you any answer. Very few might name the Koran, the Vedic literature of India, etc., and even if they gave an answer, scarcely one could tell you that they had even seen the books, let alone read them; but ask the same hundred men and women which was the best book in the world, the answer that would instantly leap to the lips of probably ninety-nine out of a hundred would be THE BIBLE. And yet the Bible is an Eastern book.

THE MARVEL OF THE BOOK

is, that though an Eastern book, and written by Easterns, it holds a place that no other book commands.

Couched in language that is true to the local colouring and customs of the gorgeous

East, the book is emphatically *universal*, so much so, that were one hundred men and women asked to name Eastern books very probably the Bible would not cross the minds save of very few. And yet it is an Eastern book. How does that fact become so secondary? It is just because its *universal* character is so dominant.

There have been great writers, whose works have been translated into three or four languages. They have had their vogue for a few years, and as the years go by the circle of their readers dwindled, and in time have disappeared. The Bible is not so.

The explanation that the Bible is a *universal* book, a book for all time and for all nations, is very simple and yet very profound. It is that

GOD is the Author of the Bible.

That is why it is a universal book. He may use Jewish pens—He may use a Moses, an Isaiah, a Paul, a John, but GOD is the Author of the book.

Said the librarian of a famous medical library to his attendants: "Examine all the books in the library, and put in the cellar every book that is over ten years old—it is out-of-date."

But the Bible is not out-of-date. Its first words were written in cuneiform characters on tablets of brick, by Moses, over 3,000 years ago. It is by far the oldest book in the world, and yet it is the world's best seller to-day—read, pondered, meditated upon, assimilated, practised by infinitely more

readers than any other book in the world, and this is true, spite of the widespread indifference to the things of God that is eating like a canker at the very vitals of stable government to-day.

It is only to state a bare fact, when we say that the Bible has made the very deepest mark upon the world, changing its history and altering its outlook. Every day millions of hands bear witness to the dynamic power of the Bible when they date their letters and documents *Anno Domini*—in the year of our Lord.

Though the most ancient book in the world, the Bible is the most up-to-date, and cannot be otherwise. Some years ago an officer in the army was lecturing to his brother officers on electricity. He explained Lord Kelvin's great discovery that rain is always caused by electrical discharge—a discovery that has deservedly made Kelvin's name famous. This officer was an earnest Christian man, and he carried a well-worn Bible under his red coat. He said, "Gentlemen, I happen to possess a very ancient volume that distinctly anticipates Lord Kelvin's discovery." This announcement considerably piqued the curiosity of his hearers, and at the close of the lecture they swarmed round him, asking in incredulous amazement what ancient book he referred to.

He responded by pulling out his Bible, and reading,

"Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters, or a way for the

lightning of thunder; *to cause it to rain on the earth*” (Job xxxviii. 25, 26).

* * *

“He maketh lightnings for the rain” (Psalm cxxxv. 7).

* * *

“He maketh lightnings with rain [margin, *for rain*]” (Jer. x. 13).

* * *

Here we have Job, the Psalmist, and the prophet Jeremiah—three witnesses to this scientific discovery, antedating it by over 2,500 years.

This is only one of many things that proves the Bible to be up-to-date, and this can be said of no other book in the world. Why? *Because the book owes its authorship to GOD.*

We read in Heb. iv. 12,

“For the Word of God is quick, and powerful [living and operative—N.T.], and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

The Bible forms the written Word, but it is also *living*. God Himself is connected with the Word in an extraordinarily intimate sense, for the passage runs on without a break or any expression of contrast:—

“Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do” (verse 13).

Its effects in the world proclaim it to be *living*. I remember preaching in the open-air in a small Norfolk village when a man came up to me, and said, “Do you see that little chapel? Two years ago if you had offered me a five-pound note to induce me to attend the chapel I should have refused to darken the door. But now, if you were to offer me a five-pound note to keep away from the chapel I should refuse it. The fact is, the things I loved two years ago I hate now, and the things I hated two years ago I love now.”

A case like this, multiplied as it is by tens of thousands of cases of all nationalities, colours and social positions, testifies that the Bible is what it claims to be, *living* and *operative*.

The Bible is living. It possesses within itself, through the agency of the Holy Ghost, the power of communicating life. Only life can beget life. That is a scientific axiom.

So we read,

“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, *by the Word of God*, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Peter i. 23).

The man, whose case we have just adduced, was evidently born again. Millions can testify to the truth of this great change: once they were “dead in trespasses and sins”

(Eph. ii. 1), but somehow, mysteriously, quietly, a change came—in short, they were born again, in every case bearing out the truth of the Scripture, which says, “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit” (John iii. 8).

How true this is in the spiritual world to the analogy that holds good in the natural world—life communicated only by life, and the new life produced having no will in the matter. So Peter tells us the new birth is produced by seed—the incorruptible Word of God; whilst John tells us it comes about by the sovereign act of God’s Holy Spirit.

The myriad hosts of the born-again bear witness to the inexhaustible, vitalizing power of the Bible. Generation succeeds generation spiritually—the stream of testimony flows on in undiminished volume as the centuries grow hoary and the coming of the Lord draws nigh. If this Bible did not possess this vital force, Christianity would have perished long ago.

Eight times over does Genesis i. repeat the formula in connection with the creation of natural life, “*after his kind.*” Like produces like whether in nature or grace. *The Word of GOD* produces moral features, glorifying God and pleasing to Him.

It is said that one of the great kings of Sweden, a man of most kingly appearance and bearing, produced his son suddenly to

his nobles, presenting him as his heir. The boy had been kept in strict seclusion, and the nobles had never seen him previously, but the moment they did they accepted him without a question, because he resembled his father so closely that they needed no further proof of his paternity.

So it should be with God's children when walking in the Spirit. We read,

“ The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance ” (Gal. v. 22).

Are these not the moral features of the Divine nature? Let us examine a few of them in brief detail.

(1) Love ! “ God is love ” (1 John iv. 16).

(2) Joy ! “ In Thy presence is fulness of joy ” (Psalm xvi. 11).

(3) Peace ! “ The God of peace ” (Heb. xiii. 20).

(4) Longsuffering ! “ The longsuffering of God ” (1 Peter iii. 20).

(5) Gentleness ! “ Thy [God's] gentleness hath made me great ” (2 Sam. xxii. 36).

(6) Goodness ! “ The goodness of God ” (Rom. ii. 4).

What a contrast to Kaiserism on the one hand and Bolshevism on the other, bitter extremes, yet uniting in their endeavour to subsist by means of the most ruthless tyranny, and each carrying within itself the

elements of its own destruction. In happy contrast stands the fruit of the Spirit.

The Bible is a *living* Book. Existing only in manuscript form at first, think of the thousands of copies that were made—mark the patient care with which many a monk in secluded monastery made it his life's work to produce a hand-written copy of the Holy Scriptures.

Held as the exclusive right of the clergy in the dark days of Popery it has broken the chains that immured it in the dark prison houses of superstition. See Martin Luther, son of a miner, driven by that inward work of God in his soul, the new birth, hungering for the Word of God. Furtively he reads that chained Bible in the monastery of Erfurt. The seed of the word sown in his heart germinated and bore fruit in the glorious Reformation. With that came the invention of printing, and the Word of God began to multiply.

It was a living book, for superstition tried to kill it. To possess a copy of the Scriptures was enough to condemn many a believer to the stake.

But the Word of God could not be bound. Translation after translation was made. At the peril of their lives colporteurs would smuggle it across hostile frontiers. Secretly read, it exerted its wonderful influence upon lives and nations.

Coming down to the present time we have abundant testimony that the Bible is a living book. In our day we have seen most deter-

mined assaults made upon the Word of God. Crude evolutionary ideas have done their deadly work; the theological chairs in the main are captured by Modernism, and yet the demand for Bibles is increasing. A publisher gave it as his considered opinion, that revived interest in the Bible is originating from without, instead of within the churches. "The undoubted great increase in the sale of Bibles seems to me," he says, "to denote a determination on the part of the people to read for themselves instead of listening to sermons from the pulpit."

There is without doubt what can be described as *a boom in Bibles*.

A recent report of the British and Foreign Bible Society announced that during a period of twelve months, no less than 8,540,901 volumes of Scripture were sent out, including 941,297 Bibles, 907,415 New Testaments and 6,692,189 smaller portions. Nearly a million volumes went to India; 246,000 to Japan; 565,700 to Korea; 43,000 to Persia and Iraq; over three millions to China, besides many, many hundreds of thousands scattered throughout Europe, South and North America, Africa, etc., etc. Nearly a million copies circulated in England, Wales and Ireland. And yet this is only one Society out of many engaged in circulating the Scriptures.

Think of the Bible having been translated, either in whole or in part, into over 500 languages. Sit down and contemplate what this means. Think of the thousands of

devoted missionaries, who have thought it worth while to devote their whole lives to such service as the acquiring of heathen languages, reducing them to writing, translating the Scriptures into these languages, and then see the results.

Think of all the toil and danger involved in the spread of the Scriptures. Romantic volumes could be written on this entrancing theme.

Suffice it to say the Bible is a *living* Word, which can well be described as a tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations (see Rev. xxii. 2).

Sit down and ponder the marvel of the Book. Space forbids us enlarging on this happy theme. But touching upon it even in such a fragmentary way we are amazed at

THE WONDER OF THE BOOK.

CHAPTER III.

The Bible: a Unique Feature.

UNLESS the Bible were the Word of God, inspired and infallible, it would be perfectly inexplicable that it should command a tithe of the power that it does. From a merely human standpoint it is the most tactless book in existence. It flatters no one. It draws the picture as it really is. It plumbs the depths of man's depravity.

Was there ever such a plain, unvarnished story of man's failure and wickedness as is contained in the Word of God? It is the greatest condemnation of the human race, and particularly of the Jewish nation. From an ordinary point of view we should expect that that nation would be glad to bury in oblivion, with no hope of resurrection, such a story which holds their race up to such condemnation.

And yet the Jewish nation revered the Old Testament, and has preserved it with jealous vigilance and extraordinary care all down the centuries. There is no question about that. To this very day the Jewish nation is the jealous guardian of Scriptures which are their greatest condemnation.

There can be no possible explanation of this save that it is God's revelation to man, and that God's protecting hand is held over

His own Word: His Holy Spirit controlling the miraculous preservation of the Scriptures.

Let us go into some details. We begin with the story of man's fall in the Garden of Eden. The Bible is the only book in the world to give us the origin of evil. We are faced with this fact. No explanation is given why God allowed it. An ordinary book, written by men, would have attempted some explanation to have satisfied the mind of man, and to have enabled him to receive it with some show of consistency. But God does not offer to explain anything. There is no defence of God attempted. The bare facts are given.

Nor are the widespread results of the fall foreshadowed to any great extent. Beyond the sentence of death being passed upon Adam, the prophecy as to the enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of *the woman* (prophetical of Christ and the Virgin Birth and the effect of His atoning death), and the particular and immediate way in which the fall would affect our first parents, and again, the atonement prefigured in the coats of skin with which God *covered* (Hebrew word for atonement, *kaphar*, to cover) our first parents, and their expulsion from the Garden of Eden, we have no foreshadowing of the tremendous consequences of sin. God patiently unrolls them bit by bit down the centuries.

Take the first family—Cain and Abel. Cain murdered Abel. The *first* child that was born into this world grew up to be a

murderer. Could anything be less flattering to the human race ?

Next we have Lamech, the bigamist, and then a big jump on is made, and we meet the frightful description of the antediluvian world. The account of the unholy alliances of the sons of God with the daughters of men, and the frightful consequences resulting therefrom, are here given in graphic, terse language. Could anything be more sweeping than "Every imagination of the thoughts of his [man's] heart was only evil continually" (Gen. vi. 5) ?

Then we have the flood, the testimony to which scientists have dared to call in question. A whole world, save eight persons, refused the warning of coming judgment. Could one conceive a less flattering picture ?

The new world begins with Noah, into whose hand is put the magisterial sword, and lo ! the first action recorded of him is planting a vineyard *and getting drunk*.

A great step forward is taken again, only to bring us to the story of the tower of Babel, when men attempted a vast imperial union, which would make them independent of God. The confounding of their language is emphasized to this very day.

We leave now what is general, and come to what is particular to the Jewish nation. That nation was taken as a sample, God's dealing with which served to test the whole human race, as is seen in the law being given, that "every mouth may be stopped,

and all the world may become guilty before God " (Rom. iii. 19).

Just as the mighty river begins as a bubbling spring high up in the mountains, so God began the Jewish nation in the call of Abraham. One verse (Gen. i. 1) is given to tell of the creation of the universe; one chapter (Gen. i. 2-31) suffices to tell us of its reconstruction in six days. And yet we have more than thirteen chapters taken up with Abraham. Man, a mere speck in size compared to the mighty mountains, puny in bodily strength as contrasted with the lion or the ox, is yet of great moral import. Creation with all its glorious setting, compared to man, is as the scaffolding to the building. Man is the only creature on the earth capable of communion with God.

A study of what God would teach in Abraham is well worth the closest attention.

He is the head of promise. He was called the Friend of God. In him all nations of the earth were to be blessed. What do we find in his history? Were an uninspired penman to write down his history we are assured he would have produced something that would have glorified Abraham rather than God.

Genesis xi. tells us in such matter-of-fact language of Abram starting for Canaan at the divine bidding, and being stopped half way at Haran by natural ties, that it is only by close reading that this failure on his part is grasped. The next chapter tells us how Abram instructed Sarai, his wife, to say

she was his sister, the truth indeed to hide the truth, for she was his half-sister, but the worst of lies. Chapter xvi. tells how Abram sought to get the promised seed through Hagar, a sad story fraught with unhappy consequences in Ishmael.

Again, Abraham himself tells Abimelech, King of Gerar, that Sarah is his sister, a lie blacker than the first—it was intended to hide the marriage relationship—for he should have learned the lesson of his former failure on this line.

Of course there shines out in the life of Abraham wonderful traits of faith—grand episodes of true moral greatness—but would any uninspired writer have given these blots on his history? God's word describes man as he is. All that was grand and noble in Abraham was the product of the work of God in his soul; all that was sinful and sad, the result of what the flesh is.

Take the history of Jacob. Without going into details, how well he deserved his name! Jacob—meaning the intriguer, the supplanter, the cheat, the robber of his brother's birthright, the man who outwitted Laban in the matter of the cattle—and yet, out of such material, *God* could produce an Israel, "a prince . . . power with God and with men" (Gen. xxxii. 28).

We get the story of the ravishing of Dinah, and the awful punishment Simeon and Levi meted out to the Hivites, followed by the genealogy of the proud, unconverted descendants of Esau, whilst in chapter

xxxviii. we get the story of Judah and his daughter-in-law, playing the harlot; Tamar by this very act coming into the genealogy of our blessed Lord (Matt. i. 3).

Thus rapidly and partially we run over the Genesis record. Is it flattering to the human race? Would an uninspired penman have put things on record as we find them in Genesis?

Next we come to Moses, a truly grand figure, the law-giver, the man who spoke face to face with God on the holy mount. And yet after his grand record we have the incident of this meekest of men speaking in-advisedly with his lips, and not being allowed to go into the promised land.

Would not an uninspired penman have suppressed such matters? How the recital of them would lower the law-giver in the eyes of surrounding nations! And yet there is the truth told in all its naked simplicity.

Next we have the sad story unfolded in the Judges of a nation continually lapsing into idolatry, yet the story of the ever faithful God, who gave them repentance and sent them deliverers. Take one of the great characters—Samson: a story of a giant and a baby, a man of God and a man of lust—not at all flattering to the race. Take Eli's sons and Samuel's sons—how sad a record.

Next look at the kingdom. Saul chosen king, mainly because of his height. Read of his jealousy of David, and how ignominiously his life ended amid the shades of

spiritism and utter despair, falling upon his own sword, committing the terrible crime of self-murder.

Next we have David, adulterer and murderer; Solomon, with his plurality of wives and worshipping of strange heathen gods, spite of the wonderful God-given wisdom; Rehoboam, an utter fool, whose folly caused the ten tribes to separate from the two, and the beginning of the separate histories of Judah and Israel, where previously there had been one kingdom; the history of these kingdoms moving on till God first allowed Israel to be carried away captive into a foreign land, and afterward Judah and Benjamin.

To look back with rapid bird's-eye survey of the history of Israel, could there be a more disgraceful history of what man is, even when surrounded by the best environment, as Israel was?

How it enhances the wonderful grace, forbearance, and love of God, which love is still set upon Israel for the fathers' sake, and will be seen in all the wisdom of its working in the coming day of glory, when the prophecy will be fulfilled that in Abraham's seed, even Christ, all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.

And when we come to the New Testament things are no better. When the Lord Jesus came out in public testimony, who were His greatest enemies? Not "the common people," for they heard Him gladly; not the officers of the chief priests, who were chided

for not making the Lord their prisoner, for they replied, "Never man spake like this man." His greatest enemies were the chief priests and rulers of the nation.

And among His friends. See Peter denying Him with oaths and curses; see all forsaking and fleeing from Him.

And above all, Jew and Gentile banded together in crucifying the Lord of glory. Was there ever such a crime? Was there ever such a declaration of the evil of men's hearts? And they did it with their eyes open. "They have both seen and hated both Me and My Father." Their law had spoken of this, for this came to pass that that which was written in their law might be fulfilled, "They hated Me without a cause." Aye, was there ever such a shining forth of God's love against the dark background of man's guilt?

And when we come to the epistles what do we find? On the side of doctrine the wholesale condemnation of man in Romans iii.—a veritable summing-up of the whole human race. Corinthians was written to take up matters of the gravest moral and doctrinal delinquency; Galatians, to combat Judaising teachings, calculated to subvert Christianity; Ephesians, after the unfolding of the very highest truth, turns round, and bids the believers not to tell lies, not to steal, to put away bitterness and wrath, etc., and be kind one to another; Philippians tells us of preachers actually proclaiming the Gospel out of contention; Colossians, like

Ephesians, bringing out truth of the highest order, says some sharp things about fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, etc. ; and so we go on till Revelation is reached with all its terrible prophecies of man's lawlessness and rebellion, and of the church's decline from her "first love," as seen in the Ephesian assembly, to Laodicea to be spued out of Christ's mouth because of her lukewarmness.

Yet, running through the whole Book, from Genesis to Revelation, we see the hand of God—patient, gracious, powerful—carrying out His own purposes step by step.

It does not do to dwell upon evil, but on the other hand, we lose immensely if we fail to grasp what is recorded for our learning. For the writer's part, the utter failure of man to answer to God, whether in innocence, or under law, or under judges, or under kings, or by the supreme test of Christ coming into the world, or in the church, being met by the way God pursues His Divine purpose, spite of it all, only tends greatly to strengthen one's faith. It only brings out into greater relief the wisdom of God in dealing with men, producing a brand new beginning for us altogether in Christ. He shines out the only perfect One amid imperfection. His Person, His work, His place are indisputable for every true Christian.

In the light of all we have so rapidly reviewed, how full of deep significance for us are the words of Christ to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again." What a moral basis God works on !

Was ever a book written with such a stand, unpopular and inexplicable, as is contained in the following words, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 14); or again, "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness" (1 Cor. i. 23) ?

And yet the Book lives—lives in the lives of multitudes of men and women: thus the Word of God is multiplied. There can be only one explanation, viz., that it is the inspired Word of God.

We can surely call the honesty of the Book, the telling a plain, unvarnished tale, the plumbing of human darkness and guilt, a unique feature.

CHAPTER IV.

The Bible : its Unity.

THE facts we are seeking to bring before our readers are so obvious that they cannot be denied. They are like the mighty snow-capped peaks of a well-known mountain range—they are there, they cannot be explained away, they cannot be mistaken, unless people deny what is.

To begin with, there are sixty-six books in the Bible, yet they form an organic whole. Bind together sixty-six medical works, or political works, or theological works, and you will find one writer denouncing what is affirmed by another; one writer praising loudly what another as loudly says is to be blamed; one writer stating as exalted truth what another considers gross folly.

And this would be more than ever so if you bound recent medical works with those of the writings of the ancients such as Æsculapius, Hippocrates (400 B.C.), Galen (A.D. 140), Paracelsus (A.D. 1490), etc. You would find that you had bound together a mass of contradictions.

But when we come to the Bible and find some forty writers, extending over a space of some 1,500 years, who, in some cases, describe scenes and operations they could

never have witnessed, and prophesy events, which are beyond the power of the subtlest intellect to have foreseen; when we find, we repeat, some forty writers encompassing this feat without confusion or contradiction, there is only one conclusion to come to, and that is, one intelligence inspired the whole of their writings. And this is what the Bible claims for itself.

To pick out some of the writers, and describe them, is to deepen the sense of the marvellous character of the Bible in our minds. For instance, there is Moses, brought up in the court of Pharaoh, learned in all the knowledge of the Egyptians, law-giver, and leader of God's people through the wilderness; David, the shepherd lad, called to shepherd the people of God, the sweet singer of Israel, a brilliant military captain; Daniel, a youth of noble birth, carried into exile at a tender age; Amos, the humble herdsman of Tekoa; Matthew, a tax-gatherer; Luke, the beloved physician; John and Peter, fishermen, "ignorant and unlearned men"; Paul, trained at the feet of Gamaliel, to mention but a handful of them—writing often in different centuries—belonging to various social ranks—living in different countries: Moses in the desert of Sinai, Daniel in exile in Babylon, Paul in the cities of Asia, Greece and Italy; John exiled in the island of Patmos, etc.—and yet producing, not only sixty-six books, but actually *one* book—one organic whole.

This is the marvel that places the Bible in a category of *one*—it stands by itself,

supreme, inimitable and sublime. Indeed, its very name—Bible—is unique, derived from *Biblia* (Greek—*THE Books*), as if there were no other books in the world.

It reminds us of the story told of Sir Walter Scott. A dying man, he asked his son-in-law—Lockhart—to read to him. On the inquiry being made what book should be read, Sir Walter, the writer of many books, replied, "There is only one book—the Bible; read that."

It might well be called the only book—what book should we need on a deathbed but that; the book that tells us of life, and light, and love, and the way to heaven, of Christ, who wrought atonement at the cross, and a Father God, who welcomes repentant sinners, who put their faith in the Saviour He offers?

There are many good and helpful books in the world, but they get all their goodness and help from the two books of God—the book of creation and the book of redemption, and pre-eminently in the latter, which reveals His very nature.

But let us look at the unity of the book. Suppose some man came and deposited five chiselled stones in a certain order; another came years after and deposited another stone, and so they went on till from vastly separate localities and stretching over centuries, stone after stone was brought and placed on the same spot.

And further suppose, when this is complete, that a definite building is the result—stone has fitted to stone till there arose a

building of rare beauty, perfect and complete in all its details—you could only come to the conclusion that a master mind had directed each workman, who, not knowing what other workmen would contribute, had each contributed his share. And if one workman had died before another took his place, separated often by long centuries, then one could only come to one conclusion, that the master mind must be God—the Divine Architect.

This is but a feeble illustration of the way in which the Bible was put together.

Let us look at some details as to the unity of the book. What made Moses write the name of God in Genesis i., not in the singular number, nor in the dual, but in the plural, followed by a singular verb, if not to enshrine the thought of the three Persons of the Trinity, yet one God? Why did Isaiah write, "Come ye near unto Me, hear ye this: I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I [evidently a Divine Person]: *and now* THE LORD GOD, *and* HIS SPIRIT *hath sent* ME" (Isa. xlviii. 16)? Here we have the three Persons of the Trinity again.

Matthew tells us disciples are to be baptized "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. xxviii. 19)—the Trinity again.

Luke gives us the tripartite parable—the Shepherd seeking the wandering sheep, setting forth the Lord seeking the sinner;—the woman seeking the lost piece of silver, setting forth the Holy Spirit's work in re-

generating the sinner dead in trespasses and sins;—the father welcoming the prodigal, setting forth the Father receiving as sons, all those who come to Him through His blessed Son. Again we have the Trinity.

The apostle John hastens to present us with the picture of the eternal Word, the Son of God, the Lamb of God, who was as “the only begotten of the Father,” and who “baptizeth with the Holy Ghost”—the three Persons of the Trinity again (see chap. i.).

Again and again Paul brings out the same truth. One or two instances will suffice: “No man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed”; and “No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost” (1 Cor. xii. 3). Again, “One Spirit . . . one Lord . . . one God and Father of all” (Eph. iv. 4-6).

Peter says, “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. i. 2).

How comes it that there is this unity—like stone fitting to stone? And we have only given a tithe of the instances that occur. A master mind has stamped the book with the undoubted hall-mark of inspiration.

The writers left to themselves would have contradicted each other, and no binding could have held together the sixty-six books of the Bible. Nor does one writer refer to another in the Scriptures we have quoted;

they each assert what is positive, each in his own way, yet in perfect harmony.

Take another instance of the unity of Scripture. Take the thought of redemption. There is not a scrap of Unitarianism in the Bible. The refrain, "Without shedding of *blood* is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22), is heard in one form or another from Genesis to Revelation.

"It is the *blood* that maketh an atonement for the soul," wrote Moses in Leviticus xvii. 11. "When I see the *blood*, I will pass over you" (Ex. xii. 13), was Jehovah's message to the downtrodden Israelites on the Passover night in Egypt.

What meant all the Jewish sacrifices, but to illustrate this great truth—burnt offerings, peace offerings, sin offerings, trespass offerings, following on and on in unceasing succession down the centuries?

What meant the blood sprinkled once on and seven times before the mercy-seat in the holiest of all?

But these were at best but types, waiting for the antitype; shadows waiting for the substance; promises pointing to a wonderful fulfilment.

Let us turn to the New Testament, and see how it answers to the Old, as stone answers to stone in a building.

The Saviour Himself says, "This is My *blood* of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. xxvi. 28). "God hath set forth [Christ Jesus] to

be a propitiation [mercy-seat and propitiation, the same word in the original] through faith in His *blood* " (Rom. iii. 25).

Ephesians and Colossians both say, " We have redemption through His *blood*."

Thus the apostle Paul links up type with the antitype—without which the type would be meaningless.

The Epistle to the Hebrews, which so largely is taken up with the fulfilment in Christ and His death of the shadows and types of Judaism, speaks often of the blood of Jesus, culminating in the verses, " Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the *blood* of Jesus " (chap. x. 19), and "*the blood* of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel " (chap. xii. 24).

The apostle Peter writes of " the precious *blood* of Christ " (1 Pet. i. 19); whilst the apostle John says, " This is He [Christ] that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; *not by water only, but by water and—BLOOD* " (1 John v. 6); whilst Revelation begins with the triumphant ascription, " Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own *blood* " (chap. i. 5).

This again is but a tithe of the evidence than can be furnished.

Line after line in this fashion could be pursued. As an old divine put it, the inspired authors wrote " without collusion or contradiction."

And see how the end of the Bible answers to the beginning—Revelation to Genesis.

In Genesis i. we read of the creation of "the heaven and the earth"; Revelation xxi. tells us of the creation of a brand new heaven and earth.

In Genesis ii. we have a river going out of Eden to water the garden. In Revelation xxii. 1 we get "a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal"—the former an actual river with a symbolical meaning; the latter a symbolical river more than fulfilling the symbolical meaning of the actual river.

In Genesis ii. 9, we get "the tree of life also in the midst of the garden"; in Revelation xxii. we have "the tree of life" bearing twelve manner of fruits, and whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.

In Genesis ii. we get Adam and Eve, Eve of Adam, taken from his side when in a deep sleep, clearly a type of Christ and the church, the product of His love in death, as Ephesians v. 25-33 clearly teaches, and in Revelation xxi. we get the "New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (verse 2).

In Genesis ii. 2 we get God resting on the seventh day, no evening and morning predicted of it, type, we believe, of that fixed eternal state, seen in Revelation xxi. 1-7.

These correspondences, along with their differences, are in beautiful harmony with the whole tenor of the Bible; that is to say, everything in the first creation is "very good," yet alas! marred irrecoverably by man's fall (Gen. iii.), and everything in the

new creation more than answering to what was lost in the old.

The first creation is characteristically material, save man, who is spirit and soul as well as body; the second creation is characteristically moral, though there will be a new body for the believer, "a house from heaven," and a new heaven and earth wherein righteousness shall dwell.

All this is utterly beyond the power and wit of man, and the Book that unfolds it is surely the Word of God, inspired and inspiring to a degree and in a manner that is above and beyond anything of man's production.

CHAPTER V.

The Bible: its Prophecies.

ONE of the most striking proofs of the inspiration of the Bible is the way its prophecies have been fulfilled. No mind, however far-seeing, can penetrate the future centuries, and say what they will unfold. The *only* book in the world that sets out to prophesy, and whose prophecies have been fulfilled to the letter, is the Bible, and this clearly proves that it was not written merely and only by men like ourselves, but that there was a Divine Mind that inspired it all.

Prophecy is the anticipation of history. When the history is unrolled, and it answers to prophecy as the obverse of a seal answers to the reverse, the prophecy is proved to be true.

As a very young Christian, the writer remembers with gratitude that it was the fulfilment of prophecy that convinced him of the inspiration of the Scriptures, and held him from the infidel tendency of his mind.

It was the prophecy of Jewish history that convinced him in an overwhelming manner of the inspiration of Scripture. In Luke xxi. the Lord Himself prophesied the destruction of the Temple, the siege of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of Israel till the times of the

Gentiles should be fulfilled. Some forty years after this prophecy, Titus attacked Jerusalem with an immense army, and subjected it to a most sanguinary siege. He, however, gave strict orders that the Temple, that magnificent building, imposing in its situation, venerable in its associations, should be preserved. Which should stand—the prophecy of the lowly Jesus or the commands of the imperious Titus, One no longer on earth to enforce His wishes as men would say, the other on the very spot with all the power of a victorious army behind him? Which should stand? Surely the former?

It is recorded that one soldier mounted on the back of another soldier, and threw a lighted torch into the sacred edifice. A strong wind fanned the conflagration, and not one stone was left upon another of the wondrous Temple, according to the word of the Lord.

But some one may foolishly say that this prophecy might have been a lucky guess. Jerusalem was a turbulent place, and was likely to have just such an end. But there is a part of the prophecy that certainly could not have been a lucky guess. The Lord said the Jewish nation was to “be led away captive into all nations” (Luke xxi. 24). This prophecy has been slowly fulfilled from about A.D. 70 to this present time—a very long stretch of time indeed. The scattering of a nation among all nations is perfectly unique in history. By all the ordinary laws governing such an event, the Jewish nation should have been tracelessly absorbed by

this time. Who, for instance, can trace the Saxons and the Normans and the Danes and the ancient Britons in London to-day? These nations have all been tracelessly absorbed long ago. But if you see the ancient Jew in London you know him to-day. He is unmistakable. The Jew is a living testimony to the miraculous.

One can understand how the waters of the mighty Amazon refuse to mix with the salt water of the ocean till seventy miles away from its mouth. Thousands of miles inland, over the highlands of a mighty continent, springs and brooks and rivulets grow into streams, and streams into rivers, and tributary joins tributary, and again and again the process is renewed, till at last the mighty Amazon, draining the waters of a huge continent, two hundred miles broad at its mouth, the distance between London and York, pours this tremendous body of water into the ocean. No wonder it refuses to mix with the salt water till the distance of seventy miles out to sea has been reached.

But one cannot understand, on mere natural grounds, how a small nation, terribly reduced in numbers by sword, famine and pestilence, scattered in mere dribblets among hostile nations, without a leader, without visible unity, in days when the Jews in one country did not know what was happening to their compatriots in another, subjected for centuries to the most horrible persecutions, and attempts at extermination—one cannot understand on mere natural grounds how it is possible for the

Jew to retain his ground ; yet where younger nations have completely and tracelessly disappeared, the Jews, distinct and separate, are found in every nation, their number to-day more than in the palmy days of King Solomon.

This then is a prophecy that cannot be explained away. It is the finger of God. It is an external proof of the inspiration of the Bible. It saved the writer at the beginning of his Christian profession from making shipwreck of faith.

The Lord in Luke xxi. 24 gives a time limit for the dispersal of the Jewish nation—"until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

This allusion brings us to another great prophecy which was given to Daniel, the prophet. The end of 2 Kings tells how Nebuchadnezzar's captain of the guard destroyed Solomon's temple, rased Jerusalem to the ground, broke down its walls and burned its palaces and houses, and deported all the Jews, save leaving a few of "the poor of the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen" (2 Kings xxv. 12). It was then the Times of the Gentiles began—the time when the Jewish nation came under Gentile domination.

This prophecy was all contained in a dream that Nebuchadnezzar had, given him by God. Deeply impressed by it, yet the dream went from him, only that he might be more impressed that God had given the dream, seeing his servant Daniel could recall to Nebuchadnezzar what his dream was, and

give the interpretation, though receiving not a single clue, and that when the pagan magicians and soothsayers were unable to do so.

The dream was that of a mighty image, whose head was "of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay" (Dan. ii. 32, 33). This was supplemented by a vision given to Daniel himself of four beasts rising from the sea, viz., a lion, a bear, a leopard, and "a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly" (Dan. vii. 7).

In these two visions were outlined in prophecy the Times of the Gentiles, consisting of four great empires, viz.:— the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian and Roman. Slowly down the centuries fulfilled prophecy is found on the pages of history. The eye of God looked down the coming ages, and indicated what was to happen.

We might ask, Who will be in power in this country a short ten years hence, or what will happen to the League of Nations within a similar period? The longest-headed politician must shake his head and reply, "Nobody remotely knows, or can even hazard a guess."

And yet Daniel the prophet could prophesy the happenings of centuries. Does not this prove Divine inspiration without a doubt? To refuse to believe this is to believe more, very much more. It would mean that prejudice blinded men to reason and fact, and

forced them to explain away the obvious by substituting wild, harebrained theories, demanding a credulity that one would expect only an idiot could stretch to. Such are the lengths that men of intelligence and scholarship are driven to, rather than bow to the plain teaching of Scripture. No wonder the apostle Paul could scathingly denounce "the oppositions of science falsely so called," and among these sciences is that of theological science, alias Higher Criticism, alias Modernism—religious infidelity.

But now we come to the greatest prophecy of all, viz., that relating to the Person and mission of the Lord Jesus Christ in this world. Many prophecies are made regarding Him, and all concerning His birth and life and death have been fulfilled. Canon Liddon in his monumental Bampton lectures, *The Divinity of our Lord*, states that there are 333 prophecies, which centre in the life of the Lord, and every one of them, relating to His life on earth, have been fulfilled.

When a prophecy is confined to one item, it is just possible for it to be a lucky guess, a fortunate hit. But when the items spread over the manner of birth, the place of birth, the life, the place and manner of death and burial, the resurrection and ascension, and run into hundreds in number, we are clean beyond the possibility of a guess, when the mathematical chances are against fulfilment by millions. Moreover, this is heightened when one considers the miraculous nature of the whole life of our Lord, its perfectly unique character, until it becomes clearly

impossible for anything but God's divine inspiration to account for these wonderful prophecies.

We must content ourselves with very few of them, but quite sufficient for our purpose.

The manner of Christ's birth. "Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and thou shalt call His name *Immanuel*" (Isa. vii. 14). Read Matthew i. 18-25 and Luke i. 26-35, and see how beautiful and modest are the wonderful accounts of the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy over seven long centuries before.

The place of Christ's birth. Micah, a contemporary of Isaiah, tells us that Bethlehem was to be the place of Christ's birth (chap. v. 2). Luke ii. tells us how the whole world was taxed by Cæsar Augustus, making it necessary for Joseph to go up to Bethlehem, the city of David, because he was of David's house and lineage. And there, in the stable of the inn, the blessed Saviour of mankind was born, fulfilling Micah's prophecy in a wonderful way.

The activities of Christ's life. Isaiah prophesies, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me: because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (chap. lxi. 1, 2). The Lord in the synagogue of Nazareth took the book of the prophet Esaias, and read that particular

passage, saying, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke iv. 21). Did He not gloriously fulfil this Messianic prophecy in that wonderful three and a half years of His public ministry? The four Gospels bear abundant testimony to this.

The effect of Christ's ministry. Isaiah again testifies as to the effect upon the people of all the miracles the Lord performed. He asks, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" (Isa. liii. 1) and then goes on to tell how He would be despised and rejected of men. John xii. 37-41 shows how all this was fulfilled.

The place of Christ's death. The Lord Himself affirms that "it cannot be that a prophet perish outside Jerusalem" (Luke xiii. 33), and His suffering "without the gate" (Heb. xiii. 12) is distinctly set forth as the fulfilment of the Levitical type of the sin offering which was burned "without the camp" (Ex. xxix. 14).

The manner of Christ's death. We are told in Matthew xxvii. 9, that the betrayal of Christ by Judas for thirty pieces of silver was the fulfilment of the prophecy of Jeremy the prophet, and when we turn to Zechariah xi. 12, 13, five centuries before the event, we find it prophesied.

Infidels have sought to make great capital out of the fact that Matthew says that Jeremiah prophesied in this particular instance, whilst we read that it was Zechariah who actually wrote the prophecy. The answer is that

Jeremiah, a major prophet, covered the minor prophets, just as an order given by a junior master in a school might be attributed to the head master, or by a junior officer to his colonel or general. So we get the expression in Matthew xvi. 14, "Jeremias, or one of the prophets." The Jews have a saying, "The spirit of Jeremiah was upon Zechariah," and many students believe that Zechariah put down in writing what had been *spoken* by Jeremiah.

The details of Christ's death. When we turn to Psalm xxii. we get it beginning with one cry on the cross, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" and ending with another, "He hath done this," equivalent to, "It is finished."

We get the expression, "They pierced My hands and My feet" (verse 16), most evidently fulfilled in the crucifixion; whilst we read, "They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture" (verse 18), fulfilled to the very letter by the soldiers who gambled for Christ's clothing at the foot of the cross.

Isaiah liii. 5 tells us prophetically that the death of Christ was substitutionary, and this is amply stated in the New Testament.

The resurrection of Christ. No fact is more attested by full and competent witness than the resurrection, and on it depends the whole structure of Christianity. Peter, on the great day of Pentecost quoted Psalm xvi. 10 as prophetic of the resurrection. The apostle Paul claims in 1 Cor. xv. 4 that

Christ "Rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." Isaiah liii. certainly inferred the resurrection, for when he prophetically outlines the rejection and death of the Messiah he goes on to say, "He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand" (Isa. liii. 10), and that could be only accomplished by resurrection.

It is only possible in a short article to give but a small tithe of the evidence that can be adduced as to the prophecies concerning the coming of Christ into this world. In truth, volumes could be written on the subject, and the evidence in its directness, in its coincidences, in its artlessness, and verisimilitude, is truly overwhelming and convincing.

The Bible has been triumphantly vindicated by history. Its inspiration by God has been proved beyond question. How blessed to have such a volume in our hands—a book inspired by God, upon which we can build for eternity without a question.

CHAPTER VI.

The Bible : its Inspiration.

THERE is a cry to-day, "Back to Christ," the meaning of which is, Don't trouble about the Bible—that has been proved to be full of legends and myths, and it is unreliable, and you can afford to drop it, and fix your attention on Christ.

This sounds like honouring Christ, but it is anything but that, for He testified to an inerrant Word of God; and, if the Bible is, as the Modernist affirms, full of mistakes, then we have Christ affirming as free from error, that which is full of error. In that case we have a fallible Christ, and the Modernists' slogan, "Back to Christ," is meaningless, and in the end reduces Him to the level of a fallible man, leading to the complete undermining of the Christian faith.

In short, if we give up an inerrant Book, we give up a perfect Christ. What do we know of Christ outside the Bible? A line or two from Josephus, little more than acknowledging His wonderful personality and power, an account of His personal appearance, written by a Roman Governor, and that is about all.

"Back to Christ," meaning a knowledge of Christ apart from the Bible, is as senseless and foolish as it is ignorant and wicked. It is no credit to the mental calibre of the men who make it.

In previous chapters we have pointed out the wonder of the Bible; its unity and prophecies—all proving its unique character and its inspiration of God. We now come to the Bible's own definite claim to inspiration.

There are several theories of inspiration abroad, but the Bible claims for itself full, complete, verbal inspiration.

We read, "All Scripture is given by inspiration [God-breathed] of God" (2 Tim. iii. 16).

Take the headings of eight consecutive chapters—Exod. vii.-xiv. We get the words, "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying," or "And the Lord said unto Moses." Is this not claiming divine inspiration? And this formula is repeated over forty times in the headings of chapters in the Pentateuch, besides very numerous instances in the chapters themselves.

That the Bible claims verbal inspiration of the original Scriptures is very manifest.

In 2 Pet. i. 21, we get the claim in definite terms: "Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter i. 21), for surely if the spoken prophecies were inspired, their being reduced to writing would not be less authoritative.

In John x. 34-36, the argument depends on a single word—*gods*. The Lord Himself appeals to that word as settling the point—an appeal to a single word in the Old Testament

as authoritative and final. "If He called them *gods*, unto whom the word of God came, *and the Scripture cannot be broken*; say ye of Him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" (verses 35, 36).

Gal. iii. 16, argues its point by proving that the word "seed" is in the singular and not in the plural. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." Here the argument hinges on a single letter.

Gal. iv. 9, draws attention to the particular mood of the verb employed as being of vital importance. "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the beggarly elements?"

And lastly, we have seen how the Lord appealed to the very jot and tittle as being necessary—*jot*, the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet; *tittle*, the smallest mark or form used to distinguish letters which are so similar as to be easily mistaken.

Gal. iii. 22 states the power, authority and inspiration of Scripture in unmistakable terms. "For the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promises by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." Here Scripture is put into the place of the Universal Judge. But who can arrogate that place but God? If the Scriptures conclude all under sin, then it is

perfectly obvious that the Scriptures are of God's authorship.

Suppose a proclamation posted up, dealing with a matter that lies only and altogether in the royal prerogative, as, for instance, Queen Victoria's Jubilee Proclamation, offering a free pardon to all deserters from the army, who should report themselves within a given date.

The Proclamation offers a free pardon to deserters, but that is equivalent to saying that Her Majesty made the offer. So with this verse.

Then, it is often urged, how can God allow the writers of the Scriptures to maintain their individuality, yet their writings be free from human defects and errors? Some have affirmed the mechanical theory of inspiration, that is, the writers wrote down the very words given them, and had no opportunity of expressing themselves in a style natural to them. We believe the mechanical theory is not upheld by Scripture, and yet, whilst the personality of the writers is expressed in their writings, the truth so expressed is God-breathed, and inerrant, and free from human imperfections.

Let an illustration help out our meaning. Suppose a royal palace is being erected. All about it has to be in keeping. For instance, magnificent gates have to be made for the chief entrance, less elaborate ones for other entrances, whilst the railings are made in different designs, those in the front of the palace more ornate than those at the rear, and so forth.

And yet all—the magnificent gates, the less ornate ones, the railings, ornate and plain—are made of the same material. The form, size, ornamentation, design—are determined by the mould, but the mould does not change the material run into the mould, but the mould gives form and design.

So we have one material running through the Scriptures, viz., God's revelation to us, pure and faultless; yet we have the individuality of the writer expressed. For instance, Isaiah's style is grand, ornate, poetical; Amos's plain and severe; David wrote stately psalms, giving us the experience of the soul; whilst Solomon gives us wise proverbs; Daniel gives us prophecy, whilst Kings and Chronicles give us history—yet all from God, and perfect in all its details.

But it may be asked, though we have the Lord's own affirmation again and again, expressed and implied, of the inspiration of the Old Testament, how can the inspiration of the *New Testament* be proved?

The answer is very interesting. The Old Testament would have been incomplete without the New. God would never give us what is incomplete. The Old Testament prophesies the coming of Christ in a very full and remarkable way. We need a book, therefore, to show us the fulfilment of all these Scriptures, and this we get in the New Testament.

An illustration may help. Suppose an elaborate seal in existence, let us say in Egypt, in far back Biblical days. Suppose

the two parts of the seal get lost, and for centuries rest in the dry sand of Egypt. At length the spade of the archæologist turns up one part of the seal—the obverse. It is obvious that there is the other part somewhere. No one in his senses would make an incomplete seal for royal uses.

Years after, let us suppose the reverse side of the seal is found. What proves it to be part of a complete whole? The answer is, BECAUSE IT FITS EXACTLY.

And if the seal is quite unique in design and elaboration—if it is known to be the only seal of its kind ever made—the matter of the second half being equally designed as the first half is proved beyond a question.

Let this illustration be applied. The Old Testament is perfectly unique. Its prophecies are numerous. Its types are abundant. And when we come to the New Testament, we find the prophecies are fulfilled, the types are met by antitype, that it fits in all its parts, in a way that is absolutely beyond the wit of man to bring about. There is only one book in the world that sets out to answer to the Old Testament, and that is the New Testament. There is no other rival in the field.

In the Old Testament we have—

The FIGURES of Christ (Pentateuch).

The FEELINGS of Christ (Psalms).

The FORETELLINGS of Christ

(Prophets).

In the New Testament we have—

The FACTS of Christ's birth, life, death and ascension (Gospels).

The FRUITS of Christ (Epistles).

The one answers to the other in a thousand ways, as the reverse of the seal answers to the obverse.

We cannot understand the Old Testament without the New; nor can we understand the New without the Old. There are over 300 quotations from the Old Testament in the New Testament, quotations covering a vast amount of ground—creation, Adam and Eve, the fall, Cain and Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Jonah, etc., etc. The whole of the Old Testament is treated as verbally inspired in all its details.

As to the New it answers to the Old. In the Old we have the types, for instance, of the sin offering burned "without the camp" (Exod. xxix. 14); in the New we have Christ suffering "without the gate" (Heb. xiii. 12), and this is distinctly linked up with "without the camp" (verses 11, 13).

The range of information, the scope of revelation, the vitalizing power of the Scriptures, their unfolding of God's nature and character, their sublimity, their effect upon civilization and countless lives, stamp the Bible as being something infinitely more than the product of man's mind.

If a father received a treatise dealing with highly intellectual mathematical problems in the handwriting of his little son of six years old, he would know that whilst the handwriting was his son's the matter could not be.

So if you contrast all the accounts of creation written by men, and compare them

with Genesis i., you may know that though Moses may have written that account on bricks in cuneiform characters, he could no more have originated that chapter than the boy of six could have originated a mathematical problem dealing with the integral calculus.

Take the first verse in Genesis i.—“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” Why did Moses write the name of God in the plural? The Hebrew language has singular, dual and plural numbers, so that the plural must designate three at least. In the word God, being in the plural, we have undoubtedly a reference to the Holy Trinity—three persons, yet one God—the blessed Triune God, far beyond our comprehension, yet not beyond our faith and adoration.

Further, the word—God—in the plural is followed by a singular verb—created. Why singular? Should not a plural noun be followed by a plural verb to be good grammar? Yet in the very first verse in the Bible we get bad grammar in order to give us good theology. Though the word God is in the plural, indicating as we have said, the Trinity, yet there is but *one* God—a plural unity, if we may use the phrase with reverence.

And still further, the word “heaven” is in the dual. Now, in 2 Cor. xii. 2, we read of the third heaven, evidently the immediate presence of God. Heaven (Gen. i. 1) in the dual would set forth (1) the atmospheric

heaven, the atmosphere that belts the earth where clouds are formed, and (2) the stellar heavens, those vast spaces in which the myriads of stars are set. Genesis i. 1 speaks of the creation of these, but not of the third heaven. How marvellously exact.

Now Moses, the writer of Genesis, was not present when creation took place, and could have no more the wit to write the very first verse of the Bible than he could have the power to create that which he described. The first verse of the Bible certainly bears most fully the hall mark of inspiration. Only God could have inspired it.

We have seen how Moses indicated the thought of the Trinity in Genesis i. 1. Isaiah xlviii. 16 presents the same idea in striking language, not enfolding the idea in one word, as in Genesis i. 1, but bringing out the thought in detail. "Come ye near unto Me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord God and His Spirit hath sent Me."

One is irresistibly reminded of John i. 1: "In the beginning was the Word," when Isaiah says, "From the time that it was [the beginning] there am I." The thought in both passages is identical. Left to themselves, neither Isaiah nor John could have penned such a sentence, and certainly would never have stumbled upon such similarity of thought. Most evidently, the Person who could claim existence as antecedent to the beginning must be none other than the eternal Word made flesh—our blessed Lord

Jesus Christ. Isaiah then speaks of three Persons—"The Lord God"—"His Spirit"—"Me"—the blessed Holy Trinity.

Take another presentation by Isaiah of the blessed Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. He writes seven centuries and more before the birth of Christ, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: . . . and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace" (chap. ix. 6). Here we get a wonderful contrast—a Child of days and the Father of eternity—both expressions describing the same Person. Was not the Lord Jesus a Child of days, born as He was in Bethlehem's stable? Was not He equally the Father of eternity—the omnipotent Originator of all things?

Does not Micah bring out the same thoughts, when he tells us that out of little Bethlehem should come the Ruler of Israel, and that His "goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (chap. v. 2).

We ask again, Would the wit of Isaiah and Micah have sufficed for such thoughts? Assuredly not.

Time and space fail to say more. Volumes upon volumes could be written on this entrancing theme. We have scarcely touched the fringe of the subject. The evidence as to the inspiration of the Bible is overwhelming.

The spade of the archæologist in Bible lands discovers long-hidden treasures, which, when they throw light on Bible subjects, always, and in every case, prove the Bible to be right in every detail.

CHAPTER VII.

The Deity of the Lord Jesus.

WE come now to an absolutely vital point in Christian doctrine—one around which controversy has raged all through the Christian era. Satan's ceaseless attack has been directed against the doctrine of the Deity of Jesus. If that doctrine is allowed, it puts everything in Scripture in proper perspective. The miraculous birth of Christ, His miracles, His speech (either directly or by powerful implication claiming to be what He was), His death and His ascension can all be looked at in a right way.

In the early Christian church and all down the ages Christians have cherished this as a very cardinal doctrine of their faith.

Pliny, the younger, writing to the Roman Emperor Trajan, reports to his imperial master with the impartiality of one who is reporting facts, elicited in cross-examination of the Christians, "The Christians meet before daybreak, and sing among themselves, a hymn to Christ as God." The Emperor Adrian writing to Servian describes the population of Alexandria as divided between the worship of Christ and the worship of Serapis. Lucian, in the 2nd century A.D., said with contemptuous sarcasm, "The Christians are still worshipping that great man who was gibbeted in Palestine."

In those far-off days every Christian worshipped Jesus as God. Alas ! in these last days apostasy has set in in the Christian church, and you can find professing Christians, who deny the very Deity of our Lord. This is the rock upon which they split. The person of Christ becomes to such " a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence " (1 Pet. ii. 8), but how vital is their mistake, for we read, " Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder " (Luke xx. 18).

It is upon no isolated passage of Scripture that the claim of our Lord's Deity is made. There is abundant evidence. The whole life, acts, and speech of Jesus would be wicked to the last degree were they not all they claimed to be, were He not " God . . . manifest in the flesh " (1 Tim. iii. 16); whereas such was their character and such His Person that He could say, " I am the Light of the world " (John viii. 12).

What mere man could say this ? Such an expression could not have fallen from the lips of Moses or Isaiah, or John the Baptist or Peter or Paul. To have made such a claim in their case would have been unspeakable blasphemy, and would have utterly destroyed their testimony as servants of the Lord; but in our Lord's case to have said less would have been for us unspeakable and irreparable loss.

We stand here on the brink of a fathomless mystery, and we may go no further. The Lord Himself states the limits of our

possible knowledge on this profound subject. "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father" (Matt. xi. 27). The person of Jesus is an inscrutable mystery, which no human intelligence can understand. The intellectual powers and wit of men are of no use here. It must be so. If I, a mere creature, could understand the Creator, I should no longer be a creature. The lowly Jesus here on earth, the Son of Mary, a true Man among men, ever was, is, and ever will be God. Who can understand this mystery? No wit of man can, but faith can receive and rejoice in the testimony of Scripture, and the heart can bow in lowly adoration like Thomas of old and say, "My Lord and my God" (John xx. 28).

Isaiah, the royal prophet, could write, "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" (Isa. ix. 6). Here we have predicted of the same Person that He is a Child of Days and the Father of Eternity. Would an uninspired writer in his wildest dreams have ever put upon record such an impossibility from a human standpoint? And yet it is blessedly true, and the whole glory of God and the blessing of man depends upon the great truth of Christ being "God . . . manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. iii. 16).

In the same way John writes: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The

Same was in the beginning with God " (John i. 1, 2). " And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us " (John i. 14). Here we have affirmed—

1. The pre-existence of the Word before all things created.
2. His distinct personality in the Godhead.
3. His full Deity.
4. His true Humanity.

The affirmation is as distinct as can be on all these heads. Substitute the name of Abraham or Moses, or Isaiah or Paul, or any servant of the Lord for the Word, and how blasphemous would be the substitution. But in learning what John by inspiration has to say of the Word we have a sense of fitness and proportion, and without such knowledge we should have no adequate sense of the Person and work of our adorable Lord.

Take the titles of the blessed Lord as given in John i., and they can fit no other person.

The Word.

The Light.

The only-begotten of the Father.

Christ—Messias (The Anointed).

The Lord.

The Lamb of God.

The Baptizer with the Holy Ghost.

Rabbi (Master).

Jesus of Nazareth.

Son of God.

King of Israel.

Son of Man.

This is a dazzling galaxy of glory to be compressed within the compass of one short chapter.

Take the self-assertion of the Lord Jesus in the Gospel of John. Self-assertion in man is wrong, his place is in the dust; in the case of the Lord entirely necessary, for unless He revealed who and what He was we should never have known the truth as to His person. The true knowledge of Christ is necessary for the foundations of our faith, and it comes to us by revelation only.

Chap. vi. 48, "*I am that Bread of Life.*"

Chap. viii. 12, "*I am the Light of the world.*"

Chap. x. 7, "*I am the Door of the Sheep.*"

Chap. x. 14, "*I am the Good Shepherd.*"

Chap. xi. 25, "*I am the Resurrection and the Life.*"

Chap. xiv. 6, "*I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.*"

Chap. xv. 1, "*I am the True Vine.*"

To these may be added similar assertions recorded by the same writer in the Revelation.

Chap. i. 8, "*I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.*"

Chap. i. 17, 18, "*I am the First and the Last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell [hades] and of death.*"

Chap. iii. 7, "*These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth.*"

Chap. iii. 14, "*These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the Creation of God.*"

Chap. xxii. 16, "*I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the Bright and Morning Star.*"

Scarcely one of these titles could be applicable to the blessed Lord if He were not a Man and had not died. For instance, how could He say, "I am the Resurrection," had He not died and risen again? And yet how could they be predicted of Him unless He were also God? What creature could answer to this description? But admit that Jesus was "God manifest in the flesh" and all is plain and simple and understandable.

But there are three instances in the Gospel of John where the assertion is of absolute Deity.

Chap. viii. 24, "*If ye believe not that I AM [He], ye shall die in your sins.*"

Chap. viii. 58, "*Before Abraham was I AM.*"

Chap. xviii. 6, "*As soon then as He had said unto them I AM [He], they went backward, and fell to the ground.*"

The other assertions could not have been made unless He had become Man; yet in the light of His atoning death and glorious resurrection, they involve in the fullest sense His Deity as giving character to His humanity—one blessed Person. What mere creature, the greatest conceivable let it be granted, could say, "I am the Light of the world," and how could He be the Light of the world save as "God manifest in the

flesh," and in the light of His death and resurrection ?

The claims are of the loftiest nature, universal in their character, stretching back to timeless eternity, and looking forward to timeless eternity, presenting Jesus as the exclusive Depository of blessing to man. Such claims are either absolutely true and blessed beyond words, or else they must be the most blasphemous assertions conceivable. But no base man could ever have conceived such assertions. They must be true in the very nature of things. The moral sense of the child of God bows in deepest assent and worship. We are overwhelmed in the presence of such an One.

His whole manner of life was in accordance with these claims. He lived, moved and had His being in the true knowledge of His Person. He never acknowledged a mistake, for He never erred. He never apologized for His words or actions. He stated what He was, but never argued about His claims. He stated them, and that was enough. He claimed to be the Son of Man again and again. See Daniel vii. 13, 14 to understand what this means.

When He said, "I and My Father are one" (John x. 30), the Jews took up stones to stone Him. When asked why they would stone Him they answered, "For a good work we stone Thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a Man, makest Thyself God?" They quite well understood the loftiness of His claims.

When He performed miracles there was an ease and dignity comparable to no one else. He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth" (John xi. 43), and death itself yielded its prey, yet when Peter gave healing to the lame man he used the words, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk" (Acts iii. 6), and explained that "His Name through faith in His Name hath made this man strong" (verse 16), and disclaimed that it was by any power or holiness of his own by which the miracle was performed. The Lord uses no name but His own. He made no such disclaimer as Peter did. He acts as the Son of God—equal with God.

Yet, how beautifully He takes the place of the lowly dependent One, sent by the Father to do His will. He tells us that He says nothing, and does nothing, but what His Father bids Him say and do. Though this is blessedly true, yet He ever acted as One who was "God manifest in the flesh," yet ever the dependent One of the Father. Who can understand the unity of such a Person? None but the Father.

He could claim to be greater than the temple; Lord of the sabbath; greater than Jonas; greater than Solomon (Matt. xii. 6, 8, 41, 42). He could say to His disciples, "Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am" (John xiii. 13).

He was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. i. 4). In truth the resurrection

proves all that Christ claimed to be. God would not have raised an impostor. As soon as Saul of Tarsus learned that the One, whom he treated in his blind zeal for God as an impostor, was at the right hand of God, in a moment his proud will was broken, and he who persecuted to the death God's people, preached the faith which once he destroyed.

No historical event has better proof than that of the resurrection of Christ, and that resurrection was God's seal upon every word that Christ spoke, every deed that He did, and especially upon the character of the work that He did upon the cross. The resurrection is the Divine upholding of every claim made by Christ.

Hebrews i. 6, says, "And again, when He bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him." Would God call upon the angels, a higher creation than man, to worship that Babe born in Bethlehem's stable and cradled in its manger, were He only the child of Joseph and Mary, that and nothing more? Impossible! To ask the question is to answer it.

Colossians ii. 9 says, "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." There is no ambiguity about this statement. It could not be more concise—it could not be fuller. Ten words, yet an ocean of meaning is conveyed.

1 John v. 20 affirms of Jesus, "This is the true God, and Eternal Life." Could affirmation be more direct?

It is one mark of anti-Christian religions, masquerading as Christian, that they one and all unite in denying the Deity of Jesus. On other points they differ widely, but in this they agree, betraying their common origin, as Satanic. The branches of a tree may travel in contrary directions, but they are supported by the same trunk and fed by the same roots.

I well remember a man, who had been delivered from one of these anti-Christian systems, and who had travelled a considerable distance to thank me for his deliverance through reading a pamphlet, which I had been privileged to write on the subject, saying with great emphasis and joy, "It was that verse that set me free, 'And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory *which I had with Thee BEFORE THE WORLD WAS*'" (*John xvii. 5*). That one verse is sufficient, if understood, to destroy utterly all the anti-Christian religions in the world.

The subject is so immense, the Scriptural proofs so numerous, that one is only able merely to quote in a very desultory surface fashion a mere tithe of what could be said on this entrancing theme.

It is a vein of purest gold, which the believer will find profitable in working out from Genesis to Revelation.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Virgin Birth.

WHEN God created man He made him to have dominion over the work of His hands (Gen. i. 26). A great fixed gulf was Divinely put between him and the lower creation. Man was to have dominion over the lower creation, but was himself endowed with faculties that enabled him to have intercourse with his Creator.

We learn that that intercourse took place, the Lord God walking in the garden of Eden in the cool of the day.

But sin came in, and intercourse with man was rudely broken. Yet God ever pursued His thoughts of blessing for man, and we find angelic visitations to specially favoured individuals at long intervals, the Lord Himself at times appearing in this way, as witness one of the three men in Genesis xviii. being none other than "the Judge of all the earth," the Lord Himself in the appearance of a man.

But all this was working out a wondrous plan. Occasional visitations of angelic beings were only to lead on to the largest, fullest revelation of God possible.

The Lord Himself in assumed human form appearing at rare intervals, and for special purposes, was to give place to His becoming

a real Man—the Eternal Word was to be made flesh and dwell among men.

One is not surprised if an event of such amazing importance was signalized by very special circumstances. Such was the Virgin Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was a miracle of vast and stupendous importance.

Modernists have sought to assail this great fact, and assert that it matters little if our Lord had a sinful father as well as mother. The Roman Catholics, on the other hand, believing in the Virgin Birth, have added an article of faith to their creed, viz., that of the Immaculate Conception. By this the Roman Catholic Church teaches that the Virgin herself was sinlessly conceived, a pure assumption, and without any support from Scripture.

Mary, the mother of our Lord according to the flesh, “blessed among women” surely, chosen for the highest honour possible in a woman, in her Magnificat says, “My spirit hath rejoiced in God MY SAVIOUR” (Luke i. 47). Now, if Mary had been sinless she had no need of a Saviour, for surely need of a Saviour she had, like the rest of us.

But now let us see the real significance of the Virgin Birth. King Ahaz is bidden to ask a sign of the Lord (Isa. vii. 11). Wicked man as he was, he declined to ask a sign, whereupon the Lord gave him a wonderful sign, and surely, as inscribed in holy writ, given to us all: “Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel” (Isa. vii. 14). There has been an attempt to prove that the word

“virgin” simply means an unmarried woman, and does not carry the force of Immanuel being born of what we, English readers, understand by the word “virgin.” But the narration of the birth of Christ as given in Luke i. 26-38, makes abundantly plain what the word “virgin” means in Isaiah vii. 14.

The learned translation of the Old Testament into Greek, commonly called the Septuagint, and from which our Lord quoted again and again, plainly understood the word, virgin, as indicated by Mary herself in Luke i. 34, and rendered it *parthenos*, a word which does mean “virgin.”

But now for the real significance of the Virgin Birth. Of all the millions of the human race only ONE has been born of a virgin, for if born of a virgin we have a miracle of the first magnitude. If there were no human paternity then the Virgin Birth could only take place if Mary were the passive agent of none less than God's Holy Spirit. No one can give life but God, and if the ordinary channel of procreation was set aside, then it must be by creation—the creative act of God Himself.

And if God, the Holy Spirit, overshadowed Mary, then her Offspring, a member of Adam's sinful race though *she* was, could only be truly described as “that HOLY thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke i. 35).

Now Isaiah vii. 14, prophesied that the child of the Virgin should be called

Immanuel, which Matthew i. 23 tells us means, "God with us." Modernists seek to fritter away the tremendous meaning of this by saying that it means, "God *is* with us"; but this is not so.

The real significance of the Virgin Birth is that the child so born is none less than Immanuel, "God with us." Only one individual has come into the world in such fashion, and this One is "God with us." Isaiah ix. 6, bears this out when he gives the child the names of the Mighty God, the Father of Eternity.

We stand here on the threshold of the most amazing revelation of God. In Old Testament times He spoke by *channels*—the prophets; but in these last days He has spoken to us in Son. The prophets were *channels*, the Son was God. When He spoke God spoke, "not as the Father nor in the Person of the Father; not merely by the Holy Ghost using a person not Divine, but as Himself a Divine Person, and that Person the Son" (J. N. Darby).

Blind Modernism endeavours to get rid of His Godhead. To accomplish that purpose the enemy will extol His humanity to the highest degree. Allow Christ to be the fairest product of humanity, to be lifted far above every other man in excellence and achievement, and deny His Godhead, and you have lost Christianity, you have lost everything that is vital and blessed in Christ.

The sign, we repeat, is of the utmost significance, a virgin was to be with child, an event that has only occurred *once* in the

whole history of the world, and this is to demonstrate that the One so born is "God manifest in the flesh," "the Word become flesh," "the Mighty God," "the Father of Eternity," yet a true Man.

If this is true, and it is, blessed be God, we are not surprised that the whole life, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is one stupendous miracle.

But let us see how Scripture presents this important truth. The first indication of it is presented in Genesis iii. 15, when the Lord God said to the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel." Where did Moses get the idea of THE WOMAN'S *seed*? Over fifteen centuries rolled by between the Lord God speaking thus of the serpent, and the record of it by the inspired pen of Moses. The seed of the woman was utterly unknown in creation. When Seth, the promised line, was born, it was by the seed of the man. Generation succeeded generation, and it was ever and only by the seed of man. If Moses had not been inspired he would never have written what looks from a merely human standpoint a flagrant mistake, yet a true assertion, though utterly unknown in physiology.

And yet, in this prophecy, for prophecy it was, the most stupendous truths were wrapped up. The world's history had to travel on, till we come to Mary, the espoused wife of Joseph, both of royal blood, but in humble circumstances.

But let us go step by step. We have already looked at Isaiah's remarkable prophecies of chaps. vii. 14 and ix. 6. Turn now to Micah, the contemporary of Isaiah. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. Therefore will He give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth" (chap. v. 2, 3).

Here we get two things. The One prophesied was to be from everlasting, that is a Divine Person, whilst as to His humanity, "the King from Bethlehem . . . has a nameless one as mother, and of whose father there is no mention" (Delitzsch). Not to mention the father was the exception, not the rule. But when there is no father, there is no father to mention. How was it that Micah could have put such thoughts together for which there was no precedent in the whole history of the world, if he were not inspired?

In Jeremiah xxxi. 22, we read, "The Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass (or *encompass*) a man." This passage is very remarkable. It uses the word, create (*bara*), something specially brought about by the creative word of God Himself. It bears out in a remarkable way a former sentence, that the birth of Christ was not by procreation but by creation. The seed of the woman was the special result of God, the Holy Spirit's crea-

tive act; and the Offspring was perfectly holy and sinless, though Mary, "blessed among women," a specially prepared vessel of God for the high honour put upon her, was herself a member of a fallen sinful race. "That holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." The Jews were under no illusion as to what was claimed in the title, Son of God. "Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God" (John v. 18).

The sign given in the height, was that God stooped down and became Man; in the depth that the blessed Lord, none less than "the mighty God," went down into the dust of death. The Child of Days was at one and the same time the Father of Eternity. What a conception! How grand and glorious!

Let us now examine very briefly the records of the Virgin Birth as given by the evangelists, Matthew and Luke.

Matthew gives us right away the genealogy of Christ through Abraham and David. Matthew is the Gospel presenting the King, and the genealogy of the King is important. It is said that Christ is the only One of Israel's race that can prove His genealogy in and from New Testament times.

The short account of the birth of Christ as given in Matthew's Gospel is presented in eight short verses and from the standpoint of Joseph.

Mary was espoused to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found with child. Joseph, a just man, on knowing this, was determined to end the espousal. None less than an angel, however, brought him the Divine information that, instead of Mary being in dishonour, the greatest honour put upon a woman was hers, and the Child to be born, of the seed of the woman, through the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, would be none less than JESUS (Jehovah Saviour), Emmanuel (God with us)—that Mary's firstborn Son was to be the long-promised Messiah of Israel, the Saviour of mankind.

The whole record is given with a delicacy of touch that could only come by inspiration. Nothing is left out that is necessary.

It is interesting as showing the marvellous grace of God that four women are introduced into the kingly genealogy; firstly, Tamar who bore Phares through an act of adultery with her own father-in-law, Judah; secondly, Rahab, the Caananitish harlot; thirdly, Ruth, the Moabitess, of a nation forbidden to enter the congregation of the Lord even to the tenth generation; and fourthly, "her that had been the wife of Urias," recalling a very dark bit of history in connection with David.

How would an uninspired writer have chosen to mention these four ancestresses of our Lord? Would he not have assuredly suppressed their names? The introduction of their names only enhances the grace of

our Lord Jesus Christ in becoming Man, yet sin apart.

The account in Luke's Gospel is from Mary's standpoint. She needs to be assured as much as her espoused husband. An angel is sent to her. Would a less exalted messenger have been sufficient? He informs her that she is to give birth to a son, whose name should be JESUS (Jehovah Saviour), the Son of the Highest, and that He should sit on the throne of His father, David, and of His kingdom there should be no end.

Mary asks the angel a direct question, for she cannot understand how such a thing could be. She is informed of the Holy Ghost's overshadowing her and that her child should be "holy" and the Son of God.

He then instances her cousin, Elizabeth, who, after long years of barrenness and past the natural powers of nature, was to give birth to a wonderful child, destined to be the forerunner of the Christ, John, the Baptist.

The less wonderful birth is brought before her notice to strengthen her faith to believe in the more wonderful birth. "For with God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke i. 37).

The genealogy in Luke is placed between the account of Christ's baptism and His entry upon His public career. In Matthew we have the descent of Christ from Abraham and David down to Joseph, His reputed father, to prove His legal right to the throne of David; in Luke we have His ascent

through His mother up to Adam, "which was . . . of God," in order to demonstrate His natural right to the throne, and His manhood, for Luke's Gospel presents Christ as the blessed Man down here doing God's will and blessing man.

Note, too, the exactitude of the language used. In Matthew i. 16, we read, "And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ." It is careful not to claim Joseph's paternity for the blessed Lord.

In Luke iii. 23, we read, "And Jesus Himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli."

By *marriage* Joseph was looked upon as the legal heir of Heli, Mary's father, as was the custom among the Jews.

So that the Lord claimed *legal* rights through his reputed father, and *natural* rights through His mother—the Virgin Mary.

And as if to make succession through Joseph an impossibility we read in Jeremiah xxii. 24-30, that no descendant of Coniah, or Jechonias, as he is called in Matthew i. 11, should sit upon the throne of David.

"Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah" (Jer. xxii. 30).

Thus, if our blessed Lord had been the son of Joseph this prophecy would have barred the throne to Him, and it was only by the marriage of Joseph to Mary, uniting the legal and natural lines, that gave the Lord the title to the throne of David.

Thus has God guarded with extreme care the entrance into the world of Him who is its only Hope.

How surpassingly beautiful, how grand in its conception is the truth of the Virgin Birth. How everything is lifted above the sordid conceptions of man into the realm of the pure, holy and exalted purposes of the Godhead.

Well might the angels chant at His birth,

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men”
(Luke ii. 14).

Thus fulfilling the Divine decree, “And let all the angels of God worship Him”
(Heb. i. 6).

CHAPTER IX.

The Atonement.

THE *character* of the death of Christ constitutes an enquiry of vital importance to every one of us. Was His death merely a supreme example to the rest of mankind, or was it a sacrificial death?

One thing is plain—the most casual reading of the Bible brings out the fact most clearly that whilst the death of Christ is a supreme example of obedience to God, yet first and foremost it is a sacrificial death, an atonement to God for sin.

How any honest person, capable of reading the Bible, can cherish Unitarian views passes comprehension. And yet in recent years Unitarian views, once confined to Unitarian Chapels, and causing a universal shudder on the part of Christians generally, are leavening Christendom to-day, till in many a pulpit, professing to be orthodox, such views, so destructive of Christianity, are taught. All this is serious to the last degree, and proclaims the fact that the apostasy, prophesied in Scripture, is well on the way.

If it was necessary for Jude long centuries ago to exhort faithful men to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3), how much more necessary is it to-day!

There has been a very subtle design to fritter away the meaning of the atonement, by arguing that it means *at-one-ment*. It is true that the English word means *at-one-ment*, and was used by old English writers in that sense, that is, in the sense of getting two parties at variance to be of one mind.

Theological writers have tried to make out that the death of Christ was only an example of good will on the part of God, a benevolent gesture, calculated to bring the human mind to think well of God, and thus bring God and man to one frame of mind, and so make *at-one-ment* between them, that is, to become friends.

This view is thoroughly unsound, and is as sophistical as it is wicked. It is plain that if the word '*at-one-ment*' was the strict equivalent of the original word in the Hebrew Bible then this view would be correct, but this is not the case. Every Bible scholar knows this.

What, then, is the Hebrew word, which has been translated by the word 'atonement' in our English Bibles? It is the word '*kaphar*' meaning to *cover*.

This thought is at the root of all judicial procedure. A man commits an offence. The case is tried. The judge passes sentence of so many days', weeks' or years' imprisonment, or even capital punishment, according to the gravity of the offence. In this way the punishment covers the offence, in other words, is calculated as sufficient to counter-balance the wrong committed.

This illustration is borne out by Exodus xxi. 30, where we read, "If there be laid on him a sum of money, then he shall give, for the ransom of his life, whatsoever is laid upon him." The words "sum of money" are the translation of *Kopher*, a form of *Kapher*, to cover, the word for *atonement*.

Let us see further how Scripture illustrates this idea. When our first parents fell they sought to cover themselves with aprons made of fig leaves, a useless expedient that did not meet the case. Why? It was a bit of unabashed Unitarianism. It was an effort to be their own saviours.

We must remember that sin is ever and always an offence against God. The creature may make the breach, but he cannot repair it. Here comes in the wonderful story of the love and intervention of God.

What did God do when our first parents fell? Did He suffer the breach to continue? No; He immediately sought the guilty sinners, cowering behind the trees of the garden. The fig-leaved aprons did not suffice.

Adam and Eve sought to make a covering and failed. Were they then left to their doom? No; GOD HIMSELF clothed them with coats of skins. God *covered* them, but how? In order to procure the skins the animals to whom they belonged had to be slain. How touching that when death was pronounced as the sentence upon our first parents, it was not their death that was first in this world, but the death of the

innocent victims. One thing is clear. It took death to meet death. The sentence had to meet or *cover* the offence.

Of course, the scene we are considering was typical, and all its value lies in what it typified. There was no value in the animals being sacrificed, and furnishing the skins for a covering, if that were all. All the value lay in what this signified, and that was undoubtedly the sacrificial and atoning death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The next scene we may consider is the Passover night in Egypt. A lamb without blemish had to be slain, and its blood sprinkled on the doors and lintels, and God said, "And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt" (Ex. xii. 13).

We are left in no doubt whatever as to the meaning of this, for the New Testament puts the type and antitype together when it says,

"Even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. v. 7).

The sacrificial atoning character of Christ's death is plainly emphasized here, and only wilful rejection can deny this.

Then we come to all the elaborate ritual of the sacrifices prescribed in the opening chapters of the Book of Leviticus—burnt offerings, peace offerings, sin offerings, trespass offerings.

Of the burnt offering it is said,

“It shall be accepted for him to make *atonement* for him ” (Lev. i. 4).

Of the peace offering we read,

“And Aaron’s sons, the priests, shall sprinkle *the blood* upon the altar round about ” (Lev. iii. 2).

Of the sin offering we read,

“And the priest shall make an *atonement* for him, and it shall be forgiven him ” (Lev. iv. 31).

Of the trespass offering we read,

“And the priest shall make an *atonement* for him before the LORD: and it shall be forgiven him for any thing of all that he hath done in trespassing therein ” (Lev. vi. 7).

On the great day of atonement it was said of the High Priest,

“He shall take of *the blood* of the bullock [the sin offering], and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times ” (Lev. xvi. 14);

whilst we read an equally impressive statement,

“The life of the flesh is in the *blood*: and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an *atonement* for your souls: *for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul* ” (Lev. xvii. 11).

The New Testament confirms all this when we read,

“And almost all things are by the law purged with *blood*; and without shedding of *blood* is no remission” (Heb. ix. 22).

How any one, claiming to be sensible and honest, can be Unitarian in the face of such Scriptures, passes comprehension. Atonement is always connected in Scripture with sacrifice, with blood. Listen to the testimony of a converted Jew.

“This is the Passover week among you, my Jewish brethren, and as I sat here, I was thinking how you will be observing it. You will have put away all leaven from your houses; you will eat the ‘*motash*’ [unleavened wafers] and the roasted lamb. You will attend the synagogue services, and carry out the ritual and directions of the Talmud; but you forget, my brethren, that you have everything, but that which Jehovah required first of all. He did not say, ‘When I see the leaven put away’; or, ‘When I see you eat the *motash* or the lamb, or go to the synagogue,’ but His word was,

‘When I see **the blood** I will pass over you’ (Ex. xii. 13).

Ah! my brethren, you can substitute nothing for this. You must have blood, *blood*! **BLOOD**!! **BLOOD**.”

As he repeated this word with ever-increasing emphasis, his black eyes flashed

warningly, and his Jewish hearers quailed before him. He continued—

“BLOOD ! That is an awful word for one who reveres the ancient oracle, yet has no sacrifice. Turn where he will in the Book, the blood meets him, but let him seek as he may he cannot find it in the Judaism of the present.”

After a moment's pause the patriarchal old man went on somewhat as follows:

“I was born in Palestine, nearly seventy years ago. As a child I was taught to read the Law, the Psalms and the Prophets. I early attended the synagogue, and learned Hebrew from the Rabbis. At first I believed what I was told, that ours was the true and only religion, but as I grew older and studied the Law more intently, I was struck by the place the blood had in all the ceremonies outlined there, and equally struck by its utter absence in the ritual to which I was brought up.

“Again and again I read Exodus xii. and Leviticus xvi. and xvii., and the latter chapters especially made me tremble, as I thought of the great Day of Atonement, and the place the blood has there. Day and night one verse would ring in my ears: ‘IT IS THE BLOOD THAT MAKETH AN ATONEMENT FOR THE SOUL.’ I needed atonement. Year after year, on that day, I beat my breast as I confessed my need of it; but it was to

be made by blood, *and there was no blood !*

“ In my distress at last, I opened my heart to a learned and venerable Rabbi. He told me that God was angry with His people. Jerusalem was in the hands of the Gentiles, the temple was destroyed and a Mohammedan mosque was reared up in its place. The only spot on earth where we dare shed the blood of the sacrifice in accordance with Deuteronomy xii. and Leviticus xvii., was desecrated, and our nation scattered. That was why there was no blood. God had Himself closed the way to carry out the solemn service of the great Day of Atonement. Now we must turn to the Talmud, and rest on its instruction, and trust in the mercy of God and the merits of the fathers.

“ I tried to be satisfied, but could not. Something seemed to say that the Law was unaltered, even though our temple was destroyed. Nothing else but blood could atone for the soul. We dared not shed blood for atonement elsewhere than in the place the Lord had chosen. THEN WE WERE LEFT WITHOUT AN ATONEMENT AT ALL ?

“ This thought filled me with horror. In my distress I consulted many other Rabbis. I had but one question: WHERE COULD I FIND THE ATONEMENT ?

"I was over thirty years old when I left Palestine, and came to Constantinople, and with my still unanswered question ever before my mind, and my soul exceedingly troubled about my sins.

"One night I was walking down one of the narrow streets of the city, when I saw a sign telling of a meeting for Jews.' Curiosity led me to open the door and go in. Just as I took a seat I heard a man say, 'The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin' (John i. 7). It was my first introduction to Christianity, but I listened breathlessly as the speaker told that 'without shedding of blood is no remission' (Heb. x. 22); but that He had given His only begotten Son, the Lamb of God, to die, and all who trusted in His blood were forgiven all their iniquities. This was the Messiah of Isaiah liii.; this was the Divine Sufferer of Psalm xxii. Ah! my brethren, I had found out the blood of the atonement at last. I trusted it, and now I love to read the New Testament, and see how the shadows of the law are fulfilled in Jesus. His blood has been shed for sinners. It has satisfied God, and it is the only means of salvation for either Jew or Gentile."

This testimony is arresting. May God give each reader to appreciate aright the value of the death of Christ—it sacrificial and atoning character.

But the reader may ask why in this article have we hitherto confined ourselves to the examination of this subject in the Old Testament? Why not begin with the New Testament?

The reason is this, the word 'atonement' occurs nearly fifty times in the Old Testament, no less than nine times in one chapter; whereas in the New Testament it occurs only once, and then it is undoubtedly a mistranslation. We refer to Romans v. 11, where the word translated atonement should undoubtedly be rendered reconciliation. The Greek word *Katallagee* is in every other instance rightly translated reconciliation.

But if the word 'atonement' never rightly occurs once in the New Testament, yet we have the atonement itself presented to us over and over again.

In the Old Testament we get the word, but not the thing; in the New Testament we get the thing, but not the word. The word—atonement—in the Old Testament is typical. The thing—atonement—in the New Testament fulfills the type. Everything centres in the atoning work of the Lord Jesus.

Seals are made in two parts, the obverse and reverse. Suppose a party of explorers discovered the obverse part of an ancient seal, elaborate in design and evidently having belonged to some great monarch. They would diligently begin to search for the reverse part of the seal, and having found it they would expect one part to exactly answer to the other. They would rightly

assert that no man in his senses would make half a seal.

So with the subject before us. God would never have given us types of the atonement, if He had not intended giving us the Antitype, even our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God.

Romans iii. 25, tells us that "God hath set forth [Christ] to be a *propitiation* through faith in His *blood*."

Now the word 'propitiation' is the same as rendered 'mercy seat.' The mercy seat was the propitiatory and the mercy seat was the place of atonement. So that we find all the types and shadows gloriously fulfilled in the atoning death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The character of that death is abundantly testified to in Scripture. The Lord Himself said—

"The Son of man came . . . to give His life *a ransom* for many" (Matt. xx. 28).

* * *

"This is *My blood* of the new testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. xxvi. 28).

* * *

"Behold *the Lamb of God*, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29).

* * *

We have the very distinct testimony in Scripture—

“This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ, not by water only, but by water *and BLOOD*” (1 John v. 6).

There we have the blood of the atonement. And this is so, in one way or another, all through the New Testament. It is woven into the very web and woof of Scripture. It is the foundation of every bit of blessing that comes to poor fallen man.

It is the strangest, blindest piece of folly on the part of man that he should refuse the only thing that can secure his eternal blessing, that he should deny what is so very prominent in the whole of Scripture from beginning to end.

If a man should deny the existence of the sun shining at mid-day in a cloudless sky we should conclude that he was stone blind and absolutely foolish in refusing the universal testimony to the existence of the great orb of day, upon which depends our very existence—in fact, we cannot conceive that such a man could ever be. And yet we find learned professors of theological colleges, eloquent ministers in their pulpits,, denying what is just as obvious, even the atoning character of the death of Christ.

Not only are such blind, but they are blinded by Satan. Their carnal mind is enmity against God. They are blind leaders of the blind—awful responsibility rests upon them. Going themselves to an eternal, hopeless hell, alas ! they are taking others with them.

In conclusion let us quote a text here and there in the New Testament out of all the multitude of texts that could be adduced.

“ Being justified freely by His grace through *the redemption* that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be *a propitiation* [or *mercy seat*] through faith in His *blood* ” (Rom. iii. 24, 25).

* * *

“ For the preaching of the *cross* is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are *saved* it is *the power* of God ” (1 Cor. i. 18).

* * *

“ He hath made Him to be *sin* for us, who knew no *sin*; that we might be made *the righteousness of God* in Him ” (2 Cor. v. 21).

* * *

“ Our Lord Jesus Christ . . . gave Himself for *our sins*, that He might deliver us from this present evil world according to the will of God and our Father.” (Gal. i. 4).

* * *

“ In whom [Christ] we have *redemption* through *His blood*, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace ” (Eph. i. 7).

* * *

“ In whom we have *redemption* through *His blood*, even the forgiveness of sins ” (Col. i. 14).

* * *

“ There is one God and one Mediator

between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a *Ransom* for all " (1 Tim. ii. 5, 6).

* * *

" Our Saviour Jesus Christ . . . gave Himself for us, that He might *redeem* us from all iniquity " (Titus ii. 14).

* * *

" This Man . . . offered *one sacrifice for sins* for ever " (Heb. x. 12).

* * *

" Christ also hath once suffered *for sins*, the Just for the unjust " (1 Pet. iii. 18).

* * *

" *The blood* of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin " (1 John i. 7).

* * *

" Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in *His own blood* " (Rev. i. 5).

* * *

Could any person honestly or intelligently deny the plain meaning of this testimony of Scripture ?

Thank God ten thousand times for such a clear unfolding of the ground of salvation; ten thousand thanks to our ever adorable Lord Jesus Christ for having procured at such an infinite cost salvation, offered to all, and enjoyed by those who put their trust in the Lord Jesus as Saviour.

CHAPTER X.

The Resurrection and Ascension of
the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE Resurrection and Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ are vital and essential to the Christian faith. The life of our Lord began with one miracle—the Virgin Birth—and was completed with another—Resurrection. If the Resurrection happened, as the Scriptures claim, then Christianity is completely proved, and to believe in the Resurrection, as understanding its import, is to bring the soul into all the blessings of Christianity.

The epistle to the Romans emphasizes this. “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that *God hath raised Him from the dead*, thou shalt be saved” (Rom. x. 9). Again we read, “Now it was not written for his [Abraham’s] sake alone, that it [righteousness] was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe *on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead*” (Rom. iv. 23, 24).

The epistle begins with a very strong affirmation as to the vital meaning of the resurrection when it says of our Lord that He was “declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holi-

ness, *by the Resurrection from the dead*" (Rom. i. 4).

The reason for this is that the death of our Lord Jesus Christ was no ordinary death. It was far more than that. The Apostle Paul did not die an ordinary death, yet many deaths can compare with his; for instance, the Apostles James and Peter, and all the long line of martyrs.

But no death can compare with that of our Lord Jesus Christ's. One word only describes it. It was infinitely more than ordinary—it was infinitely more than extraordinary—*it was UNIQUE*. It stands altogether and immeasurably by itself in character and results.

Not one atom of Divine blessing could flow to man if the resurrection of Christ were not what it claimed to be in fact and in character.

It takes its character from all that it involved.

First, as to Christ personally. He claimed to be the Son of God—equal with God, "that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father" (John v. 23)—Son of Man with universal claim and authority.

Secondly, as to the nature of His death. He accepted the title of "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29), by which title His forerunner, John the Baptist, described Him. He declared that He came "to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. xx. 28); that

“the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke xix. 10).

If in Luke xv. He describes Himself as the Shepherd seeking the lost sheep, in John x. 11 He indicates the price of rescue that had to be paid. “I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep.” In John vi. 53 He insists upon the character of His death, when He says, “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.” His was a sacrificial death—an atonement for sin, propitiatory in character.

His resurrection proved all of these claims, for if they had been false God would never have singled out the worst of imposters, the most blasphemous of blasphemers, for the unique honour of Resurrection—a Resurrection which could have had no meaning in it. It would have been confusion worse confounded.

But in raising our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, God confirmed all that Christ ever affirmed of Himself. All the statements He made of Himself were all gloriously true, and in Resurrection Jesus was declared “to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness.”

If the Resurrection proved Jesus to be all that He claimed to be, to be the sent One of the Father, and proved the nature of His death, then it is incumbent upon us to bow to the incomparable claims of Christ.

The Ascension is a logical sequence to His Resurrection, for if the Resurrection was God's seal upon His life and death on this earth, it was only to be expected that His own words should be fulfilled, "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before" (John vi. 62).

Let us now pay some attention to the historical side of the resurrection.

As an historical fact the resurrection is amply proved.

There is a well-known story told of two deists of the seventeenth century—Lord Lyttleton and Gilbert West, two well-known lawyers, well trained in the use of evidence.

They rightly came to the conclusion that the Resurrection of Christ is the keystone of Christianity, that once prove it to be a fiction there would be no difficulty in overthrowing the whole fabric. They agreed each to write a book, one to prove that the Resurrection of Christ never took place, the other that the conversion of Saul of Tarsus was fictitious, for if Christ was not raised, how could His voice be heard from heaven, arresting Saul on his journey to Damascus, and completely changing his career?

They both set to work to read the evidence. Trained minds and honourable men, they both were convinced of the truth of the Resurrection; and one wrote a book to uphold the truth of the Resurrection of Christ, the other to uphold the veracity of the description of the conversion of Saul

of Tarsus, just the opposite to what they set out to do.

The books they wrote can be seen in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

Thirdly, the witnesses were slow to believe. The apostles were not a set of credulous men, who were anxious to believe any story that was chosen to be foisted upon them. They were not like the followers of Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormon community, who were ready on his word alone to believe that an angel had shown him golden plates inscribed in an Egyptian language, which he was unfamiliar with, and yet which he claimed he had translated miraculously.

The slowness of the apostles to believe was all the more remarkable, seeing that they had followed the Lord during the three and a half years of His public ministry, that they had witnessed His wonderful acts of power, and had even seen Lazarus, dead four days and stinking, restored to life at His command.

This last miracle should have prepared their minds for His Resurrection, coupled with His own prophecy that in three days after His death He should rise again, for the Resurrection of Lazarus, though prior as to time, was in reality dependent on the Resurrection of Christ. "Christ [is] the firstfruits" (1 Cor. xv. 23). And yet, in spite of all this, they were "slow of heart to believe" (Luke xxiv. 25).

Matthew tells us, "Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw Him they worshipped Him: *but some DOUBTED*" (Matt. xxviii. 16, 17).

Hear the testimony of Mark. "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils. And she went and told them that had been with Him, as they mourned and wept. And they, when they heard that He was alive, and had been seen of her, *believed not*. After that He appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country. And they went and told it unto the residue: *neither believed they them*. Afterward He appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, *and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen Him after He was risen*" (Mark xvi. 9-14).

Luke's testimony is on the same line. The two disciples from Emmaus, to whom the Lord made Himself known, returned to Jerusalem, and finding the eleven testified to them, that they had seen the risen Lord, and found them saying, "*The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon*" (Luke xxiv. 34); yet when the Lord appeared in their midst they were afraid and supposed that they had seen a spirit, and when He bade the disciples to handle Him and see that He was really flesh and bones, and

showed them His hands and His feet with the marks of the nails in them, we read "*they believed not for joy*" (Luke xxiv. 41).

It all seemed too good to be true, yet what had they were it not so? Absolutely nothing, and infinitely worse than nothing.

John tells us how unbelieving Thomas was, and not convinced till He had seen the Lord for Himself.

As to the ample number of the witnesses there can be no mistake.

1 Corinthians xv. gives us the list, and that not exhaustive. The Lord appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve (we gather from the end of John's Gospel this occurred three times). James is singled out as having seen Him, and we are told that "He was seen of about five hundred at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present" (1 Cor. xv. 6).

If the Apostle Paul had stated a falsity when he named over two hundred and fifty living witnesses as attesting the reality of Christ's Resurrection, he would have had many vehement denials of his assertion, and his whole testimony would have been valueless.

Moreover, the Lord was seen by the Apostle Paul himself. Arrested by the ascended Saviour's voice on the road to Damascus, with no doubt, therefore, as to His Resurrection, he narrates how he was caught up to the third heaven, and it was doubtless then that he saw the Lord in glory. The restraint put upon Paul by the Holy Ghost in the narration of this is one of the great marks of its truthfulness.

In 2 Cor. xii. he tells the story. If a man were not under restraint the tendency would have been to have glorified himself over such an astounding occurrence. The place and circumstances of it would have been described with elaborate and particular care.

Some fourteen years had elapsed before he described this occurrence, and then in self-defence it was wrung from him. The barest allusion is made to it in 1 Corinthians xv. 8, 9, only one year earlier. He wrote, "And last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."

As to the *reliable* character of the witnesses we have ample proof. A witness is worth a great deal when he is of proved worth and uprightness. In a court of law the evidence of a man of character and worth would be accepted if it were pitted against the word of a rogue or vagabond.

Take the character of the prominent Apostles—Peter, John, Paul. Study their writings. Never was religious teaching of a higher order than theirs. Would their writings be received as inspired by the early church if the character of the apostles had not corresponded with their teaching?

One mark of some evil religions, such as Christian Science, is that they are money-making systems. Mrs. Eddy, the hysterical daughter of a small New England farmer, died enormously rich as the result of propagating her evil cult.

But in the case of the apostles, they had everything to lose as men in this world in pressing the claims of Christ. We know in the case of the three apostles whom we know most about, that the end of their strenuous lives of Christian service ended in poverty and martyrdom.

So that we have not only an abundance of witnesses, but also witnesses of the highest order, and whose interests as men in the world were all against their taking up the line they did.

Again and again did the apostles put the Resurrection of Christ in the forefront of their testimony. Peter, in his famous Pentecostal sermon laid stress upon it. Addressing the High Priests and other notable Jews, he speaks to them of "Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, *whom God raised from the dead*" (Acts iv. 10).

Indeed, the great feature of the testimony of the early church was that "with great power gave the apostles witness *of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus*" (Acts iv. 33).

The whole teaching of the Christian faith is founded on Resurrection. As the Apostle Paul argues: "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ" (1 Cor. xv. 14, 15).

Finally, look at the grand results of the testimony to the Resurrection of Christ. If the risen Christ had not appeared to His disciples and demonstrated that risen from

the dead, He was all that He claimed to be, and that He was the Conqueror over death and sin and hell, there would have been no Christian Church.

That the Christian Church has maintained its way, spite of the worldliness of many of its professors calculated to smother it to death; spite of all the fleshly divisions, which are a scandal on the name of Christ, is an overwhelming proof, not of the failure of Christianity, as many would loudly assert, but of the very opposite—its unquenchable vitality.

It is reported that when an earnest seeker after truth in the middle ages travelled to Rome to inquire into the truth of Christianity at its headquarters, finding the unabashed wickedness of Pope and prelates and the utter worldliness of their lives, he exclaimed, "God's Spirit must be in Christianity, else it could not survive when its chief pastors live such shameless lives," and he became a Christian. Wise man ! Sensible deduction !

The personal testimony of millions of believers during the centuries of the Christian era is to the knowledge of a *living* Christ, One risen from the dead and ascended to God's right hand, One we look for to come again, and receive us to Himself for ever.

We can dismiss the theory that Christ never died, that He was simply in a swoon and recovered, as infidels assert, for it is unthinkable that a character like our Lord Jesus Christ could lend Himself to such deception, and that the edifice of Christianity, with all its beneficent, uplifting results wherever it has taken root, could have been reared up upon a lie.

CHAPTER XI.

The Second Coming of the Lord
Jesus Christ.

THE last chapter in the Old Testament ends with the promise, "Unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings" (Mal. iv. 2); whilst the last chapter in the New Testament gives us the presentation of the Lord Jesus Christ by Himself in the words: "I am the Root and Offspring of David, and the bright and Morning Star. . . . Surely I come quickly" (Rev. xxii. 16 and 20). The Sun of Righteousness—the Hope of Israel and of the world, the Bright Morning Star, the Hope of the Church, are here presented.

The similes are used skilfully, for just as the morning star rises before the sun, so the Lord will come **FOR** His heavenly saints, before He comes **WITH** them to reign over the earth.

The writer well remembers an illustration of this. Travelling from the Shetland Islands to the Orkneys he rose after a restless night at 5.0 a.m. On reaching the deck of the steamer he saw a really beautiful and impressive sight. High up in the sky, already beginning to light up with the morning glow,

shone one large lustrous star—the only one visible. It was the bright morning star. Away on the eastern horizon the rising sun was shooting upwards his beams of golden light.

Instantly there came into his mind these symbols of the Lord in connection with His coming again: the Bright Morning Star—the Hope of the Church; the Sun of Righteousness, the Hope of Israel and of the world.

That the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ is fundamental to the Christian faith is evidenced by the fact that it is mentioned in every New Testament book, save five; and the reason for these exceptions only strengthens this statement.

These five exceptions are the little pastoral epistle to Philemon and the second and third epistles of John, and the epistles to the Galatians and Ephesians.

It is quite understandable that in the case of the three first named there should be no mention of the second advent. They were very short pastoral letters addressed to individuals, and not taken up with any systematic unfolding of Christian doctrine.

In the case of the epistle to the Galatians, the Apostle Paul fought strenuously the evil effects of the propaganda of the Judaizing teachers, who were undermining the very foundations of the Gospel in their attempt to mix the teaching and the ritual of the law with Christianity in a systematized way. The plain fact was that the believers in the

Galatian assemblies were not clear as to the Gospel—as to the result of the *first* coming of Christ, and how could the apostle write to them as to the *second* coming?

Just as a boy at school who has not mastered what is taught in the lower class is not likely to be promoted to the higher, so the apostle had to keep to his theme as to what grace and the Gospel brought the believer into.

In the case of the epistle to the Ephesians the reason why the Lord's second coming is not mentioned is for an exactly opposite reason to that of the Galatians. In Ephesians the believer is looked upon as quickened, raised and seated with Christ in heavenly places. Already are they *in spirit* where the Lord's coming will place them bodily.

The coming of the Lord is made up of two parts, viz., the coming of the Lord *for* His saints, commonly called for the sake of convenience THE RAPTURE; and the coming of the Lord *with* His saints to deliver His earthly saints, and bring them into the millennium—the kingdom of heaven set up in manifestation on the earth—commonly called THE APPEARING.

The latter was prophesied even in Old Testament times. As far back as “the seventh from Adam,” Enoch prophesied, “Behold, the Lord cometh WITH ten thousands of His saints to execute judgment upon all” (Jude 14, 15). In the New Testament the great majority of allusions to

the second coming refer to the appearing. Not that the importance of the rapture is to be reckoned by the number of allusions made to it. The appearing has to do with God's government upon the earth, and the place the believer will have in it is determined by his devotedness and faithfulness during the King's absence. The rapture has to do with heaven; the appearing with the kingdom of heaven upon the earth. The rapture has to do with the Father's house, sovereignty, God's grace, salvation, eternal life, and all believers share alike in this; whereas the appearing has to do with government, responsibility, reward, and believers will differ one from another according to their faithfulness and devotedness.

Naturally we should expect the appearing to be oftener presented to us in the New Testament as the means to awaken saints to a sense of their responsibility, and as an incentive to their privilege of seeking by devotedness and faithfulness to earn the Lord's encomium, "Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. xxv. 21).

But though this is the case, and the rapture is not referred to in the Old Testament at all, and only directly twice in the New Testament, though there are one or two other allusions to it, yet the rapture is a matter of supreme importance. Its blessedness and importance must not be measured

by the number of times it is alluded to as compared with the appearing.

What can be more wonderful than the Lord presenting the church "to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing" ? (Eph. v. 27). And this will take place at the rapture.

There is a deep and widespread impression on the part of earnest Christians all over the world that the church of God is upon the very threshold of her translation to glory. It is true that there are no events which must be fulfilled before that wonderful event may take place. And yet there are recent events which clearly point to the imminence of the Lord's coming.

If for instance it were true that the church had to go through the great tribulation we should be in the position of saying that the Lord's coming could not take place until the Antichrist had appeared and made his treaty with the head of the Roman empire, yet to be revived; in short, that the coming of the Lord could not occur for several years at least.

In order to be clear on this point it must be grasped: (1) That no events need to occur before the return of the Lord FOR His saints, but (2) That there are events which must needs materialize before the Lord can come WITH His saints to reign on the earth; in other words, there are no necessary events to occur before the rapture, there are necessary events which must occur before the appearing.

But seeing that these two events are separated by a very measurable space of years, it is not surprising that before the rapture takes place there should be signs, ominous of and preparatory to the appearing, occurring, and that these very signs, though necessary to and connected with the appearing, and proclaiming that the appearing is at hand, must necessarily tell us that, if the appearing is near at hand, the rapture must be still nearer.

It is this that has stirred so many Christians of late years out of their lethargy, and revived the hope of the Lord's coming in their hearts.

Read 1 Thessalonians iv. 13-18; 1 Corinthians xv. 51-57, which are the two prominent Scriptures which present the coming as the immediate hope of the church, and you will find no event or events are outlined as needing fulfilment before the Lord shall come *for* His people; whereas in Matthew xxiv. 3-41, where the coming of the Lord *with* His people is the theme, you have many events necessary to take place before that event can occur.

How cheering for the believer to realize that there may be only "the twinkling of an eye" (1 Cor. xv. 52) between him and that most wonderful event—the coming of the Lord for His church. Do we really live in constant and daily expectation of this blissful event, which is surely coming, and that soon?

The church is listening for sounds, not looking for signs, which latter the godly Jew will do in a future day, when he will wait and long and pray for Messiah's appearing. We wait for the long-continued silence of the heavens to be broken, "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God" (1 Thess. iv. 16). And that silence may be broken before the reader has time to finish the reading of this volume.

How sweet and comforting are the words, "The Lord Himself"! He will not send a deputy, however glorious. He will come Himself. How could it be otherwise? The One who has revealed the Father, the One who in His anguish sweated as it were great drops of blood in Gethsemane's garden, the One who died for His church in all the shame and bitterness of the cross of Calvary, the One who broke the power of sin and death and hell, the One who ascended to God's right hand, the One who sympathizes with, succours and supports His people through their wilderness journey, is the One who is coming again for us. What a joyful shout His will be! How full of power and majesty!

The archangel, as leader of the uncounted angelic hosts, will voice with deepest reverence their sympathy with and joy in the glad shout of their Creator and Lord, whilst God Himself will sound the trump which proclaims so blessedly that the mind of heaven is one. The Father and the Spirit

are in fullest accord with the Son in this wondrous moment.

Some uninstructed Christians may think of the Lord as gracious and merciful and tender, and of God as austere and demanding satisfaction for outraged majesty in connection with sin. But the Gospel is to bring us *to God*, not to shield us *from* God. It was the Father, gracious and merciful and tender, who sent the Son, equally so surely. Righteousness must be upheld, but only that love might flow forth through the only channel possible. "Grace reigns *through righteousness*" (Rom. v. 21).

It will be sweet to hear "the trump of God," as "the voice of the archangel," and "the shout" of the blessed Lord—to be welcomed by all in heaven.

The few verses—1 Thessalonians iv. 13-18—are of especial interest to the believer. Cut them out of the Bible and we should not know the order of the Lord's coming. Verse 14 reiterates that the Lord will come *with* His saints; verses 15, 16, 17 explain how the Lord will come *for* His saints, in order to come with them, and how the sleeping saints, the dead in Christ, will be the first to come under the mighty power of the resurrection shout, and then with them the living will be changed.

The question is often asked, "Will *all* believers be caught up at the second coming of Christ?" and the scriptural answer is clearly in the affirmative. But some may quote Hebrews ix. 28, "Unto them that look

for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation," and say that only those who LOOK *for Him* will be caught up. That is exactly what the verse states, but "those who look for Him" describes the believers as a class, whilst the unbelievers can be described as those who do not look for the Lord. It certainly does not describe a specially earnest section of the believers, but it describes believers as a whole. It does not say, "Those who look for His *coming*," but "Those who look *for HIM*," and what Christian is there who cannot be thus described? 1 Corinthians xv. 51, 52, settles the point beyond dispute that all believers will be caught up. We read, "Behold I will shew you a mystery; we shall not *all* sleep, but we shall ALL be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump."

Here it states categorically that ALL saints—dead and living—will be changed in a moment, not at different times, the duration of the moment being limited to "the twinkling of an eye." The whole chapter bears this out. Verse 22 says, "*In Christ shall all be made alive*" and "*Afterward they that are Christ's at His coming*" (verse 23) will be raised.

The one qualification for the sleeping saint is, Do they belong to Christ? and surely that is the only qualification for the living saint.

But for a place of reward in the kingdom of heaven in manifestation devotedness is

required. It is this confounding of heaven and the kingdom of heaven that leads to this unscriptural view of partial raptures.

After the rapture, when saints have their glorified bodies and are like Christ, there will be the judgment seat of Christ, when the deeds of the believer will be reviewed for his loss or reward. His person, however, will never come into judgment—we have the Judge's own assurance in John v. 24 that this will never take place, but his deeds will be manifested. There is no question of his fitness for heaven being raised. That is settled on the ground of the wondrous efficacy of the atoning death of our Lord Jesus Christ, and hence there can be no question as to all believers being caught up at the rapture, but their position in the kingdom of heaven will be determined by the results of the judgment seat.

As for unbelievers, Scripture teaches that they must be judged. In their case it is their persons that will be judged according to their works. How different it is for the *person* of the unbeliever to be judged, and the *deeds* of the believer to be manifested either for loss or reward in view of the kingdom of heaven.

One Scripture may be given, which clearly proves that the believer's person will never come into judgment. Turn to the hypothetical case adduced in 1 Corinthians iii. 15, where we read, "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; *but he himself shall be saved*; yet so as by fire." The case

is adduced where a man's work might be thoroughly bad, and its condemnation at the judgment seat would actually be a means of salvation—not in the eternal sense of the word, but in a governmental sense. Yet, how solemn when the work of the flesh has to be burned by the fire of judgment. May the solemnity of this affect our lives even now and day by day till He come. And the knowledge that the judgment of the persons of the unbelievers means eternal punishment will make us more grateful for the wonderful salvation that is ours through the death of Christ and more zealous in the Gospel.

