

THE BIBLE

COLLECTED PERIODICAL ARTICLES

A. T. JONES

FRAGMENTS – VOLUME 6

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The Anvil of God's Word

Last eve I paused beside the blacksmith's door,
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
Then looking in, I saw upon the floor,
Old hammers, worn with beating years of time.

"How many anvils have you had," said I,
"To wear and batter all these hammers so?"
"Just one," said he, and then with twinkling eye,
"The anvil wears the hammers out, you know."

And so, I thought, the Anvil of God's Word
For ages skeptic blows have beat upon;
Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard,
The Anvil is unharmed, the hammers gone."

—Attributed to John Clifford

1 Peter 1

²⁵ But the word of the Lord endures for ever.

Psalm 138

² I will worship toward your holy temple, and praise your name for your lovingkindness and for your truth: for You have magnified your word above all your name.

About the “Fragments” Series

THE *Fragments* series is composed of 12 books of articles, gathered from the various Periodicals which A. T. Jones contributed to during his lifetime.

In order to bring some cohesion to these articles, the books are topical: that is, articles are organized according to their topic, and there is a separate book for each topic. So there are books on Gospel, Law and Sabbath, Healing and Temperance, the Bible, Religious Liberty, the Holy Spirit, the Prophetic Word, etc.

These volumes range in size from less than 100 pages, to over 1500 pages. In the largest, the Religious Liberty articles, I selected only those articles that carried principles or examples that would be applicable for our day. There were many other articles (about 3000 pages or more) that concerned local news and happenings. But to extract just the most essential, I left these out.

In most cases, I have left out articles that already appear in other books. For example, there was a series of Gospel articles in the Present Truth magazine, titled “Bible Studies on the Christian Life”. These are available as a separate book on our website, so they are not included in the Gospel book of the Fragments series. Also, we produced a large collection of articles regarding the Papacy and Catholic errors, “The Light Shines in Darkness”. Articles that are in that collection are not included in the *Fragments* series.

Also, some articles crossed over many topics. For example, an article on the Sabbath could fit into the “Law and Sabbath” book, but it might also cover “Religious Liberty”, “The Gospel”, and even “The Prophetic Word.” I did not think it wise to duplicate articles, so I tried to fit these kinds of articles into the book that most matched it’s topic, or where there were a series of articles that it belonged to.

What these books demonstrate is that A. T. Jones produced a lot of precious material, much of which was never organized or reprinted after his death. Jesus taught us to “gather the fragments that none be lost.” *John* 6:12. Since much depends on how we receive and appreciate the light that God gives through His chosen messengers, I felt a burden to put these forgotten treasures into an orderly and easily accessible format.

May the Spirit that gave them, bless you as you read!

*“If human beings would open the windows of the soul heavenward,
in appreciation of the divine gifts,
a flood of healing virtue would pour in.”*

Ellen White, Ministry of Healing, p. 116

About This Volume

THIS volume, the sixth in the collection of “Fragments,” is devoted to articles dealing with the Word of God: the Bible. These articles deal with such topics as the inspiration of the Word, its accuracy, its literature, its usefulness, and some of the vain attempts made to cast doubt upon it.

I have not included articles dealing with the Bible in education, as those are included in a book of such name, “The Bible in Education,” as well as in the last volume of the Fragments series, “Thoughts on Education.” Both of these are available for download from our website.

There is no doubt that we live in a time when the Bible is under assault as never before, especially through the widespread indoctrination of atheistic scientific theories. There are few, even among professed Christians, who still believe in the literal Genesis record, that God actually created the Earth in six days, and rested the seventh day. We are, in all respects, in a time very similar to the times of Noah just prior to the flood.

Through the harnessing of the powers of nature, mankind is putting their whole confidence and trust into what the ingenuity of man can accomplish. But the moral condition of man has not advanced one bit from the earliest times of recorded history. It is this moral condition that the Bible especially addresses, and which all the harnessed powers of nature are absolutely helpless to change.

The creative Word is the one force in this world, that promises to renovate man’s inner nature, and without this renovation, giving man more external power is like giving a child dynamite to play with.

Abraham, the father of the faithful, simply believed that “what God had promised, He was able to perform.” *Romans* 4:21. God’s promises are in His Word, still waiting for the same faith today, to grasp the same power that Abraham, Moses, David, and Jesus, grasped in their day, and found able to meet their greatest need and want.

The Desire of Ages, p. 823:

The gospel still possesses the same power, and why should we not today witness the same results?

1 Peter 1

²⁵ But the word of the Lord endures for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

1. The Division and Punctuation of the Scriptures

Signs of the Times, March 1, 1883

Original title: Value of Marginal References. I have used the title of a partial reproduction of this article which appeared in Present Truth, October 30, 1902.

AS A KIND of religious “last ditch,” the marginal references of *Acts* 20:7; *1 Corinthians* 16:2 and *Revelation* 1:10 are adopted as proof that the first day of the week is the Lord’s day, and therefore holy.

I would not utter a word against the use of the marginal references of the Scriptures as helps to the study of the sacred word; but there are inseparable objections to them being adopted as the basis of doctrine, or their use as authority in connection with the word itself.

The marginal references, the punctuation, the divisions into verses and chapters, are all the work of men. Not of men met together for that purpose as in the translation of the Scriptures; but by several men at different times, and each independent of all the others.

Chapters

First was the division into chapters. This was made by Hugo de Sancto Caro who was born at St. Cher, Dauphine, France, about 1200 AD, was created a cardinal by Pope Innocent IV, in 1245, and died in 1263. In preparing to make a concordance to the Latin Vulgate version of the Scriptures, he divided both the Old Testament and the New into chapters, and that division still remains as he made it, in all our Bibles.

Verses

Next was the division into verses. The first direct step toward this was taken by Rabbi Mordecai Nathan, a celebrated Jewish teacher, in a “Concordance to the Hebrew Scriptures,”

composed 1438 to 1445 AD. In this concordance, he made the division into verses, and marked every fifth verse with a Hebrew numeral letter.

Then in 1661, Athias, a Jew of Amsterdam, printed an addition of the Hebrew Bible, in which he adopted the verses of Rabbi Nathan, and marked every verse with the figures in common use 1, 2, 3, 4, &c., &c., except the verses previously marked with the Hebrew numerals by Rabbi Nathan. With the rejection of these Hebrew numerals, and placing instead the corresponding figures, the verses and numbers of Nathan and Athias are still retained in all the copies of the Bible in other languages. But observe, this refers only to the Hebrew Bible i.e. the Old Testament.

The verses of the New Testament as now used are the invention of a printer, Robert Stephens by name, in imitation of those made for the Old Testament by Rabbi Nathan. They were first introduced in 1551, in an addition of the New Testament printed by Stephens.

Punctuation

As for punctuation points, with the exception of the period, no such things were known when the New Testament was written, nor for a long time afterward, for the writing in the oldest manuscripts is all without accent or mark of any kind, not even spaces, between the words. Here is a copy of the first few lines of the gospel of John as it was written:

INTHEBEGINNINGWASTHEWORDANDTHEWORD-
WASWITHGOD.ANDGODWASTHEWORD.HEWASINTHE-
BEGINNINGWITHGODALLWEREMADEBYHIMANDWITH-
OUTHIMWASMADENOTONETHINGTHATWASMADEIN-
HIMLIFEWAS.

About 400 AD, Jerome and others from him, used points that correspond with our comma and colon, but they did not go into general use at all. Again in the eighth century the

stroke now called comma was received, and Jerome's points were again used at the command of Charlemagne. And in the ninth century the Greek note of interrogation, which is now our semicolon, was first used.

But it was not till the invention of printing that any of these points came into general use. Thus the colon and the period began to be used about 1485, the comma was next given a better shape, and the semicolon added about 1521, and in Philip Sidney's "Arcadia" 1587 they all appear, as also the note of interrogation, the asterisk, and the parenthesis.

Then again, there were no of knowledge rules to guide the editors and printers and the use of the points, consequently they were placed just as each one pleased, and very often arbitrarily. And yet again the same editors and printers would change the punctuation in the different editions of the same work as they were successively printed; especially did Stephens vary his points in every addition of the Bible that he printed.

Problems with Punctuation

And more than that, this variance in the punctuation of the Bible is not yet ended, as any one may prove by comparing copies of the Bible printed only as far back as 1830 or 1840 with the later editions, and looking at *Matthew* 19:28 and *Hebrews* 10:12. In the earlier copies, at *Matthew* 19:28 you will see the comma placed after "regeneration" in the passage reading thus:

Matthew 19

²⁸ Verily I say unto you, That you which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory,...

Whereas in the later copies the comma is placed after "me," thus:

²⁸ ...you which have followed me, in the regeneration when

the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory,...

See what a difference it makes. *Hebrews* 10:12 is still more apparent, for in the older editions the comma is after “sins,” thus:

Hebrews 10

¹² But this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God.

Where in the newer editions the comma is placed after “ever,” thus:

¹² But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.

While the first would make Christ sit down at the right hand of God forever, the last only makes one sacrifice for sins forever, and then Christ sits down at the right hand of God only “till his enemies be made his footstool.”

To anyone who will compare the *Revised New Testament* with the old version of common use, it will be apparent that the Revision Committee did not hold themselves subject to the punctuation of the common version, but changed it wherever they chose; and it would seem that their changes are not always for the better, for instance, *Matthew* 27:52-53. From this it would appear that at the death of the Saviour,

Matthew 27

⁵² ...many bodies of the saints that had fallen asleep were raised;

—and yet did not come out of the tombs till after His resurrection, which was the third day after His death. Such a thing is hardly to be supposed, but rather, as our old version gives it, that, at the death of Christ,

⁵² The graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,

⁵³ And came out of their graves after His resurrection.

That is, the graves were opened at His death, when the earth quaked, and the rocks were rent; but the saints did not arise till after His resurrection. This looks more reasonable, and is less ambiguous.

Yet there are places in our old standard version where the punctuation needs to be changed before the Scripture will be in harmony with itself. One notable instance is:

Luke 23

⁴³ And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto you, Today you shall be with me in paradise.

By placing the comma after “today,” instead of after “you,” it will harmonize perfectly with *Zechariah* 9:12 and *John* 20:17, and with the whole course of Scripture on that subject.

⁴³ And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto you today, you shall be with me in paradise.

Marginal References

Now we come to the marginal references. The first introduction of these was in *Coverdale's Bible*, the first English translation of the entire Bible, which was printed in 1535. The marginal references were few however, but they served as an introduction, and as an inducement to others to follow his lead.

The next was King James' translation of 1611, now our *Authorized Version*. This had in the first edition, 6,588 references in the Old Testament and 1,527 in the New.

- In an addition printed by Harris, in 1677, there were 14,699 references in the Old Testament and 9,857 in the New.
- In Dr. Scattergood's edition 1678, there were 20,327 references in the Old Testament, and 11,717 in the New.
- In Dr. Blayney's, 1769, there were 43,318 in the Old Testament, and 19,898 in the New.
- In Bishop Wilson's, 1785, there were 45,190 in the Old

Testament, and 19,993 in the New, making total in Old and New of 65,183.

These with perhaps a few additions are the ones we now use, and thus we have *Acts* 20:7, and *1 Corinthians* 16:2 referring to *Revelation* 1:10. No doubt these Bishops believed, as many will claim now, that the first day of the week is the Lord's day, but the Scripture does not say so, and their running the references from one to the other does not make it so, any more than the references from *Leviticus* 16:10, 21, 22 to *Isaiah* 53:6, 11, 12, and *1 John* 2:2, &c., make Christ, the Holy Saviour, the scapegoat.

Neither of these is any nearer to the truth than is the explanation in the margin of *Daniel* 9:24, in saying that the seventy weeks begin from the twentieth year of Artaxerxes.

And not one of all three is any nearer to the truth than is the margin of *2 Chronicles* 21:12, in explaining the writing which came to Jehoram from Elijah the prophet, when it says,

“Which was written before his [Elijah's] death.”

Everybody knows that there is no truth in that, for all know that Elijah never died, but was caught up alive, by a whirlwind, into heaven.

All this goes to show that the references are not to be followed implicitly as are the Scriptures, but simply and alone, as helps to the study of the Scripture. As such they are a very great help.

But always bear in mind that the plain reading of the word of God is to be taken above any, or all, references, punctuation, or division of verses or chapters.

1. Vain Philosophy

Signs of the Times, January 8, 1885

Daniel Webster said:

There is more of valuable truth yet to be gleaned from the sacred writings, that has thus far escaped the attention of commentators, than from all other sources of human knowledge combined.

THIS is a true saying, and worthy of all acceptance. From the days and works of Origen to the present there has been a vast deal more of valuable truth that has escaped the commentators than they have ever discovered.

The commentaries are valuable for one thing, that is, to show us the meaning of many of the Hebrew and Greek words, which cannot be brought out fully in a translation. With this exception, the value of any commentary, in points of doctrine or duty, is a minus quantity. Indeed almost all the commentators have the faculty of “darkening counsel by words without knowledge” (*Job* 38:2); of creating difficulties where there are none.

One of the best Bible scholars of modern times said that commentators are to the Bible what curtains are to windows. A window is made to let in the light; a curtain obscures it, or shuts it out.

These thoughts have been suggested by reading the Sunday-school lesson notes in the different denominational papers and publications which propose to help in understanding the *International Lessons*; but particularly by the notes on *Acts* 20:2-16, Paul at Troas. In the 8th verse Luke says,

Acts 20

⁸ There were many lights in the upper chamber where they were gathered together.

On this Theodore D. Woolsey, D.D., LL.D., in the *Sunday*

School Times, comments as follows:

Why does Luke find it best to introduce the number of lamps in the chamber where Paul preached? Meyer answers, that the fall of the young man was thus at once perceived. But if so, there is no reason for mentioning the fact in the introductory way, before anything is said of Eutychus. Clumprtre more naturally explains the mention as account for the closeness of the room, which led to the sleep of Eutychus. It seems to be a sufficient explanation that the air was bad, and this comes fitly from the physician Luke.

Notice, the question is,

“Why does Luke mention the number of lights where they were gathered together?”

One answers,

“Because the fall of the young man was thus perceived.”

Another answers:

“It accounts for the heat and closeness of the room, which caused Eutychus to go to sleep.”

And Dr. Woolsey sums it all up in his saying that:

“It is a sufficient explanation that the air was bad.”

The first of these has made the discovery that there were many lights in the upper chamber, so that they might know when a person fell out of the window. We wish that from the height of his great erudition, he had condescended to tell us whether it was so common a custom for people to fall out of the window that they must take lights to the place of meeting, so that they might see them fall?

The second finds that there were many lights, because the room was hot and close.

The third, who was an instructor in Yale College for fifty

years, renders the profound decision that there were many lights where they were gathered together, because the air was bad. We wonder why the thought never occurred to them that the meeting was in the night, and there were many lights because it was dark!

This idea of the air being bad, however, occurs in several places in the notes. H. Clay Trumbull, in giving his “Illustrative Applications” says:

Heat and smoke in a close and crowded room are solid obstacles to an intelligent hearing of the gospel, even with an inspired apostle for a preacher. Ventilation is often an important means of grace. That young man who sought it in the window, was doing his best to keep awake, even at the risk of his life.

According to this we have:

1. Heat and smoke in a close and crowded room.
2. This was a solid obstacle to an intelligent hearing of the gospel.
3. Ventilation is a means of grace.
4. This young man sought this, his only means of grace, on that occasion.

And behold he went so sound asleep as to fall out of the window. Now if that was the effect of ventilation (the means of grace) upon the only one who had it, what could have been the condition of those in the body of the room, who had no ventilation, no means of grace?

And yet on the other hand, if the windows were so wide open that a man could fall through, we cannot help wondering how the room could be “hot and close,” and how, with windows so wide open, there could be no ventilation!

But by turning to the very next page of the same paper our wonder on this point is removed. Under the heading “Oriental

Lesson-Lights,” we read:

The “upper room” is the large and airy chamber beneath the roof...with large latticed windows on three sides through which the cooling breeze blows. This seems to have been the kind of room in which Paul’s meeting was held.

By this we find that the room, instead of being “hot and close” was “large and airy,” that instead of there being “no ventilation,” a “cooling breeze” could blow through. And although that wonder is removed, it is replaced by another, viz., we wonder which of these teachings (?) the Sunday-school scholars and teachers are to believe?

- Are they to believe the room was “hot and close” or “large and airy”?
- Are they to believe that there was no ventilation, or are they to believe that “a cooling breeze” could blow through the room?

There is another subject in this same lesson that gives room for more vagaries. That is, “the first day of the week.” President Woolsey says of this,

The first day of the week, on which the Christian people gathered to break bread, to celebrate the resurrection of Christ.

Now anyone can read:

1 Corinthians 11

²⁶ As often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord’s death.

In view of this we wish Dr. Woolsey would tell us how that, in commemorating the death of Christ, they in the same act could celebrate his resurrection. Again he says:

The time, in the present instance, for partaking of it, was on the evening of our Sunday.

O that we wish he or someone else would tell us, if this was our Sunday evening, how that breaking of bread after midnight on Sunday night, could be any possibility be on the first day of the week?

In the same paper Faith Latimer gives “Hints for the Primary Teacher,” in which she says:

When Paul was a young man, what was his name? He had been brought up a strict Jew, and all Jews kept the last day of the week as the Sabbath; but after Paul became the servant of Christ, he kept holy the first day of the week, and so did all Christians.

The Bible says nothing about this, and we should like to know how she knows it. Next she asks,

What made the change?

But she gives no answer, nor any hint of what answer she expects shall be given. We should like exceedingly to hear the answers to that question that will be given by the different teachers in the Sunday-schools. How many will give the Bible answer?

Daniel 7

²⁵ He shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change times and laws.

And how many will show that the Papacy was what made the change? Further she says:

Who rose from the dead on the first day of the week? From that time it was called the Lord’s day.

On this we state these facts:

- Matthew wrote in 61 AD, 30 years after the resurrection of Christ;
- Mark wrote about 63 AD, 32 years after;

- Luke wrote the Gospel and the Acts about 64 AD, 33 years after;
- Paul wrote *1 Corinthians* 60 AD, 30 years after; and
- John wrote the Gospel in 97 AD, 66 years after.

And every one of them called it “the first day of the week.” *Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:2, 9; Luke 24:1; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2; John 20:1, 19.*

We can only wonder how persons can become so infatuated with themselves as authorities, as to make statements to be accepted as scriptural, which upon the slightest investigation are found to be flatly contradictory to the Scriptures.

But such “wonders will never cease,” at least not as long as men will love falsehood more than truth, and their own will more than the word of God.

Space forbids pursuing these fallacies any further; but every one of these can be found in a single number of the *Sunday School Times* (December 20, 1884), and yet the list is not exhausted. And we are the more sorry to see them there, because the *Times* is generally exceptionally good.

2. The Teaching of the Apostles

Signs of the Times, March 12, 1885

WE DO NOT here refer to what the apostles really taught, but to the document found about a year ago,—written by no one knows whom, at a time when no one knows,—which purports to be a summary of what was taught by the apostles, and which, therefore, is entitled “The Teaching of the Apostles.”

Since its discovery this document has been made a great deal of, in fact a great deal more prominence has been given it than it can possibly deserve. For no one claims that any of the apostles ever saw it, or ever heard of it; the best authorities placing its origin in the first half of the second century, or, in figures, about 140 AD.

In the new Sunday book of W. F. Crafts this precious (?) find is again pushed to the front in the following manner:

The recent discovery and publication of “The Teaching of the Apostles” shortens and simplifies the argument for the change of the Sabbath to the first day of the week.

But as the “Teaching” says nothing about either the Sabbath or the first day of the week, it is difficult to see how it “simplifies the argument for the change,” unless, indeed, it be by furnishing a new and good opportunity to commit a fraud.

At any rate, that is just what has been done to utilize it in the argument for the change. And if they propose to abandon all attempts to sustain the change by the Scriptures and rest it wholly—where it rightly belongs—upon fraud, pure and simple, then we cheerfully confess that the argument (?) for the change has been greatly simplified by the publication in English of the “Teaching of the Apostles.”

However, some may ask,

“Even though the ‘Teaching’ does not speak directly of the Sabbath nor the first day of the week, does it not mention the Lord’s day?”

We answer, No, decidedly. There is no such phrase in all the book. And in the place where the translation reads “Lord’s day,” Dr. Crafts himself admits that the word “day” is not in the Greek. Then what right have they to put it in? If the writer of the “Teaching” meant “day,” could he not have written it?

When the Revelator wanted to say Lord’s day he wrote in Greek *Kuriake hemera*, “Lord’s day.” And also, when the writer of the “Teaching” meant day he said day.

In chapter 4 we have *nuktos kai hemerus*, “night and day;” in chapter 8, *tris test hemeras*, “thrice a day;” in chapter 11, *hemeran mian*, “one day;” in chapter 12, *duo he treis hemeras*, “two or three days;” in chapter 16, *eschatai hemerais*, “last days;” but in chapter 14, in which he is made to say “day” there is no such word as *hemera*, “day,” nor anything that demands its insertion; so it is sheer invention to make it read Lord’s day.

But even if the “Teaching” contained the plain Greek phrase *Kuriake hemera*, Lord’s day, it would still devolve upon the Sunday advocates to show that it meant the first day of the week, because the same term is used in the Scriptures and by no means does it refer to the first day of the week.

Again, even though it should plainly speak of the first day of the week, and plainly command that it should be kept, it would not relieve them in the least, for it would still be incumbent on them to prove that it comes from proper authority. And we need not go outside of the document itself to successfully impeach its credit in the estimation of all people who have any regard for the rights of property.

We here make the distinct charge that the document enti-

tled “The Teaching of the Apostles,” plainly teaches that it is right to steal. In chapter one we find these words:

If one that is in need takes, he shall be guiltless.

And to show that it is theft that is meant, we have but to read right on:

But he that is not in need shall give account whereof he took and whereunto; and being in durance [imprisonment] shall be questioned touching what he did, and he shall not go out thence until he give back the last farthing.

According to this precious document then, all that is requisite is to be “in need,” and then if he “takes, he shall be guiltless.” A man is sorely in need of a suit of clothes; he “takes” one and “shall be guiltless.” Another is in need of a horse; he “takes,” and “shall be guiltless.” Another is in great need of bread; he “takes” a sack of flour, and “shall be guiltless;” and so on to the end of the catalog.

How the socialists, the communists, the nihilists, and the anarchists generally, may be glad and shout for joy, and fling their ready caps in air at sight of “The Teaching of the Apostles,” this wondrous screed, this last, best gift to the rascals! How aptly they can apply Dr. Crafts’ words:

The recent discovery and publication of “The Teaching of the Apostles” shortens and simplifies the argument...

...that one man has no right to have more than another, and that those who have must divide with those who have not and are too lazy to work! And, too, it “shortens and simplifies the argument” for the man who has read the command “You shall not steal;” all he has to do is to convince himself that he “is in need,” and lo! he “takes” and “is guiltless.”

Oh, yes, that fellow did a great thing when he got off all this as the teaching of the twelve apostles! It is a pity he did not leave his name along with it, so that Dr. Crafts and his Sunday

law associates might have canonized him.

About 140 AD, then, we are to suppose that this copy of “The Teaching of the Apostles” was first given to the world, and in it someone says that the apostles taught thus and so.

But we have on our table a copy of the teaching of the Apostles, which is certainly of earlier date than that. It bears unmistakable evidence of having been written in the first century, even in the very days of the apostles themselves. We would willingly submit it to the closest scrutiny of the most critical scholars of the present day, feeling assured that they would pronounce it a production of the first century.

Yet in this copy we find that, even in that day, someone said that the apostles taught:

1. That it is right to do evil that good may come.
2. That it is not right to marry.
3. That there is no resurrection.
4. That Christ was not divine.
5. That the Lord’s supper could be celebrated by selfishness, drunkenness, and gluttony.
6. That all things are lawful, even to lasciviousness.
7. That Paul was not an apostle.
8. That the resurrection was then past.
9. That it was not lawful to eat with Gentiles unless they were circumcised.
10. That in their meetings all should speak at once.
11. That the gospel that Paul preached was not the true gospel at all.
12. That the second coming of Christ was then actually impending, so near indeed that Christians need do no work at all.

All this, and much more of like tenor is there set forth by somebody as the teaching of the apostles. But in refutation of

all these and of the other of which we have spoken, we simply turn to the New Testament, the true teaching of the apostles, and we find that these are all false as false can be.

Paul describes it a slanderous report to say that he said, "Let us do evil that good may come," and if he had ever heard of the report that the apostles taught that, "If one that is in need takes, he shall be guiltless," we may imagine how swiftly and witheringly he would have rebuked the slanderous tongue or person that published it.

No, such is not the teaching of the apostles of Christ; but it shows how very degenerate Christianity has become, when it receives so gladly, and extols so highly, as the veritable teaching of the Spirit of God, a production that is a shame to man. It shows, too, to what lengths this degenerate Christianity will go whenever occasion allows, and it emphasizes the already urgent necessity of holding fast the word of God.

Surely the time has come when they will not endure sound doctrine; and in view of all these things Paul's charge is now all-important:

2 Timothy 4

¹ I charge you therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; preach the word.

3. When Was the New Testament Written?

Signs of the Times, July 16, 1885

Note: This article was first printed May 2, 1882 in the Advent Review. I

have included the first four paragraphs from that article as they were left off of this one.

AS LONG as the Bible is believed to be the word of God, so long will it be denied. As long as the Scriptures shall be held as of authority, so long will they be opposed as such. So long as we may present the Scriptures as the word of God, just so long shall we have to defend them as such.

But believing, as we most assuredly do, that they are authentic, that they were written when they purport to have been written, and that therefore they are what they purport to be, it is only a pleasure to uphold and defend them, and the excellent part of the matter is that there is no lack of effectual means of defense, from whatever direction the attack may be made.

One of the favorite objections is,

“We cannot tell when the Bible was written, whether the books of the Bible were written when they are said to have been, or hundreds of years later.”

But in reply we can say,

“We have abundant and indubitable proofs that the books of the Bible were written at the times that are claimed for them—New testament as well as Old, Old Testament as well as New.’

We propose to give some facts of history, showing the fulfillment of the lines of prophecy of the Scriptures; but before entering upon that subject direct, we have thought best to present some facts which show the times when the prophetic books were written. We propose to deal in facts; we shall have very little to do with mere opinions.

It is a fact that the Bible exists today. It is also a fact that books are written in opposition to it. These things none can deny. It is equally undeniable that nearly one hundred years ago Thomas Paine wrote a book against the Bible, which proves that the identical Bible which is in existence today was in existence then.

About three hundred and sixty-five years ago, Luther in Germany, Zwingle in Switzerland, and Faber in France, each and all opposed the corruption of the church of Rome, and this opposition was based wholly upon the Bible. The Bible was preached, it was translated, it was printed and distributed in great numbers. It cannot be denied that the Bible was in existence then.

We can go back nearly two hundred years further, and Wycliffe in England had a Bible, expounded it to the people, exhorted them to study it for themselves, and even translated it into the English language.

But, not to be tedious, we will at once go back more than fifteen hundred years, to 331-361 AD. Julian was emperor of the Roman empire, and wrote in opposition to Christianity, and of course opposed the doctrines of the New Testament. But he never pretended to:

...deny the truth of the gospel history, as a history, though he denied the deity of Jesus Christ asserted in the writings of the evangelists; he acknowledged the principal facts in the gospel as well as the miracles of our Saviour and his apostles.¹

He mentioned Matthew and Luke by name, and presented the objection to the genealogy of Christ as given by them, that is urged to this day.

He recited the sayings of Christ in the very words of the

¹ Thomas Hartwell Horne, *An Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures*, 1839, Chapter II, Section II.

evangelists; he also bore testimony that the gospel of John was composed later than the other evangelists, and at a time when great numbers were converted to the Christian faith both in Italy and Greece; and alluded oftener than once to the facts recorded in the *Acts of the Apostles*.

He expressly states the early dates of these records; he calls them by the names which they now bear. He all along supposes, he nowhere questions, their genuineness or authenticity; nor does he give even the slightest intimation that he suspected the whole or any part of them to be forgeries.²

This, being “testimony from an enemy, is the strongest kind of evidence” in favor of the New Testament, and proves that it was in existence in 331 AD. But we have more of the same kind. One hundred years before Julian, 233 AD, lived Porphyry,

The most sensible as well as the most severe adversary of the Christian religion that antiquity can produce.

He had conversed with the Christians in Tyre, in Sicily, and in Rome.

He was of all the adversaries of the Christian religion the best qualified for inquiring into the authenticity of the sacred writings. He possessed every advantage which natural abilities or political situation could afford, to discover whether the New Testament was a genuine work of the apostles and evangelists, or whether it was imposed upon the world after the decease of its pretended authors.

But no trace of this suspicion is anywhere to be found, nor did it ever occur to Porphyry to suppose that it was spurious. He did not deny the truth of the gospel history, but actually considered the miracles of Jesus Christ as real facts. He also notices the difference between Paul and Peter in *Galatians* 2:11.

But the objections of Porphyry were not confined to the New Testament; he attacked the Old Testament also, especially the prophecy of *Daniel*, declaring that it was written

² *Ibid.*

“after the time of Antiochus Epiphanes.”³

This proves that the Bible was extensively known as far back as 233 AD; for how could a man write in opposition to a thing that did not exist? But we may go back sixty years further, to 176 AD, or thereabouts, and we find Celsus, another...

...infidel writer, and one of the greatest enemies with whom Christianity had to contend. He not only mentions by name, but quotes passages from, the books of the New Testament, so that we know that we have the identical books to which he referred.

The miraculous conception is mentioned with a view of accusing the Virgin Mary of adultery; we also recognize Joseph's intention of putting her away, and the consequent appearance of the angel warning him in a dream to take her as his wife; we meet with a reference to the star that was seen at his birth, and the adoration paid to the new-born Saviour by the Magi at Bethlehem; the murder of the infants by Herod, in consequence of his being deceived by the wise men, is noticed, as also the reappearance of the angel to Joseph, and his consequent flight into Egypt. Here, then, are references to all the facts of our Saviour's birth.

Again, we are informed of the descent of the Spirit in the form of a dove, and the voice from Heaven at the baptism of our Saviour in Jordan; we hear also of the temptation in the wilderness; we are told that Christ was constantly attended by a certain number of disciples, though the number is not correct. There is an allusion to our Saviour's conversation with the woman of Samaria at the well; and a reference, less distinct, to the attempt of the people of Nazareth to throw him down the rock on which their city was built. Here, therefore, is ample testimony to his baptism and the facts immediately following it.

[He] also pretends to believe in the miracles of Christ; and those of healing the sick, feeding the five thousand men, and raising the dead, are expressly mentioned, though they are

³ Horne's *Introduction*, vol. 1, chap. 2, sec. 2; and *Unbelief in the Eighteenth Century*, by Principal Cairns, Lecture 1, sec. 3.

attributed to magical influence. Several passages also in our Saviour's sermon on the mount, are quoted verbatim, and his predictions relating to his sufferings, death, and resurrection are recorded.

Nor are the closing scenes of the life of the Saviour noticed with less exactness. We meet with the treachery of Judas, and Peter's denial of his Master; we are informed that Christ was bound, insulted, beaten with rods, and crucified; we read of the gall which was given him to eat, and vinegar to drink; and we are insulted with an unfeeling jest upon the blood and water that flowed from our dying Redeemer's side. He mentions some words which were uttered by Christ upon the cross, and alludes to the earthquake and darkness that immediately followed the crucifixion. There is also mention made of the appearance of the angels at the sepulcher, and of the manifestation of Christ to Mary Magdalene and the disciples, after his resurrection.

The difficulty of one angel or two, [at the tomb,] is noticed.

Jesus is reproached for needing to have the stone rolled away by an angel.

[Now he says,] These things are from your own writings, for you fall by your own authority.⁴

There can certainly be no controversy about the existence of the New Testament in the times of Julian, Porphyry, and Celsus, and, as has been remarked, not one of these able writers pretended to call in question the authenticity of the records of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ.

It would be just as reasonable for us today to deny the facts of the Reformation by Luther, as to expect that Julian should deny the existence of the records of the ministry of Jesus; just as reasonable for us today to deny the facts of the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers, as to suppose that Porphyry could deny the faithfulness of the New Testament history. Just as wisely could we reject all the evidences of the American Revolution,

⁴ Horne's *Introduction*, vol. 1, chap. 2, sec. 2; and *Unbelief in the Eighteenth Century*, by Principal Cairns, Lecture 1, sec. 3.

as to suppose that Celsus could reject the evidences of the life of Jesus in the world.

It would certainly be the supremest folly for any man to deny the reality of any one of these three world-stirring events. Just as supremely foolish would it have been for any of these three men to deny the event that was then moving the world as it had never been moved. An event the results of which were threatening the very existence of the empire of Julian as it had existed for hundreds of years, could not well be denied.

Each of these men, more especially Celsus, had ample means and ability, and the will also, to disprove the authenticity of these sacred records, had it been possible; and the very fact that not one of them even pretended to attempt any such thing, proves that that thing was impossible. We will close this paragraph with Principal Cairn's closing observation on Celsus, before quoted. He says:

His testimony here is evidently of the greatest weight; and his position, as at once an immediately succeeding writer and an enemy, gives the gospels a recognition which could have come from no other quarter, even from later unbelief in the earlier centuries. It is impossible for modern unbelief to shake this foundation, or to resolve those materials which Celsus has attested as so solid and documentary, into the mist and vapor of shifting tradition. What he assails is not a cloud, but a fortress well defined, and the mark of studied attack and siege. It is too late now to obliterate his lines and parallels, which have even been added to the entrenchments against which they were directed.

As the last, but not by any means as the least authority in confirmation of the early date of the New Testament, we introduce Gibbon, the prince of historians. He says:

The Christian Revelation was consummated under the

reign of Nerva.⁵

This indisputable authority carries us back beyond Celsus sixty years, for the reign of Nerva began in 96 AD and ended in 98 AD. Here is a chain of authorities, not a single link of which can be broken, which, taken together, prove to an absolute certainty that the New Testament was written at the time when it claims to have been written.

⁵ Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, chap. 21, sec. 7.

4. Can the Old Testament Be Trusted?

Signs of the Times, July 23 & 30, 1885

Note: Most of this article was first printed in May 9, 1882 in the Advent Review. There are some additions in this later article that were not in the earlier one. I have included the last few paragraphs from the earlier article at the end of this one.

IT IS A historical fact that 282 years before Christ, the Old Testament was translated from Hebrew into Greek, at Alexandria in Egypt, and it there consisted of the same books that compose the Old Testament of today.

Whence it is evident that we still have those identical books which the most ancient Jews attested to be genuine.

We shall not take up separately each book of the Old Testament, as that would extend this article further than would be proper, but only some of the leading ones, and as the writings of the whole Old Testament are so intimately connected, if we establish a portion of it, we confirm the validity of the whole.

First we will notice the book of *Daniel*, and, as an introduction, offer a few lines from an editorial in the *New York Independent*:

A few years ago the critics with one voice refused to see anything in it [the book of *Daniel*] more than an apocalyptic composition of the date of Antiochus Epiphanes. Eichorn, Bertholdt, Gesenius, De Wette, Lengerke, Ewald, and Hitzig, with the more moderate as well as the rationalistic critics, agreed in its late date, some being so precise as to fix it at 167 BC. "There never was any Belshazzar," they exclaimed, and we could bring nothing to corroborate our written record. The replies made to them were feeble and unsatisfactory. But the monuments of the kings of Babylon began to be read a few years ago.

The critics could assert with a great deal of assurance, that "there never was any Belshazzar," because, aside from the Bible, in none of the authorities on the subject, was there any

Belshazzar named. Therefore, as the historians failed to mention him, “there never was any” such king.

But the Babylonian inscriptions make all plain, and exactly confirm the Bible account. They declare that Nabu-Nahid (Nabonadius) with an army took the field against Cyrus, and left Belshazzar, his eldest son, in command of the city. Nabu-Nahid, being defeated by Cyrus, was compelled to take refuge in Borsippa, and Cyrus went on against Babylon and Belshazzar, and the city, with Belshazzar, was taken, as recorded in *Daniel* 5.

And this condition of affairs in Babylon is the only one that will agree with the record in *Daniel*; for *Daniel* was certainly made prime minister of the kingdom, the chain of gold being the insignia of that office. Yet for all his being prime minister, he is spoken of as the third ruler in the kingdom. *Daniel* 5:7, 16, 29. How can this be? Thus:

Nabu-Nahid, the first ruler, Belshazzar his son, yet the third ruler. And in no other possible way can the records of *Daniel* be met; for his office was really the second in the kingdom. But how fully this illustrates the perfect accuracy of the Scriptures. Here is an important point in the history of Babylon, wholly passed over by the historians; yet *Daniel* records it exactly as it is, and after more than two thousand years the inscriptions of that king of Babylon declare that *Daniel* is correct.

This also fixes the date of the book of *Daniel* to the time that has been claimed for it, because there is no other time in the world’s history when these points in *Daniel* could have been written. For shortly after, Babylon fell into decay and these inscriptions were buried out of sight, and the historians made no mention of any of them; consequently they never could have been learned afterward; therefore they were learned in Babylon at the time when they occurred, and thus the claims of the book of *Daniel* are correctly placed, and absolutely

fixed, at the date 538 BC.⁶

The list of instruments mentioned in *Daniel* 3:5, 7, 15, is another proof; for this...

...very list is true to the time of *Daniel*, and would never have been thought of three centuries later.

In short,

Every historical or social allusion in *Daniel* is borne out by the facts discovered.

The book of *Ezekiel* gives another instance of the exactness of the Bible writers, and of being true to the times in which it was written.

Ezekiel 23

¹⁴ For when she saw men portrayed upon the wall, the images of the Chaldeans portrayed with vermillion,

¹⁵ ...after the manner of the Babylonians of Chaldea.

Of this also we may say that is it true to the time of Ezekiel in the captivity in Babylon; and would never have been thought of later, nor in any other country. In Egypt, in Assyria, in Persia, and in Greece, their art was displayed in sculpture. From the gems upon which the carving was so minute as to suggest the employment of a magnifying-glass, to the colossal bulls that guarded the palace of Nineveh from the entrance of evil spirits, all, all was sculpture. But in Babylonia it was far different.

While the Assyrians had stone in abundance, the Babylonians were obliged to import it from a distance. Brick-clay, on the contrary, lay read at hand. Where the Assyrians employed sculptured alabaster to ornament their buildings, the Babylonians contented themselves with enameled bricks, and painted plaster. Sculpture was naturally developed by the

⁶ For proofs as to Belshazzar, see *Encyclopedia Britannica*, ninth edition, article "Babylonia;" Rawlinson's *Seven Great Monarchies*, Fourth Monarchy, chap. 8, par. 50.

one; just as painting was by the other; and ornamentation, which could be lavished on the exterior in Assyria, had to be confined to the interior in Babylon.

(Compare *Ezekiel* 8:8-10 with the text quoted above.)

The few bas-reliefs of Babylon that exist are small and inferior in execution; but brilliant coloring and a lavish use of the metals, made up for this want. The walls were covered with the most costly materials, and “images portrayed with vermilion” excited the admiration of the stranger. The love of bright colors, in contrast with the sober hues of the Assyrian palaces, led also to the cultivation of gardens; and the hanging gardens of Babylon, raised upon tiers of arches, were one of the wonders of the world.⁷

At no time in the world’s history later than this, could such a thing as Ezekiel describes be said of the Babylonians. For only a little while afterward the kingdom of Babylon was overthrown by the Medes and Persians, who took possession of it, and these Babylonish peculiarities were lost to the world.

But how plainly these words of *Ezekiel* bring before us the Babylon of his day, when Nebuchadnezzar reigned, whose utmost endeavors were put forth in the building, and decoration of his capital city, when all the skill of his splendid artists was employed in blending the brilliant colors that ornamented the walls of his pleasant palaces, and Babylon sat as mistress of the world in that pitch of pride and grandeur,

Isaiah 13

¹⁹ Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency.

And by all this we know of surety that the book of *Ezekiel* is exactly placed at 604-561 BC.

Now we turn to the books of *Kings* and *Isaiah*.

⁷ *Encyclopedia Britannica*, article “Babylonia.”

Isaiah 36 [2 Kings 18:13]

¹ Now in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah did Sennacherib, king of Assyria, come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them.

This is placed in our Bibles at the date 713 BC, which does not exactly correspond with the Assyrian inscriptions, but is only twelve years out of the way, being that much too early. The native monuments state that Sennacherib ascended the throne the 12th of Ab (part of July and August), 705 BC, and place his invasion of Judah in 701 BC.

2 Kings 18

¹⁴ And Hezekiah, king of Judah, sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish, saying, I have offended; return from me; that which you put on me will I bear. And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah, king of Judah, three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold.

This is the only record that the Bible makes of this point, and so far as the Bible goes we do not know wherein he had “offended,” nor why he should confess so readily, and offer to bear whatever Sennacherib should put upon him. Sennacherib, however, tells the whole story. The trouble arose as follows:

The Philistine city of Ekron revolted from Assyrian rule, but Padi, their king, still retained his friendship for the king of Assyria, and so opposed the rebellion. Thereupon the Ekronites entered into negotiations with Ethiopia and Egypt and obtained promise of their help, and also seized Padi, made him prisoner, and sent him to Hezekiah for safe keeping. By thus accepting this charge, Hezekiah made himself a partner in the Ekronite rebellion.

So after Sennacherib had defeated the Egyptians, recovered Ekron, and punished the leaders in the rebellion, he went up against Hezekiah, not only to compel him to release Padi, but to punish him for his offense. Then it was, and this is why it

was, that Hezekiah confessed to Sennacherib, “I have offended.”

A number of points could be given from Sennacherib’s narrative, every one confirming that in the Bible, but this one will suffice to show the perfect veracity of the Scripture account.⁸

Again, in *Isaiah* 37:37-38 and *2 Kings* 19:36-37, it is said:

Isaiah 57

³⁷ So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh.

³⁸ And it came to pass, as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezar his sons smote him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Armenia. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.

The inscriptions declare that Sennacherib was...

...building a palace for himself at Nineveh on a grander scale than had ever been attempted before. His works were interrupted by his murder, in 681, by his two sons, who, however, soon found themselves confronted by the veteran army of Esarhaddon, their father’s youngest and favorite son, who, in January, 680, defeated them at Khanirabbat, and was proclaimed king.⁹

Here, then, is the confirmation of every point in these Scriptures, and in this single instance the slight difference in the dates will bear nothing against the truthfulness of the narrative, nor against the general correctness of the time in which the books were written. Indeed, the Scripture narrative would seem to demand more time than is there given for these occurrences. The invasion, return, and dwelling, of Sennacherib, are all placed by the dates, within 710-709 BC, which is hardly time enough, especially as it is said that he “returned and

⁸ For the full account see Rawlinson’s *Seven Great Monarchies*, Second Monarchy, chap. 9, par. 164-168; Geikie’s *Hours with the Bible*, vol. 4, chap. 17, par. 4-21.

⁹ *Encyclopedia Britannica*, art. “Babylonia”; *Seven Great Monarchies*, Second Monarchy, chap. 9, par. 193; *Ancient Empires of the East*, chap. 2, par. 36.

dwelt at Nineveh;” and this short period would hardly justify the statement that he dwelt there.

But the native monuments remove all difficulty, by showing that he did actually dwell at Nineveh after his return, being employed in building a palace in honor of his god. In this, therefore, is proof that *Isaiah* and this part of *Kings* were written as far back as the former half of the seventh century BC.

The next point in the book of *2 Kings* is on the invasion of Samaria, by Shalmaneser:

2 Kings 18

⁹ Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, came up against Samaria, and besieged it.

¹⁰ And at the end of three years they took it; even in the sixth year of Hezekiah, that is the ninth year of Hosea, king of Israel, Samaria was taken.

The Bible chronology places this event “about 723 BC” And the tablets of Shalmaneser, from the ruins of Nineveh, assert that his reign was 727-722 BC, and that the...

...chief event of his reign was the campaign against Samaria. The capture of that city, however, was reserved for his successor, Sargon, in 720.

This corresponds with the Scripture date exactly, as the attack was made about 723, and the siege continued three years, which gives the very date of the tablets of Shalmaneser.

Besides extending this article to an immoderate length, it would be too tedious a task to give in full all the accounts confirming the Scripture record; in fact it would be only to re-write that record. Therefore we shall mention the names, and give references to the passages of Scripture with which they correspond.

The inscriptions declare that, in 710 BC, Sargon, king of Assyria, overran Judea, and razed Ashdod to the ground (*Isaiah*

20:1); that a year after the Judean war by Sennacherib, Mero-dach-Baladan was in command at Babylon (*Isaiah* 39:1; *2 Kings* 20:12); that in 740 BC, Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, overthrew the ancient kingdom of Damascus (*2 Kings* 16:9), and in his...

...inscriptions, Ahaz of Judah appears among the names of those who acknowledged his sovereignty and paid tribute.¹⁰

And in 730 BC he placed his vassal Hoshea on the throne of Samaria in the room of Pekah (*2 Kings* 15:30; 17:1); that Ben-hadad reigned in Damascus, while Ahab reign in Israel, and that Hazael succeeded Ben-hadad (*2 Kings* 8:7-15).

No less accurate and circumstantial is the testimony of the “Moabite Stone,” discovered in August, 1868, and now familiar to many, which reads as follows:

I am Mesha, king of Moab [*2 Kings* 3:4]; the Dibonite, my father, reigned over Moab thirty years, and I reigned after my father. Omri was king of Israel [*1 Kings* 16:16]; and he afflicted Moab many days, because Chemosh [*1 Kings* 11:7; *Jeremiah* 48:7, 13, 46]; was angry with his land, and his son succeeded him [*1 Kings* 16:28]; and he also said, I will afflict Moab. In my days he spoke thus: And I looked on him and on his house. [*2 Kings* 1:1; 3:4, 5.] And Israel kept constantly perishing. And Omri held possession of the land of Medeba, and there dwelt in it Omri and his son and his grandson, forty years. [*1 Kings* 16:23, 29; *2 Kings* 3:1.]

But Chemosh restored it in my days. And the king of Israel built for him Kiriathaim, and I fought against the city and took it [*Jeremiah* 48:1, 23], and brought from thence the altar of Jehovah, and put it before Chemosh in Keriioth. [*Jeremiah* 48:24] And Chemosh said to me, “Go and take Nebo from Israel.” [*Jeremiah* 48:1, *Isaiah* 15:2] And I went in the night, and fought against it from the overspreading of the dawn till noon, and took it, and I utterly destroyed it, and I slew all of

¹⁰ *2 Kings* 16:7-18; *Encyclopedia Britannica*, article “Ahaz;” Rawlinson, *Third Monarchy*, chap. 9, par. 129

it, seven thousand, for to Ashtor-Chemosh had I devoted them. And I took from thence the vessels of Jehovah, and I presented them before Chemosh.

And the king of Israel built Jahaz, and dwelt in it while he was fighting against me, and Chemosh drove him from before me; and I took from Moab two hundred men, all told, and I attacked Jahaz and took it [*Isaiah* 15:4, *Jeremiah* 48:21], joining it to Dibon. [*Isaiah* 15:2, *Jeremiah* 48:18] Chemosh said to me, "Go fight against Horonaim." [*Isaiah* 15:5, *Jeremiah* 48:5, 34]

Here, then, are the facts, strictly in accordance with the Scripture account of Omri, his son Ahab, and his grandson Jehoram; and of Mesha, king of Moab, and his father's servitude, and his own rebellion. And the references to *Isaiah* and *Jeremiah*, which I have given, show that the very cities named by Mesha as taken by him and belonging to him, belonged to Moab in their days.

Now it is utterly inconceivable how these statements of the Scripture could have been gathered from any other source than the actual events themselves. For there is absolutely no history of the Moabites, from which they could have been taken in later times. Therefore the perfect agreement between the occurrences as recorded in the Bible, and as recorded by Mesha, king of Moab, upon the enduring stone, proves, to a demonstration, that the records were made at the same time. This, then, carries us back 929 years BC, as the date of this portion of the Sacred Word.

However, we are not obliged to stop at this date for want of proofs of any earlier, for the decipherment of the inscriptions on the Egyptian monuments and tombs fully corroborates the record in the Pentateuch concerning Joseph and the exodus; so much so, in fact, that it is now considered as a most valuable auxiliary to the full understanding of the Egyptian history, and:

Brugsch and Lepsius and Chabas and Mariette treat the

Pentateuch as of prime historical importance.

It seemed, a few years ago, an almost incredible story told in *Genesis* of the campaign of the four kings of Elam and Babylonia—Chedorlaomer, Arioch, Amraphel, and Tidal—against the five kings of Sodom and the plain. The monuments confirm the story wonderfully. They tell us that at just this time [about 1900 or 2000 BC] there had been an Elamite (or Median) conquest of Babylonia; they tell us that Laomer was the name of an Elamite god, and that Chedorlaomer means worshiper of Laomer; and we find an account of this very Arioch mentioned on the monuments as king of Elassar, and we learn that his father's name was Chedormabug, and his grandfather's name was Simtihilhak; and we further learn that even earlier than this there had been Babylonian expeditions to the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. Every difficulty is completely removed, and confirmation supplied.

Abraham, we are told, came from Ur of the Chaldees. Such a town had become utterly lost, except in this Biblical mention of it, and a pious tradition had put it in an impossible place. The present generation has rediscovered it, and read its record on the monuments. We find it was the second capital of Babylonia, and was distinguished for its worship of the moon-god. The names could be mentioned of half a dozen of its kings, one of whom was Cheformabug, father of the Arioch of the Bible. Two seals, worn by gentlemen of Ur before the time of Abraham, and bearing the names of the first two kings, are in the British Museum. The Bible geography is proved no fiction.¹¹

We shall add no more. These evidences, wholly from outside of the Bible, prove beyond any possibility of reasonable doubt, that the Scriptures are authentic records of the things of which they treat, and all the researches in archaeology only serve to heap evidence upon evidence of their absolute truthfulness. It is a law of evidence that:

Probable proofs, by being added, not only increase the evi-

¹¹ Wm. Hayes Ward, D. D., in *Sunday School Times*, vol. 25, no. 42, article, "The Bible and the Monuments."

dence but multiply it.¹²

When two independent writers witness to the same event, the probability of that event is increased, not in an arithmetical, but in a geometrical ratio, i.e., Let it be ten to one that a certain fact is true upon the testimony of one witness, and likewise ten to one that the same fact is true upon the evidence of another, then it is not twenty to one, but one hundred and thirty to one, that the fact is true on the evidence of both. And the evidence to the same point, of a third independent witness of equal credibility with the others, would raise the probability [of its truth] to one thousand three hundred and thirty to one. "By the mouth of two or three witnesses," the word, to which such witness is borne, is "established."

And the agreement is the more valuable, if it be (so to speak) incidental and casual—if the two writers are contemporary, and their writings not known to one another; if one only alludes to what the other narrates, if one appears to have been an actor, and the other merely a looker-on; if one gives events, and the other the feelings which naturally arise out of them; in these cases the conviction which springs up in every candid and unprejudiced mind, is absolute; the elements of doubt which hangs about all matters of mere belief being reduced to such infinitesimal proportions as to be inappreciable, and so, practically speaking, to disappear altogether.¹³

It is upon precisely such evidence as this that the Bible rests. Therefore, even though it be looked upon as merely a history of the times in which it was written, these evidences prove that the Bible is worthy of all acceptance as a faithful record of absolute facts as they actually occurred. So that it is verily true that he who, in these days, presumes to cast doubt upon the Scripture record, only thereby exposes his ignorance or his willfulness.

But this is not all. In the Bible are recorded not only the things that had occurred in the times when its respective

¹² Butler's *Analogy*, Part 2, chap. 7, par. 41.

¹³ Rawlinson's *Historical Evidences*, lecture 1, par. 22, note 52.

books were written, but also things which should occur for ages to follow, even to the end of the world. And when we read that which was written in these books away in ancient times, concerning what should come in ages to follow; and then take up the history of these ages and find events occurring exactly as written hundreds and even thousands of years before; this again, not only confirms the absolute faithfulness of the Scripture but carries it beyond the human for the spring of the knowledge of the facts, the record of which is therein given.

Nor yet is this all—nay, it is merely the beginning. For there is a “scheme of doctrine bound up with these facts”—absolutely dependent upon them, inseparably connected with them, and “null and void without them”—which stands fully established, just as soon as the record of the facts is shown to be worthy of acceptance; that doctrine is the doctrine of Jesus Christ the Son of God. Therefore it stands proven to a demonstration that, “All Scripture,” whether doctrinal, prophetic, or historical, “*is given by inspiration of God.*”

Then hail! Book of books,—the Bible! You contain the most ancient history, the most sublime poetry, the grandest truths, the noblest examples, the best comfort of our imperfect condition, the most blessed gift in the knowledge of human kind! Let me bind you as a crown unto me. Be you ever “the lamp unto my feet, and the light unto my path” along all the way through the darkness of this world of sin.

Hail! all hail! the precious Saviour whom you reveal, the subject of your sublimest poetry, the fountain of your grandest truths, the sum of your noblest examples, the object of our hope, the Author and finisher of our faith, the glorious King of kings!

Hail, Son of God, Saviour of men; let your name
Be the copious matter of my song
Henceforth, and never let my heart your praise

Forget, nor from your Father's praise disjoin.

5. How Do You Read?

Signs of the Times, October 15, 1885

SOMEONE, presumably its editor, has sent us a number of papers bearing the title, “The Spirit of the Word,” and in the first number we have an explanation of the title, as follows:

By the Spirit of the word I mean its real and intended meaning, in contradistinction to its apparent and surface meaning, or the “letter.” It is a common mistake among Christians to suppose the Bible is written in very plain and simple language, and that the correct meaning is that which lies upon the surface—the most obvious and apparent sense. If I err not, the truth is just the opposite of this. The Bible often means something very different from what it says....It may sound strange and erroneous, to some, to hear anyone say that the Bible does not mean what it says. But if you will read this paper month after month, I think I can show you that I do not make the statement unwarrantably.

From what we have read of the paper, we think the last statement to be correct. We believe that the person who should read that paper “month after month” would not only believe that the Bible does not mean what it says, but would also believe that there is nothing that means what it says.

But we can prove, by sound logic, and upon his own principles, that the Bible does mean what it says. See: He says that the Bible means “just the opposite” of what it says. So he must mean “just the opposite” of what he says. Therefore, by his own principles, the Bible means just what it says. Because when he says that the Bible means just the opposite of what it says, he means just the opposite of what he says; and the opposite of what he says is, that the Bible means just what it says.

We suppose, however, that this editor will hardly admit our deduction; yet we cannot see how he can reasonably object to

it, for surely we have just as much right to hold that his words mean the opposite of what they say, as he has to say that the Bible means just the opposite of what it says. And if he, or any other, objects, then we should like him to explain to us by what right it is that he applies to the word of God a false rule that may not be applied to his own words.

But this person is not the only one who holds to this system of interpreting the word of God. True, all such do not state the case so boldly, but they act firmly upon the principles which this writer has plainly stated. When the Lord says,

Ezekiel 18

⁴ The soul that sins it shall die,

He is made to mean that it shall live to all eternity. When the Lord says,

Exodus 20

¹⁰ The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God,

He is made to mean that it is the Jewish Sabbath; that it is the first day of the week; that it is the seventh part of time; etc., etc., in fact He is made to mean just anything at all but what He says. When the Lord says,

Romans 6

²³ The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord,

He is made to mean that eternal life is the common lot of all men. When the Lord says,

1 John 5

¹² He that has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son of God has not life,

He is made to mean that every man has life whether he has the Son of God or not.

This is nowadays the prevalent mode of reading the word of God. It is read in the reverse of what it really says, and so ev-

ery man is left “to do that which is right in his own eyes.” *Deuteronomy 12:8*. The Saviour once asked a lawyer these two questions:

Luke 10

²⁶ What is written in the law? how do you read?

These questions are as appropriate today as they were the day they were first uttered.

“What is written in the law? how do you read?”

- If the Lord wanted to tell the people of this world that the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord, how would it be possible for Him to do it more plainly than He has done it?
- If He wanted to tell the people that the soul that sins it shall die, how could He do it in any other words than those in which He has told them?
- If he wanted to tell men that His own gift to men is eternal life through Jesus Christ; and that those who have Christ have life, and those who have not Christ have no life; how would it be possible for Him to tell them that in words more plain than those in which He has told just that thing?

“How do you read?” Do you read the word as it is, or do you read it the reverse of what it is? And if you read it, and seek to obey it, in the reverse of what it says, why should not the Lord reward you in the reverse of the hopes which you build upon your reverse reading?

Luke 10

²⁶ What is written in the law? how do you read?

6. The Authority of the Old Testament

Signs of the Times, June 17, 1886

THE “Disciples” not long since issued a pamphlet entitled, “Our Position.” One part of their position is stated as follows:

We accept the Old Testament as true;...but as a book of authority to teach us what we are to do, the New Testament alone, as embodying the teachings of Christ and his apostles, is our standard.

Upon this the *Christian Intelligencer* makes the following excellent comment:

But they forget that in thus denying the authority of the Hebrew Scriptures they fly directly in the face of the teaching of Christ and his apostles. When the Saviour repelled the tempter in the wilderness it was by quoting the Old Testament. He said again and again, “It is written”; but if the words written had no authority, why were they cited?

In the Sermon on the Mount our Lord said that he came not to destroy (abrogate) the law and the prophets, but to fulfill them. But if the law and the prophets were not abrogated by him, then they are of binding authority still.

When he was asked what was the great command, he answered, quoting the words of the Pentateuch which enjoin supreme love to God and to love our neighbor as ourselves, words which are unlimited either in time or place, and therefore are authoritative now, and evermore.

When he was asked about marriage, he quoted from *Genesis* the passage which settles the question for all time. When he was asked about the resurrection, he referred to the Old Testament as deciding the point not for Jews only but for all men.

When he was asked about the way to eternal life, he gave the most explicit sanction to the decalogue, saying, “If you will enter into life, keep the commandments.” It follows, then, that to deny the authority of the Old Testament is to deny the

authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul throughout his epistles cites the old scriptures, not simply as illustration, but as confirmation of his utterances. Not only so, but he affirms that “whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope,” and again, that “they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.” He also said that “every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness” (Revised Version); but how could it be this unless it were authoritative?

In the conference at Jerusalem the apostle James quoted from the prophets as a means of settling the question which caused the assembling of the council, and in the epistle he refers to the royal law according to the Scripture as a decisive rule of action. The apostle Peter not only quotes the Old Testament as authority, but tells his brethren that they do well to take heed unto it as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, since they knew that its authors “spoke from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost.”

It is clear, then, that they who restrict authority to the teachings of Christ and his apostles are counter to those very teachings. And they cut themselves off from three-fourths of the rule of faith which God has given. They also greatly disparage the divine wisdom. It pleased the Most High to make his revelation of himself gradual. Through a long course of years the disclosures were made, the late never superseding but supplementing the earlier, and the whole together constituting the divine directory for men.

The Bible, the whole Bible, is one book, and it is needful in order to accomplish its purposes; but to deny authority to the greater part of it is sadly to mutilate the inspired rule of faith and practice. If the Old Testament has and was designed to have no grip upon the conscience of Christians, its use and advantage to them is woefully abridged. In fact, it is reduced to the level of uninspired productions.

It may contain many excellent things, but the reader is to sit in judgment upon their value to him just as he would in

the case of any human production. Whatever is be, narrative, proverb, psalm, statute, or prophecy, he is to accept it if it commends itself to his mind, otherwise not. To all who hold such views one may well repeat the incisive words of our Lord, “You do err, not knowing the Scriptures.”

Yet as plain as all this is, the *Christian Standard* seriously sets about to controvert it, and begins by asking the ever mistaken question of that denomination, namely:

Who is now the Lawgiver in the spiritual universe?...That is the question. Moses or Christ—which?...Those scriptures were a standard to those who lived under the authority of Moses; but they cannot, in the nature of things, be a standard of authority to those who live under the authority of Christ.

We would ask the *Standard*, who, but God, has ever been the Lawgiver in the spiritual universe? Where was Moses ever a lawgiver in the spiritual, or in any other, universe? We challenge the *Standard* to show, from the hour that Moses saw the burning bush to the hour of his death, that he ever did anything upon his own authority, unless it be at the rock of Meribah, when he said,

Numbers 20

¹⁰ Must we fetch you water out of this rock?

But as this forfeited his entrance into the promised land, we think that even the *Standard* would hardly present that as proof that Moses acted on his own authority. The calamity that came upon Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and all their company, was to demonstrate that the authority by which Moses acted was the authority of God.

Numbers 16

²⁸ Moses said, Hereby you shall know that the Lord has sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of my own mind.

Then by what right is it that the *Standard* speaks of the “au-

thority of Moses”? None whatever but an assumed right. It is directly against the word of Moses, to speak of what he did as being the authority of Moses. From *Exodus* 3:4 to *Deuteronomy* 34:4, from the burning bush to Pisgah, always the word is:

Exodus 6

¹⁰ The Lord spoke unto Moses, saying...

Exodus 4

⁴ And the Lord said unto Moses...

So it is all through the Old Testament. The Lord spoke to Joshua, to the Judges, to Samuel, to David, to Nathan, to Isaiah, to Jeremiah, to Ezekiel, to Daniel, and to all the prophets. None of these spoke on their own authority, nor upon the authority of Moses, but ever by the authority of the Lord.

None of these things ever purported to be the authority of Moses. Nobody ever obeyed them as of the authority of Moses, but always as of the authority of God. And this authority is the authority of Christ. It was the Spirit of Christ that was in all the prophets from Moses—yet, from Abraham, from Enoch—to Malachi. It was the Spirit of Christ that testified in all their writings,

1 Peter 1

¹¹ ...searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them did signify, when it testified...

The Old Testament, then, is the testimony of Christ, and the testimony of Christ is the testimony of God. Therefore, to deny the authority of the Old Testament is to deny the authority of Christ and of God.

But this will not suit the *Standard* at all; for according to it the authority of Christ did not begin till after His resurrection. It says:

It was after his resurrection that Jesus claimed the posses-

sion of “all authority in Heaven and on earth,”...and from that time men are under the authority of the Lord Jesus.

It is true that it was after His resurrection—in fact, on the day of His ascension—that Jesus said this; but to claim that He had not this authority till that time is more than the record will justify. Near the beginning of His ministry, before the imprisonment of John the Baptist, the record is,

John 3

³⁵ The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into his hand.

And before the death of John the Baptist, Jesus said,

Matthew 11

²⁷ All things are delivered unto me of my Father.

Colossians 1

¹⁶ By Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him, and for Him;

¹⁷ And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.

John 1

³ Without Him was not anything made that was made.

Before He came into the world, He upheld...

Hebrews 1

³ ...all things by the word of His power.

Now if the *Christian Standard* can conceive how Christ could have all things delivered to Him, how He could create all things delivered to Him, how He could uphold all things by the word of His power, and yet have no authority till after His resurrection, it has a power of conception that is truly phenomenal.

Besides this, if the *Standard's* position were true, it would follow that no part of the New Testament even would be of

authority except that which was spoken after the resurrection of Christ. For it was not till then that Christ “claimed the possession of authority.”

In reply to the *Intelligencer’s* instance of Jesus telling the young man,

Matthew 19

¹⁷ If you will enter into life, keep the commandments,

the *Standard* again lets itself out after this fashion:

Let the reader carefully observe that this was the question of a Jew, propounded to one whom the questioner regarded as an expounder of the law; and therefore Jesus answers him out of the law. This certainly proves that the law of Moses was then authoritative. But does the *Intelligencer* mean to say that this is the way of life taught in the gospel? and that to deny this is “to deny the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ”? We have not so learned Christ.

Then we say that the *Standard* has not properly learned Christ. This was not all that Jesus said to the young man. He said also to him,

Matthew 19

²¹ Sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in Heaven; and come and follow me.

Was it as “a Jew,” “an expounder of the law” to a Jew, that this was said by the Lord Jesus? No; it was said by the Saviour of the world, the One by whom comes eternal life, to one who honestly asked the way to eternal life, and one whom Jesus wanted to follow Him. It was said to one whom Jesus wanted to be His disciple.

Therefore, what Jesus told this young man to do is what His disciples must do that they may have eternal life. Had the young man done it, he would assuredly have been a disciple of Christ; therefore, to deny the commandments of God, of the Old Testament, is to deny an essential part of the duty of a

disciple of Christ. The *Standard*, and the “Disciples” whom it represents, need to learn more thoroughly what constitutes a true disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. The *Standard* needs to so learn Christ.

But aside from this special pleading, the *Standard* cannot make its own system work. In answer to the statement that “Jesus repelled the tempter by quoting the Old Testament,” it says:

Those Scriptures had authority. Jesus was a Jew, “born under the law,” and it was his office to “magnify the law and make it honorable.” Not one jot or tittle of the law was to pass until all was fulfilled; and Jesus was then engaged in fulfilling it. What has that to do with the question concerning the present Lawgiver, whose authority we are to honor?

And yet in an editorial on the same page, in reply to a Catholic on the worship of Mary, it says:

There are no hymns of praise, there is no worship, addressed to Mary in the Scriptures. “You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve,” is what the Son of Mary uttered as true doctrine.

But hold, Mr. Standard. Why may not the Catholic answer you in your own words, that it was as “a Jew ‘born under the law,’” and “as an expounder of the law,” and while he was “engaged in fulfilling it,” that Jesus uttered these words? He was speaking to one who regarded him...

...as an expounder of the law, therefore Jesus answered him out of the law. This certainly proves that the law of Moses was the authoritative.

But,

What has that to do with the question concerning the present Lawgiver whose authority Catholics are to follow?

Now why is not that argument as sound in behalf of the

Catholics as the foregoing is in behalf of the Disciples? Or is it true that argument against the authority of the Old Testament is good for the Disciples alone, and is not to be used by other people?

“It is a poor rule that will not work both ways.”

And as the *Standard's* rule, by its own application, will not work both ways, we set it down that the argument against the authority of the Old Testament is a poor, miserable shift to escape the obligation of the Law of God.

7. Dr. Clarke and the First Written Document

Signs of the Times, November 11, 1886

Question: "I find that Dr. Clarke teaches that the law of ten commandments is the first instrument in writing ever seen by man. Is this true in the light of revelation and history?"

IT IS too often the case that, in exalting the merit of some person or thing which they greatly admire, and which they want others to admire, and which is really admirable in itself, men overdo the matter and really belittle the subject of their admiration.

An instance of this which we recall, occurred in relation to General Grant about the time of his death. In illustrating the General's evenness of temper, and his gentleness under great provocation, an instance was cited which should really be no provocation to any person, and which, if it had worked as this person supposed it naturally should in General Grant's case, would simply show him to have been little and spiteful and mean. And the narrator instead of by his narrative illustrating General Grant's greatness, only exposed his own lack of capacity to appreciate greatness.

Another notable instance is that wherein ministers and others in portraying the merit of the Saviour, quote Napoleon's estimate of Him. We have known one preacher in particular who apparently never lost an opportunity to parade Napoleon's opinion of Christ. As though the approval, or even the admiration of such a character as Napoleon, would be a recommendation of anybody, much less of the perfect goodness of the divine Saviour. For our part we should rather by a vast degree have Christ's opinion of Napoleon, than to have Napoleon's opinion of Christ.

But the most singular instance of this overdoing the thing

that we have ever seen is the one referred to by our correspondent. We know not by whom it was originated, but the idea is sanctioned, as our correspondent says, even by Dr. Adam Clarke, that the decalogue was the first written document on earth! It is singular that so eminent a scholar as was Dr. Clarke,—a biblical scholar too,—should be led to endorse such an idea.

And that the idea still passes current as though it were a piece of astonishingly exceptional wisdom, is a singular instance of the facility with which a thing passes on from generation to generation by sheer “reiteration and no examination.” Dr. Clarke, in his comment on *Exodus* 31:18, “tables of stone, written with the finger of God,” attributes the idea to Dr. Winder, saying:

Dr. Winder, in his “History of Knowledge,” thinks it probable that this was the first writing in alphabetical characters ever exhibited to the world.

But in his “Key to the Bible,” Dr. Clarke himself gives it the weight of his own authority. In speaking of the Scriptures, he says:

They contain the most ancient writings in the world, the decalogue, or ten commandments, a part of the book of *Exodus*, being probably the first regular production in alphabetical characters ever seen by man.

That might look very well as a theory, but there are a multitude of facts which go to show that it is but a figment of the imagination. It cannot be expected that we should attempt to give all the facts, for that would require that we should write a book. But we shall give a few which we hope may be useful on this point.

Here is the English of part of a document that was written at Babylon nearly fifty years before the tables of stone were seen by man. It was written by Khammu-rabi, king of

Chaldea, or his scribe, whose reign was about 1546 to 1520 BC. He says:

I have caused to be dug the canal of Khammu-rabi, a blessing to the men of Babylonia. I have directed the waters of its branches over the desert plains; I have caused them to run in their channels, and thus given unfailing waters to the people. I have distributed the inhabitants of the land of Shumir and Accad [*Genesis* 10:10] among distant cities. I have changed desert plains into well-watered lands. I have given them fertility and abundance, and made them the abode of happiness.¹⁴

But there was writing away beyond that. The great Senacherib, king of Assyria, who invaded Palestine 713 BC, began to reign about 716 BC. About the tenth year of his reign (cir. 707 BC), he set up a monument with an inscription stating that he had recovered from Babylon certain images of gods which had been carried there by a king of Babylon, who took them from Tiglath-Pileser I., king of Assyria, 118 years before. This carries us back, $707+418=1125$ years before Christ.

Now this same Tiglath-Pileser wrote a long account of his wars, his conquests, his buildings, etc., and this document is in the British Museum. In it Tiglath-Pileser says that he rebuilt a temple in Assyria which had been torn down sixty years before, after it had stood 641 years from its foundation by Shamas-Vul, son of Ismi-Dagon. He rebuilt this temple at the beginning of his reign, which was about ten years before his war with the king of Babylon in which he lost his gods. This would give, $1125+10=1135$ years BC.

But the temple had then been in ruins sixty years, after standing 641, which would give, $1135+60+641=1836$ BC for the foundation of the temple by Shamas-Vul. But he says Shamas-Vul was the son of Ismi-Dagon, which would demand

¹⁴ Lunnemand's, *Ancient History of the East*, Book IV, chap. 1, sec. 67; Rawlinson's *Monarchies*, "First Monarchy," chap. 8, par. 29, 30.

at least thirty years more for the reign of Ismi-Dagon, which would give, without a single missing link, 1866 BC for the beginning of the reign of Ismi-Dagon, which was 375 years before the tables of stone were “ever seen by man.”

And Ismi-Dagon, or his scribe, could write. And he did write, he and his two sons, Gurguna, who succeeded him as king in Ur of the Chaldees whence Abraham came, and Shamas-Vul, who reigned as viceroy in Assyria. And their writings are now in the British Museum and are known and read of all Assyriologists.

But these are not exceptions in the matter of writing. Writing was a familiar thing in the countries of Chaldea and Assyria, even a long while beyond the day of Ismi-Dagon. There were Arioch of *Genesis* 14:1, king of Ellasar, and Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, who invaded the borders of Palestine in the days of Abraham. Both are mentioned on the monuments, and this very Arioch is written, “King of Ellasar,” and we are told that his father’s name was Chedormabug, and that his grandfather’s name was Simtisilhak.

Writing that was written not only in the days of Abraham, but even before that, is now familiar, to oriental scholars. Writing was a familiar thing in Chaldea 450 years before the tables of stone were seen by Israel.

The same is true of Egypt. The following is the English of a document written by a discontented warrior, who was an officer in the army of the king “which knew not Joseph” (*Exodus* 1:8), or in the army of that king’s father:

When you receive the verses I have written may you find the work of the scribe agreeable.

I wish to depict to you the numberless troubles of an unfortunate officer of infantry.

While still a youth he is entirely shut up in a barrack, a tight suit of armor encases his body, the peak of his helmet comes over his eyes;

The visor is over his eyebrows; so that his head is protected from wounds.

He is wrapped up like a papyrus roll, and can hardly move his limbs in fight.

Shall I tell you of his expeditions into Syria, his marches in far distant lands?

He is obliged to carry water on his shoulder as an ass bears its burden;

His back is bent like that of a beast of burden, his backbone is bowed.

When he has quenched his thirst with a drink of bad water, he is obliged to mount guard for the night.

If he meets the enemy he is like a bird in a net, his limbs have no strength left.

When he returns to Egypt, he is like a piece of worm-eaten wood.

If he is too ill to stand, they put him on the back of an ass;

His baggage is plundered by robbers, and his servant deserts him.¹⁵

But it may be said that these writings were all Egyptian, Assyrian, or Babylonian, while the ten commandments were written in Hebrew, and that this was the first written document in that kind of characters. Very well, of this kind of writing, Dr. Wm. Hayes Ward says:

It was not many years ago that it was stoutly asserted that Moses could not have written a book of the law, or the ten commandments, because writing was not then invented....But within the past twenty years the history of Phœnician writing used by the Hebrews has been carefully studied; and it is now the general conclusion of the best scholars that it originated during the time of the conquest of Egypt by the Shepherd Kings four or five centuries before Moses. The last student of the subject, Mr. Isaac Taylor, thus sums up the result of long and careful investigation:

¹⁵ Lenormant, *Idem*, Book III, chap. 5, sec. 6.

“The possible date of the origin of the alphabet...lies between the twenty-third and seventeenth centuries; and there seems to be no reason why we should not provisionally accept the approximate date which has been proposed by De Rouge, and place it in or about the nineteenth century BC.”¹⁶

If, however, these evidences should be questioned or should not be considered sufficient to show that the decalogue was not the “first writing in alphabetical characters ever seen by man,” we have the evidence of the Bible itself.

The Witness of Job

According to the best evidence and authorities, Job lived more than 500 years before the children of Israel left Egypt, and he exclaims,

Job 19

²³ Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed [graven, carved] in a book!

²⁴ That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock forever.

Here we have the plain words “written,” “book,” and “pen.” We cannot conceive how Job could have talked about his words being written if writing was not known. And if there was no writing there could have been neither book nor pen.

Under Dr. Clarke’s supposition, the words of Job are not only utterly meaningless, but it is impossible to conceive how he could have so named things that had no existence. This is not the only instance of it.

Job 31

³⁵ My desire is, that...my adversary had written a book.

The only reasonable conclusion is that in the days of Job pens and writing were familiar things and to such an extent that books were written.

¹⁶ *The Bible and the Monuments*, in *Sunday School Times*, Volume 25, Number 42, pp. 659, 660.

Writing after Amalek

In *Exodus* 17 we read:

Exodus 17

¹⁴ And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua; for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.

This was after the battle with Amalek at Rephidim, and before Israel came to Sinai. Now if the decalogue was the first written document ever seen by man, Moses at this time could not have known what it was to write, much less could he have known what such a thing as a book was; and so the Lord had commanded him to do what was simply a physical, moral, and intellectual impossibility. But this is not all.

Writing Before the Decalogue

We know that Moses could write, and that he did write in a book, before either he or anybody else on earth ever saw the tables of stone.

Exodus 24

⁴ And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord, and rose up early in the morning, and built an altar under the hill.

⁷ And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people; and they said, All that the Lord has said will we do, and be obedient.

Now it was not till after that that the Lord told Moses to come up and get the tables of the decalogue; for in verse 12 it is said:

¹² And the Lord said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there; and I will give you tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that you may teach them.

And Moses was there in the mount “forty days and forty nights,” before he came down with the tables of stone. Therefore the word of God shows positively that here was a “regu-

lar production in alphabetical characters," a "written document" written and seen and read by men before ever the tables of stone were seen by Moses, and more than forty days before they were ever seen by any man besides Moses. The idea of the ten commandments being the first written document on earth is a myth.

Lest there should be any who may have so rested upon this statement of Dr. Clarke as being of authority that they might think its destruction would weaken the claims of the law of God, we would say that even though the statement were true it would not strengthen the claims of the law a particle.

The ten commandments are the law of God. They were written with the finger of God, on the tables of stone, and whether they were the first writing, or the last, that man ever saw, neither adds to them, nor diminishes from them, a single element of force.

And if the statement in question is not true, then it could not add any to the strength of the decalogue anyhow; for the truth can never be helped by that which is not the truth; its sole tendency would be to weaken the truth, and the sooner it was destroyed the better.

There is, however, a principle involved here that justifies the question of our correspondent, and the exposure of this error. It is this: If it were true that writing was not then known on the earth, that of itself would be a sufficient reason why the Lord himself must write the law. For if man was to have the written law at all, the Lord would have to write it, because man couldn't; which we say would imply that that was the reason why the Lord did write it.

But when we allow the truth to stand as it is, that writing, both on stone and in books, was a familiar thing to men and nations, then it shows that there was that about the giving and the writing of the law, which God regarded as of too much importance to be intrusted to the hand of man.

8. Infidelity in High Places

Signs of the Times, January 20, 1887

IN ANSWER to a question as to whether men can be saved except through faith in Christ, the *Christian Union* of December 16, 1886, page 26, says:

According to the Westminster Assembly's Catechism a knowledge of Christ is necessary to salvation, and those who have never possessed that knowledge are certainly lost. But this opinion is now entertained by very few divines.

So then it is "the Westminster Assembly's Catechism" is it, that declares that "a knowledge of Christ is necessary to salvation"? We thought we had read in the Bible, of Christ, these words:

Acts 4

¹² Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

We thought that we had read in the Bible, that:

Romans 3

²³ All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,

—and that God has set forth Christ,

²⁵ ...to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.

We thought that we had read in the word of God, that it is the righteousness of Christ alone that avails for the sinner, and that this righteousness is received by faith,

²² Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference.

²⁶ To declare, I say, at this time His [Christ's] righteousness;

that He [God] might be just, and the justifier of him which believes in Jesus.

We have thought all these years that faith in Christ was necessary to salvation, and that:

Romans 10

¹⁷ Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

And now the *Christian Union* informs us that it is the “Westminster Assembly’s Catechism” that says so. However, whether it be the Bible, or the catechism that says it, or whether both say it, the *Union* says that “this opinion is now entertained by very few divines.” Again says the *Union*:

Some hold that an opportunity will be given for such knowledge in another life; others hold that no such knowledge is necessary, and instance the case of Cornelius (*Acts* 10), the Judgment as described in *Matthew* 25, and such promises as *Isaiah* 55:7, and *Romans* 3:7-10.

The case of Cornelius is not well taken in this connection, for to him such knowledge was most certainly necessary. So very necessary, indeed, that an angel was sent from Heaven on purpose to tell him how he could obtain the knowledge. The angel told him to send for Peter, and:

Acts 10

⁶ ...he shall tell you what you ought to do.

He sent for him. Peter came, and Cornelius said,

³³ Now therefore are we all here present before God.

Peter there preached to him and them...

³⁶ ...peace by Jesus Christ,

and

⁴⁴ The Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

And then they were baptized. *Acts* 10:48. The other passages

referred to are turned just as much awry as this.

Romans 3

⁷ For if the truth of God has more abounded through my lie unto His glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?

⁸ And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say), Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just.

⁹ What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;

¹⁰ As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one.

It seems that this is rather cold comfort to give to satisfy men that a knowledge of Christ is not necessary to salvation. But more yet, the *Union* says:

There seems to us abundant scriptural authority for the latter opinion [that a knowledge of Christ is not necessary to salvation], and none for the doctrine that a knowledge of Christ is essential to salvation.

No scriptural authority for the doctrine that a knowledge of Christ is essential to salvation! Then what in the world was ever the Scriptures given for? Why was the gospel ever preached to men? If this be so, then why did Christ die at all?

And the opinion that such knowledge is necessary, “is now entertained by very few divines.” How much further can infidelity go, and still wear the name “Christian,” and its advocates be called “divines”?

Luke 18

⁸ When the Son of man comes shall he find faith on the earth?

9. How God Has Spoken

Signs of the Times, June 30, 1887

Hebrews 1

¹ God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

² Has in these last days spoken unto us by His Son.

NOTICE, God is the speaker, whether unto the fathers or unto us; whether by the prophets or by His Son. In time past God spoke by the prophets; in these latter times God has spoken by His Son.

“At sundry times and in divers manners,” that is, at different times and in different ways, He spoke by the prophets. But at whatever time or in whatever way, the prophecy came not by the will of man,

2 Peter 1

²¹ ...but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

None of the prophets of God ever spoke of their own will, or out of their own hearts, but the Spirit of God spoke by them.

2 Samuel 23

¹ ...the sweet psalmist of Israel said,

² The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His word was in my tongue.

When the prophet had spoken, his task was done; it was the word of God, and whether men would hear or whether they would forbear, rested with themselves.

Ezekiel 3

¹⁰ Moreover He said unto me, Son of man, all my words that I shall speak unto you receive in your heart, and hear with your ears.

¹¹ And go, get to them of the captivity, unto the children of your people, and speak unto them, and tell them, Thus says

the Lord God; whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.

A good illustration of the “sundry times” at which God spoke unto the fathers by the prophets is found in the book of *Haggai*. There are only two short chapters in the book, but yet the word in it came at four different times.

Haggai 1

¹ In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the Lord by Haggai.

Again,

Haggai 2

¹ In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month, came the word of the Lord by the prophet Haggai.

Again,

¹⁰ In the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet.

²⁰ And again the word of the Lord came unto Haggai in the four and twentieth day of the month.

Here we have the fact stated that the word of the Lord came to him the first day of the sixth month, the twenty-first day of the seventh month, and the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, twice in the same day, all in the same year. And that is all the prophesying that Haggai did. In other words, four times this holy man of God spoke as he was moved by the Holy Ghost.

The “divers manners” in which the Lord spoke by the prophets, was by visions and dreams.

Numbers 12

⁶ If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.

There was yet another way, which was by Urim and high priest, but after the early days of Israel in Palestine it seems to have been used only occasionally, as the only mention of it after the time of Saul (*1 Samuel* 28:6) is in *Ezra* 2:63 and *Nehemiah* 7:65, when Israel first went up from captivity.

Of course a dream from God was in a certain sense a vision, but visions were not always seen through dreams. Yet like things were revealed whether shown through a dream or by a vision when wide-awake. The prophecy of the 7th chapter of Daniel was revealed to him in a dream.

Daniel 7

¹ Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed; then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters.

It was in the same way that the prophecy of the 2nd chapter was made known.

Daniel 2

¹⁹ Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision.

- But the prophecy of the 11th chapter was revealed to him in the daytime, while he was out by the side of the river Tigris. *Daniel* 10:4.
- The vision of the 9th chapter was also given him while he was wide-awake and praying.
- The vision of the 8th chapter was also given him while he was awake and in the palace at Susa, on business for the king of Babylon.

Ezekiel's visions seem to have all been given him when awake. That of the 1st chapter was given while he was "among the captives by the river of Chebar." The heavens opened and he saw visions of God.

The vision of chapter 8 to 11 was given as he was sitting in his house and the elders of Judah sitting before him. This was a most remarkable vision. Ezekiel was one of those who had been carried captive to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. These

captives were placed in a colony on the river Chebar, in Chaldea.

Ezekiel, as has been stated, sat in his house in Chaldea, with the elders of Judah before him. Suddenly a vision from God fell upon him. He saw an appearance of a glorious personage glowing as fire. This personage put forth the form of a hand and took him by a lock of his hair, and seemed to lift him up between heaven and earth, and carried him in vision to Jerusalem.

Although it was a vision, it was just as real to the prophet as though he had been carried literally and bodily from Babylon to Jerusalem. He was taken in vision to Jerusalem, and was shown the idolatrous practices of those who yet remained there. He was shown a hole in a wall, and was commanded to dig there. He dug a little space and found a door. He went in and found a place where idolatry was carried on secretly. He saw on the walls portrayed all round the pictures of creeping things and abominable beasts, and all the idols of their worship, and seventy of the principal men of the nation standing there burning incense to these idols, and in the midst of all, apparently as the chief in the wicked work, he saw one whom he recognized as Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan.

Then he was brought to another part of the temple, and there he saw the Hebrew women weeping for Tammuz, the Babylonian god of lust. Next he was taken to the inner court of the temple, between the very porch and the altar, and there he saw about twenty-five men, with their backs to the temple of the Lord and their faces toward the east, worshipping the sun.

Then he saw six men drawing near with slaughter weapons, but there was another among them having a writer's inkhorn by his side; and Ezekiel heard his heavenly guide saying to this one,

Ezekiel 9

⁴ Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.

The others were to follow after and slay utterly all, but not to come near any man upon whom was the mark.

Next the prophet was taken to another part of the temple, and at the door of the eastern gate he saw twenty-five men, among whom he recognized a certain other Jaazaniah, and Pelatiah, princes of the people. Then said the guide to him,

Ezekiel 11

² These are the men that devise mischief, and give wicked counsel in this city.

Afterward he was again taken up and brought back in the vision to Chaldea, and the vision went up from him, and he told his brethren of the captivity all that he had seen in Jerusalem.

Thus we see that when God gives a person a vision, distance is nothing. Here were a lot of men and women carrying on wicked practices in Jerusalem, some of them in secret chambers in the dark, others devising mischief and giving wicked counsel.

But there was a man, sitting in his own house down in Chaldea, who saw it all. He saw exactly what they were doing, he knew just what they were saying, he looked them right in the face and called them by name. How little these people thought that all that they were saying and doing was known, not only to God, but also to one of their fellow-men, through whom it was to be made known to all the others. Thus,

Hebrews 1

¹ God at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time

past unto the fathers by the prophets.

But at the last God spoke by His Son. This is not believed now as the truth really is and as it ought to be believed. It is actually taught, and the belief is gaining ground, that when Jesus came he conducted matters upon His own responsibility, while God in some mysterious way stepped aside. But it is not so. God spoke by His Son. This is what He promised to do. The Lord said to Moses:

Deuteronomy 18

¹⁸ I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto you, and will put my words in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him.

¹⁹ And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which He shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.

God speaks by Him, and whoever will not hearken to God's words so spoken must render his account to God. God will require it of him.

Romans 14

¹² So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

Thus God promised to do, thus Jesus says He did:

John 12

⁴⁹ I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.

⁵⁰ ...whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

John 14

¹⁰ The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself.

John 7

¹⁶ My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me.

¹⁷ If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

God spoke by the prophets, and He spoke by His Son, who was “that Prophet” above all prophets. Yet, although God is the speaker both by the prophets and by His Son, there is an important difference in the manner in which He spoke by them and by Him.

While God spoke through the prophets by vision and dream, we never read of Jesus having either a vision or a dream. The prophets spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, but, as we have seen, it was only upon occasion that the Holy Spirit, moved them to speak. Jesus spoke also as He was moved by the Holy Ghost, but He was moved by the Holy Spirit all the time,

John 3

³⁴ For God gives not the Spirit by measure unto Him.

God gave the Spirit by measure unto the prophets, and they spoke according to the measure given. But unto the Son, God gave not the Spirit by measure, therefore He always spoke from the immeasurable fullness of the Spirit of God, and there was no room for either vision or dream. His whole life might be called one constant, limitless vision.

Thank God that He has not only spoken unto the children of men by the prophets, but that He has also in His loving-kindness spoken unto us by His Son.

John 3

³⁴ For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God; for God gives not the Spirit by measure unto Him.

Therefore whosoever it be that will not hearken to the words which He speaks in His Father’s name, God will require it of him, and how shall he render the account?

10. Mr. Moody's Bible School

Signs of the Times, October 6, 1887

A SHORT time ago we gave a specimen of the teaching that is given in Mr. Moody's Bible school. Since writing that another specimen has come to hand.

If these two specimens form any criterion at all we are justified in concluding that the *Northfield Summer School* is anything but a Bible school. The following is from an official report of one of Mr. Moody's addresses to the Bible students at his school:

If you had gone into Sodom, and asked about Lot they would have told you he was the most prosperous man in all Sodom; he owned the best property in Sodom—he owned the best corner lots. His family moved in the very highest circles—at the very top. He wasn't too religious. He wasn't like his uncle, Abraham. They thought Abraham a very narrow-minded man. But Lot was a noble man—he was just the kind of a man the Sodomites liked. They liked that kind of Christianity. He was their style of a man.

If there had been a railroad running from Sodom to Jerusalem, he would have been a prominent director in it. He believed in all modern improvements. He was getting along amazingly well. Bear in mind, Lot is a typical character. He represents the professing Christians of today who don't want to be too religious. They just want to get into Heaven. They keep their religion as a sort of fire-escape. They don't want to be too religious—peculiar—narrow-minded. Lot wasn't too religious. He didn't belong to that class. He was "a noble man."

But God knew about him; and when he came to investigate him, he found a rotten state of things. Lot had been there twenty years and hadn't any family altar—been there twenty-years and hadn't got a convert—been there twenty years and not one man had been made better in all Sodom. God he said: "Lot has been there twenty years. Certainly he has got some converts." But there wasn't a convert, and all Sodom suffered

one fate. Young men say: “Let us make the best of both worlds.” That is what you hear now. Well; Lot tried that, and he came to a miserable end.

Now as this was an address to Bible students, in a school professedly devoted particularly to Bible study, it is but natural to suppose that the ideas and instruction of the chief instructors would be almost entirely biblical. It is therefore but fair to inquire whereabouts in the Bible did Mr. Moody learn all these particulars in relation to Lot?

Here he has given a long series of statements, all given in a tone of supercilious criticism, in regard to a person named several times in the Bible, and there is hardly one statement in the whole account that is according to the truth of the Bible, and not one of the criticisms that is justified by the word of God. The tone of the whole tirade is such, and only such, as to set forth Lot as a man who used the profession of godliness only as a cloak, and only as a stepping-stone to worldly prosperity—in short to show him up as a systematic hypocrite, only keeping “his religion as a sort of fire-escape.”

And, by the way, if Mr. Moody be right, that is certainly a most excellent thing to do, for it is certain that God sent His angels personally to see that Lot should escape the fire that destroyed Sodom. If it be indeed that Lot, as described by Mr. Moody, was “a typical character,” then those who pattern after him most assuredly have all the encouragement that could be given to continue in their pernicious ways, seeing that, hypocrite though he was, God sent His angels to deliver him from the destruction of the place where he dwelt.

But the truth is, the Bible truth too, that Lot was no such person at all as is here set forth in this display of Mr. Moody’s extra-biblical wisdom. The word of God calls him:

2 Peter 2

⁷ ...just Lot,

and

⁸ That righteous man.

But in the character drawn by Mr. Moody there is no element of righteousness. The word of God says of Lot and of his conduct in Sodom, that:

2 Peter 2

⁷ [God] delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked;

⁸ For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds.

While Mr. Moody's whole sketch conveys the idea that he was a familiar associate, and a hail-fellow-well-met, among the Sodomites. But the same angels who condescended to associate with Abraham, and to share his hospitality, also associated with Lot and shared his hospitality. The same holy beings who counted Abraham worthy to entertain them, also counted Lot worthy to entertain them.

Abraham sat in his tent door, and when he saw the angels,

Genesis 18

² ...he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground,

³ And said, My Lord, if now I have found favor in your sight, pass not away, I pray you, from your servant;

⁴ Let a little water, it pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree;

⁵ And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort you your hearts; after that you shall pass on...And they said, So do, as you have said.

⁸ And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.

Lot sat in the gate of Sodom, and when two of the same angels came to Sodom at even,

Genesis 19

¹ Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground;

² And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and you shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night.

³ And he pressed upon the greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat.

Now when the angels of God treated these two men so nearly alike, and when the word of God shows them so nearly alike in their hospitality to the angels; we question Mr. Moody's right to draw so wide a distinction between them as he has done here, and we seriously question both the propriety, and the reverence of Mr. Moody's laying such hypocrisy to the charge of God's elect. Mr. Moody says,

Lot had been there twenty years, and hadn't any family altar.

How does he know? God calls Lot a "righteous man," and the Lord is not in the habit of calling men righteous who are not pious. More than this, God delivered Lot and his family from His fury poured out upon Sodom. But instead of so delivering the families that call not upon His name, the Word is,

Jeremiah 10

²⁵ Pour out your fury upon...the families that call not on your name.

Therefore we are free to say that we think the idea that he had a family altar is a good deal nearer in harmony with the word of God, than is Mr. Moody's statement that he "hadn't." Mr. Moody says, Lot had...

...been there twenty years and hadn't got a convert.

And:

I have no doubt when Abraham was pleading with God he said: “Lot has been there twenty years. Certainly he has got some converts.” But there wasn’t a convert, and all Sodom suffered one fate.

Well Noah was there a hundred and twenty years, and he didn’t get a convert in all the world. There “wasn’t a convert,” and all the world “suffered one fate”—drowned by the flood. And yet God has not laid this to the charge of either Lot or Noah. It has remained for Mr. Moody to go beyond the Lord and usurp the authority to perform that extra-judicial service.

It is altogether likely however that both “just Lot” and “righteous” Noah were more concerned in getting men to live righteous lives before God, than they were in getting “converts.” Then at last, this extra-biblical teacher says:

Young men say, “Let us make the best of both worlds.” That is what we hear now. Well, Lot tried that, and he came to a miserable end.

Lot did not try that, Mr. Moody. For:

James 4

⁴ Whosoever will be the friend of the world, is the enemy of God,

and “just Lot” “that righteous man” was not the enemy of God. But the fitting climax to this whole piece of Bible (?) teaching is the statement that Lot “came to a miserable end”! To what miserable end did Lot come? Does Mr. Moody think that Lot came to the same miserable end that Sodom did? Is that a part of his Bible teaching? How does Mr. Moody know to what end Lot came, whether miserable or otherwise? The Bible nowhere tells.

We may therefore very properly suppose that Mr. Moody got this remarkable piece of information, where he got all the rest of this intelligence that he has given us about Lot—that is, outside of the Bible. And that is the sort of Bible study and

Bible teaching, that they have at Mr. Moody's Bible school!

We most devoutly wish that this Bible school may become a Bible school indeed, and that at last both teachers and students may come to the same "miserable end" that "that righteous man," "just Lot," will. Amen.

11. Questions and Answers

Signs of the Times, July 20, 1888

AN ATHEISTIC paper fell into the hands of one of our brethren, making some of the same old objections to the Bible, and he asks us the following:

Question: How do you harmonize the following passages of Scripture? *Genesis* 14:14 with *Judges* 18:29; also *Exodus* 12:40 with *Genesis* 15:13; and *2 Kings* 8:26 with *2 Chronicles* 21:20 and 22:1, 2. The dates in the Gospels place Christ's baptism at 27 AD and his crucifixion at 33 AD, when but three and one-half years should intervene. Please explain. -C.H.H.

The first of these passages tells how Abram, when he heard that Lot had been carried captive, armed his trained servants and:

Genesis 14

¹⁴ ...pursued them unto Dan.

The second tells how the children of Dan, the son of Jacob, burnt the city of Laish, and built a new city in its place, and:

Judges 18

²⁹ ...called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born unto Israel; howbeit the name of the city was Laish at the first.

These two passages are of exceeding great comfort to scoffers at the Bible.

“Behold,” say they (but they are but vain words), “the books says Abram pursued them unto Dan, when the book itself shows that there was no such place as Dan for more than five hundred years afterward.”

But this is saying too much. For although there was no such city as Dan till more than five hundred years after Abram's expedition there was such a place as Dan at the time when Abram pursued the captors of Lot, and it is the truth that

Abram pursued them unto Dan. Says Josephus:

When Abram heard of their calamity he was at once afraid for Lot his kinsman, and pitied the Sodomites, his friends and neighbors; and thinking it proper to afford them assistance he did not delay it, but marched hastily, and the fifth night fell upon the Assyrians near Dan, for that is the name of the other spring of Jordan.¹⁷

The river Jordan has its principal source in a big spring near Caesarea Philippi, at the foot of Anti-Lebanon. From unknown time that spring was called Dan, as Josephus says, and that is why the river that flows from it has always been called Jordan, literally Yar-Dan, that is, the river Dan. And it was to this place that Abram pursued the captors of Lot, and surprised them “by night,” in their camp there at the spring of Dan.

This record about Abram and Lot has nothing to do with the city of Dan. It does not say Abram pursued them unto the city of Dan, but he “pursued them unto Dan.” Before infidels can make their objection good, they must prove that the Dan in *Genesis* 14:14 is the city of Dan, of *Judges* 18:29. But this they cannot do, for their own objection as formed in their own words shows that then there was no such city as Dan; while both authentic history and philology show that there was the such a place as Dan and that it is the source of the river Dan—Jordan.

This is an old infidel objection, and has been answered over and over, but they still repeat it, although they know the truth about it.

Here is a new point which we propose for them in place of this old, worn out one: In *Genesis* 13 the Book says,

Genesis 13

¹⁰ And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jor-

¹⁷ *Antiquities*, Book 1, chap. 10, paragraph 1.

dan,

—that is, all the plain of the river Dan. Now let them argue thus:

The plain of Jordan is literally the plain of the river Dan. Now Dan was one of the sons of Jacob, the grandson of Abraham, and there was no such city as Dan, till the children of Israel had possessed the promised land, and the tribe of Dan had destroyed Laish and built their own city in the place of it and called the city Dan after the name of their father.

Therefore to say that Lot beheld all the plain of the river Dan is the height of absurdity, because then there could have been no such river as Dan, because there was no such city as Dan for more than five hundred years afterward.

Here is a parallel: History says that Columbus discovered America in 1492 AD. Now what could be more preposterously absurd than to set forth a sober history, such a statement as that, when everybody knows that there was no such place as Columbus for three hundred and thirty-six years afterward. Everybody knows that Columbus is the capital city of the State of Ohio, and it is not only a fact of authentic history, but one also attested by the memory of men still living, that the foundations of the city of Columbus were laid in 1828 AD. Quote to us as sensible history that Columbus discovered America! Pooh!

In the second reference, one passage, *Exodus* 12:40, speaks of the sojourn of Israel in Egypt 430 years, while the other said to Abraham that they should dwell in a land that was not theirs 400 years. The same difference is made between *Galatians* 3:17 and *Acts* 7:6, Paul saying it was 430 and Stephen 400.

This is to be explained by the fact that *Acts* 7:6 and *Genesis* 15:13 do not speak definitely but only in round numbers, which was suitable to the purpose in both places; while *Galatians* 3:17 and *Exodus* 12:40 having occasion to be definite give

the exact time and name the odd years.

Another instance of this is *Numbers* 14:33-34. It is said, after they had spied the land, that they should spend forty years wandering in the wilderness, according to the forty days that they had spied the land. Yet it was really only thirty-eight years from that time, and the forty years include the two years which they had already spent since leaving Egypt.

Another is in *Judges* 11:26. Jephtha said Israel had possessed the lands of Moab 300 years, but, to speak exactly, it was somewhat more than 300 years.

Another is in *Judges* 9:18, 56, with verse 5. Abimelech is said to have slain the seventy sons of Gideon, though in reality he only slew sixty-nine, for Jotham escaped.

In *1 Corinthians* 15:5 Paul speaks of Christ's appearance to the twelve, when there were but eleven, because Judas had hanged himself.

In *Mark* 16:14, it says that He appeared to the eleven, when there were only ten, because *John* 20:24 says Thomas was not there.

In all these instances, the numbers are used generally, but when Paul or any other is making an argument or a particular statement, then the definite number is given.

The next reference in the question relates to the age of Ahaziah when he began to reign. In *2 Kings* 8:26 he is said to have been twenty-two years old; while in *2 Chronicles* 22:2 he is said to have been forty-two years old. Yet at the same time, *2 Chronicles* 21:20 shows that his father died at the age of forty years, which leaves no shadow of doubt as to the age of Ahaziah—he was twenty-two years old. How then could it come about that it is said in one place forty-two, and in the other twenty-two?

It must be remembered that the ancient nations did not

have figures as we have to express numbers, they had only letters. And in the Hebrew there are several letters so near alike that a very small scratch of a pen—a tittle—will turn one into the other. One of these letters is Kaph, and when used as a numeral counts twenty; another is Mem, and when used as a numeral counts forty. These two letters are so near alike that the scratch of a pen less than one-sixteenth of an inch in length will turn Kaph into Mem, and so turn twenty into forty. And that is how, in copying the ancient manuscript, *2 Chronicles 22:2* was made to read forty-two instead of twenty-two, as it should be.

The discrepancy in the dates given in the margin of the Gospels, is a mistake of Archbishop Usher, who put them there. The date of the baptism of the Saviour is given correctly, 27 AD. But how the Archbishop got three years between His baptism and His first miracle, when the Scripture gives it plainly as only four days, is more than we can understand. See *Mark 1:7-9*, and *John 1:26-29, 35, 43, and 2:1*.

And how the Archbishop could get six years between the Saviour's baptism and His death, when the Scripture clearly shows that He attended but four Passovers, making but about three and a half years, for He was crucified at the fourth Passover, is likewise more than we can make out. See *John 2:13; 5:1; 6:4; 11:55*.

The reader must always bear in mind that, although the dates and marginal references in the Bible are often a great help to the understanding of the Scriptures, yet they are not given by the inspiration of God.

12. The Sure Interpreter

Bible Echo, February 11, 1895¹⁸

THE spirit of prophecy is the means through which Christ Himself gives the true understanding and right interpretation of His word. Christ is the Author of the written word of God. This word,

2 Peter 1

²¹ ...holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

It was “the Spirit of Christ” (*1 Peter* 1:11) in these holy men, which testified the things that are written and now preached unto us with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.

It being the word of Christ Himself, signified and testified by His own Spirit—by Himself through His Holy Spirit—it follows that He alone by that same Spirit is qualified to interpret that word and infallibly give the right meaning of it. The only absolutely sure interpreter of any writing is the author of it Himself. All others are liable to mistake, or fail to catch the real thought which the author intended to convey.

How much more, then, is it so with the word of God—that word which is in meaning of eternal depth! How much more with this than with any other writing, are all others liable to mistake or to fail to catch the real thought of the Author! And how certainly therefore is the Author of this word the only one qualified to interpret it and to set forth its meaning!

Christ alone, in His own proper person by His Holy Spirit, is the interpreter of His word. And that interpretation is infallible; because Christ alone possesses infallibility. Whoever else would presume to interpret the Bible and declare its meaning, would thereby put himself in the place of Christ.

¹⁸ Also appears in a more complete form: “The Gifts”, *The Home Missionary*, December 1894; included in Fragments collection, vol. 8: *The Holy Spirit*.

And this is the papacy.

Christ alone is the interpreter of His word. And the evidence which He gives, the testimony of Christ, as to the meaning of His word, that is the meaning of it as He thinks it. That is the truth itself as it is in Jesus. And he who receives it thus receives the thought of Christ. And,

Revelation 19

¹⁰ ...the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy.

Consequently the one chief object of the gift of prophecy is to draw us to the word of God, and enable us to see there:

1 Corinthians 2

¹⁰ ...the deep things of God;

–to enable us to find there the precious hidden treasures; and to bring to understanding the things that...

2 Peter 3

¹⁶ ...are hard to be understood.

13. Eternal Depth of God's Word

Present Truth, August 15, 1895

GOD'S purpose in making known to us His will is an "eternal purpose." *Ephesians* 3:11. And the Scripture is the expression of God's thoughts on that purpose, carrying out and setting forth and making known that purpose.

- How deep then are His thoughts? Just as deep as is His purpose.
- How far-reaching is that purpose? Of eternal depth.
- In how many expressions in the Scriptures is the thought of eternal depth? In how many passages? Every one.
- Has it required all the Scriptures that are written, for the Lord to express to us what He wants to tell us of His eternal purpose? It has.
- Then how deep is the thought in each passage of Scripture and the words that are used to tell it? Eternal.

Then just as soon as any man catches one of these thoughts and thinks,

"I know it now, and have got it in that passage; I have the truth; I have all there is of that thought,"

—he has shut up his own mind from the wisdom of the knowledge of God. He has put himself and his own mind in the place of God and His thoughts. The man that does that cannot learn any more.

Do you not see that at that instant he shuts himself out for ever from learning? And the man who does that, of course can learn nothing beyond himself, and of course will never have the knowledge of God.

The expressions of thought conveyed in the statement of the Scriptures are as eternal depths. Then what limit can we set to

ourselves in the study of these? No limit at all. Then does not that present the splendid picture, and the grand prospect that the eternal, the whole, mind of God is wide open before us for us to study upon?

And until all the depths and eternities are past we shall never get to the place where we shall have the right to think we know that thing and are done learning from its eternal depths.

I am glad to know that we have such a subject to study upon, and such a length of time (eternity) in which to study it.

14. How to Know that the Bible is the Word of God

Present Truth, June 11, 1896

THE Bible comes to men as the Word of God. In every part it speaks to men as from God and upon the authority of God.

But how shall men who do not know God know that it is the Word of God? This is the question that thousands of people ask. They ask,

“What proof is there, where is the evidence that it is the Word of God?”

There is evidence—evidence that every man can have—evidence that is convincing and satisfactory. Where is it, then? Let us see.

Whom Shall We Ask?

Being the Word of God, where could evidence be found that it is such? Where should we expect to find such evidence? Is there anyone of greater knowledge than God, or of greater authority than He, of whom we may inquire? Certainly not. For whoever God may be, there can be no higher authority, there can be none of greater knowledge.

Suppose, then, we were to ask God whether this is His Word, and suppose He should tell us in just so many words,

“The Bible is my Word.”

Then we should have His word for it. But we have that already, over and over; so that even then we should have no more evidence than we now have in abundance; and the evidence would be in nowise different; for it would be the evidence of His word, and that we already have.

The Word of God bears in itself the evidence that it is the

Word of God. It is impossible that it could be otherwise. If God had never yet spoken a word to the human family, and should this day send a message to all people at once and in their own native tongues, that word, being the word of God, would have to bear in itself the evidence of its being the word of God; for the people could not possibly inquire of any other, because there is no other person whose knowledge or authority is equal to this.

Bearing in itself the evidence of its being the word of God, all the people could obtain this evidence by accepting it as the word of God. Each one who did this would know that it was the word of God, for he would have the evidence in the word, and by accepting it, also in himself.

How to Get the Evidence

This is precisely the position that the Bible occupies toward the people of this world. It comes as the Word of God. As such it must bear the evidence in itself, for there can be no higher, no better evidence.

Whoever receives it as the Word of God, receives in it and in himself the evidence that it is the Word of God. And so it is written,

1 Thessalonians 2

¹³ When you received the word of God which you heard of us, you received it not as the word of men; but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually works also in you that believe.

Acts 17

¹² Therefore many of them believed; also of honorable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.

And again:

1 John 2

⁸ A new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in Him and in you.

And again,

John 7

¹⁶ My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me.

¹⁷ If any man will [is willing to] do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

Thus he who accepts the Word as the Word of God has the evidence. He who will not accept the Word cannot have the evidence; in rejecting the Word, he rejects the evidence, because the evidence is in the Word.

To make this yet plainer if possible, especially to those who doubt that the Bible is the Word of God, we may for the sake of the case suppose that it were not, and that the God of the Bible were not, and that the God of the Bible were not the true God.

Suppose then that we should find the true God and ask Him, and suppose He would say,

“It is not the Word of God.”

We should then have only His word; and the only way that we could know that this answer were true would be by believing it, by accepting it as the word of God. So that the only way in which any person could surely know that the Bible is not the Word of God, would be by the Word of God.

And even though they had the word of God to this effect, the only way that they could be sure of it—the only evidence they could have—would be by believing that word. But there is no word of God that the Scriptures are *not* the Word of God, while there is the word of God that the Scriptures *are* the Word of God.

That Word of God bears in itself the evidence that it is the Word of God. And every soul who will receive it as it is, will get the evidence. The evidence will be plain to him who be-

lieves the Word.

15. Does God Mean What He Says?

American Sentinel, May 6, 1897

Original title: Editorial

The Bible Means What It Says

THE Bible is not difficult to understand when it is taken as it says. Whoever will allow the Bible to *mean* what it *says*, will never have any difficulty in knowing what it means.

And whoever will allow that the Author of the Bible is capable of knowing what He wants to say, and that He has clearness of mind enough to say what He wants to say, *just as He wants to say it*, will have no difficulty in taking the Bible as it says, and consequently will have no difficulty in understanding it.

The Bible comes to us as the Word of God. In itself it claims to be the Word of God. It is the Word of God. And whoever will receive it as the Word of God, will find it to be that.

Then to allow that the Author of the Bible had sense enough to know exactly what He wanted to say, and ability to say it just as He wanted to say it, is only to allow that God had sense enough to know what He wanted to say, and had sufficient clearness of mind to say it as He wanted to. In other words, it is only to allow that God in giving His Word knew what He meant, and meant what He said. When the Bible is taken this way and treated thus, no one will have any difficulty whatever in understanding it.

And for any man not to take it this way, and not to treat it thus: that is for any man to say that the Bible does not mean what it says, and that it is left for the man himself to say what it means—this is only to claim that he knows better than God just how it ought to have been said, and just what should have been meant. In other words, he puts himself in the place of God.

Childlike Simplicity

But when the Bible is taken just as it says, and is allowed to mean exactly what it says because the Author of it knew well enough what He wanted to say to be able to say just what He meant, it is all plain enough. Even a child can understand it then, for it is written,

Luke 18

¹⁷ Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no case enter therein.

Now the Word of God is the word of the kingdom. Through that Word we enter into the kingdom. And as whosoever does not receive that kingdom as a little child, cannot have it, it is perfectly plain that it is intended by the Word that a little child shall understand the Word, and that a little child can understand it. Even grown people must receive it *as little children*, and must become “as little children” in order to receive it. *Matthew 18:3*.

Any system, therefore, any writing, any way that is taken, by anybody, that has a tendency to mystify the sayings of the Bible, to turn them into hard problems or to make them difficult to understand, can never be the right way. And anything offered as an exposition of any doctrine that presents a problem difficult to be understood cannot be the truth. Therefore again, it is written,

2 Corinthians 11

³ I fear lest as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from simplicity that is in Christ.

The Word of Christ is simple. His Word is plain. It is as simple as A, B, C. And anything that tends to make it anything else than plain and simple, cannot be the right way. The simplicity that is in Christ is the perfection of simplicity.

When He was on earth He taught all classes of people at

once. The common people heard Him gladly (*Mark 12:37*) because He spoke with such simplicity of language, and such directness of meaning that they could understand Him. And it was only the subtlety of the serpent in the Scribes and Pharisees that pretended not to be able to understand Him.

Confusing the Word

It was so in the very beginning. When God placed in the Garden the first human pair, he said to them plainly,

Genesis 2

¹⁷ Of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it: for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die.

Yet there came the serpent with his subtlety and proposed that the Lord did not mean what He said, that it was necessary that it should be explained, and that he was the one who was qualified to explain it and convey to them the true meaning. He therefore said,

Genesis 3

⁴ You shall not surely die,

⁵ For God knows that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as God, knowing good and evil.

Thus Satan proposed that God had not said exactly what He meant, and had kept back the real meaning, and had left His saying dark and problematical. That is the first explanation that was ever offered: the first comment that was ever made upon the Word of God. And everything since, that has ever tended to make problematical the Word of God, to make it mean otherwise than exactly as it says, is following the same lead. It is of the subtlety that beguiles from the simplicity that is in Christ.

It has been well written of Moses that:

He gave God credit for wisdom to know what He meant,

and firmness of purpose to mean what He said; and therefore Moses acted as seeing the Invisible.¹⁹

And it was:

Hebrews 11

²⁷ *By faith* that Moses endured as seeing the invisible.

It is therefore *faith* to give God credit for wisdom to know what He means, and firmness of purpose to mean what He says. And,

⁶ Without faith it is impossible to please Him.

The Sabbath Question

Now it is a fact that there is much discussion of the Sabbath question. Many people seem to have great difficulty in knowing just what day is the Sabbath; yet the Word of God says plainly,

Exodus 20

¹⁰ The seventh day is the Sabbath.

Any person who will simply accept that statement as it stands, taking it simply as it says, will never have any difficulty at all in knowing exactly what day is the Sabbath. And the Bible throughout speaks just as plainly and is as easily understood in all its statements with reference to the Sabbath, as it speaks in this sentence quoted.

The people who accept the Bible statements exactly as they are on this subject, never do have any difficulty at all in knowing what day is the Sabbath. But those who will not accept it have endless confusion and difficulty: and in fact, never do get the question settled to their perfect satisfaction.

That “Great Discovery” lately made by the *Christian Endeavorers* is only another instance of the confusion, mystification and difficulty that people find by not taking the Word of

¹⁹ Ellen White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 346.

God simply as it says. It is another instance of the subtlety that beguiles from the simplicity that is in Christ. It has taken years of subtle invention and contrivance, of cutting and trying, of intricate elaboration, to produce what is now lauded as a “Great Discovery.”

And now that it is presented to the world, instead of its being plain and simple as divine truth always is, it is so contradictory to the Scriptures that no man can believe both; and in itself is so intricate and involved that an examination of it forces the query as to whether the author of it himself understands it.

If the subject of the Sabbath or any other subject in the Bible were set forth after any such order as this “Great Discovery” is, every man in the world would have just cause for saying that the Bible could not be understood: for it would then lack the essential element of a divine revelation—that is, simplicity.

He who knows most can always make plainest and simplest what he has to tell, however deep the subject he may be discussing. God, knowing all things, and being the embodiment of all wisdom, is capable of making subjects that are of eternal depth so plain that a little child can receive them and understand them.

But when anybody, whether it be the devil or a man, not believing what the Lord says just as He says it, undertakes to interpret it and by subtle distinctions to tell what the Lord means, he produces only infinite and eternal confusion. And all who allow themselves to be so beguiled from the simplicity that is in Christ, inevitably find it to be so.

When the Scripture is read that says plainly, “The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God,” those who do not believe it and will not accept it as the truth of God, and will not allow that He knew what He wanted to say and then said just what He meant, put on an air of child-like innocence and

inquire:

“The seventh day of *what?*”

or

“*What* seventh day is the Sabbath?”

In the very first chapter of the Bible the Word of God is, that in six days the Lord created the heavens and the earth and all things that are in them. Then the same word follows with a statement that on the seventh day He rested, and that He blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that in it He had rested from the work which He had created and made. And that particular seventh day, that *rest day* is the Sabbath, for Sabbath is rest.

That six days of creative work followed by the seventh day of rest, formed the first week of time that this world knows anything about. And from that record *just as it stands*, without any interpretation or explanation whatever, it is perfectly plain that the seventh day, which is God’s rest day; the seventh day, which is the Sabbath of the Lord, is the seventh day of the week.

Such is the record that the Lord himself has given of His own creative acts through the first six days of the world’s existence, and of His rest on the seventh day of the world’s existence. These together compose the original week of the world’s existence. And every one who will believe the record *just as it stands* and simply as it says, will know for himself and to his perfect satisfaction what seventh day it is that is meant in the Bible, when it says that “the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God.”

Then if any one wants to have another statement of the case, he needs only to turn to the 20th chapter of *Exodus* and read what the Lord himself said with His own voice, speaking from the top of Sinai. To His people there assembled and for

all people for all time who will be His people, the Lord himself said,

Exodus 20

⁹ Six days shall you labor and do all your work,

¹⁰ But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God, in it you shall not do any work...

¹¹ For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day, wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and allowed it.

Here the Lord says that the people are to work six days and rest the seventh, *because* at creation He himself had worked six days and then rested the seventh day. Now anyone who is willing to allow that the Lord tells the truth, and was able to remember at Sinai what He had done at creation, will have no difficulty whatever in understanding what seventh day it is that is referred to in this language. For it is the identical day of His rest at the close of the six days of creation, which cannot possibly be any other than the seventh day of the week; for there was no other existing period of which it could possibly be the seventh day.

The people who stood at the base of Sinai that day and heard that voice, have continued, through their descendants, unto this day; and are scattered over the whole earth, among all the nations. And the day that there God gave them, upon His own count, by His own voice, in connection with the facts in which He himself was the actor, *they have never lost*.

If anyone wants yet further evidence, come fifteen hundred years still further down. Then He who made the heavens and the earth, who rested that seventh day at the close of the work of creation, He who spoke from the top of Sinai the word which we have just quoted, stood upon the earth Himself in the form of a man as a teacher sent from God. He observed this same seventh day as the Sabbath. He ever called it the Sabbath.

And it was *the same day* that the people of Israel had observed as the Sabbath, from the day that He himself had spoken from the top of Sinai. And though there was constant criticism of all His words and ways on the part of the Scribes, Pharisees, Lawyers and Rabbis, yet there was never any shadow of a question raised as to whether He observed the proper day as the Sabbath. There was always agreement between Him and them as to that.

Their objections against Him were solely with reference to His *manner of observing* the day. And He in this as in everything else was the grand exemplar of the right way for all mankind forever.

Thus three separate times the Lord himself has stated the facts concerning the origin and basis of the Sabbath, and has made plain exactly what seventh day it is.

1. In the record of the original creation in the first and second chapters of *Genesis*.
2. In repeating with His own voice the record of the original creation.
3. When upon the earth He repeated with His own voice and manifested in His own life the living truth as the example for all mankind.

O that men would believe the word of the Lord which He has taken all these pains to make plain to their understanding. Why will men continue to allow the same serpent that beguiled Eve, and in the same way, through his subtlety, to corrupt their minds from the simplicity that is in Christ?

16. Are You Agreed?

Advent Review, November 23, 1897

Amos 3

³ Can two walk together, except they be agreed?

NO. If two persons, even dear friends, are walking together, arm in arm, and strike a disagreement, they either stop at once, and come to an understanding, or else they drop arms and walk no farther together. It is literally true, therefore, and it expresses itself in the natural, unconscious actions of men, that two cannot walk together, except they be agreed.

Now you want to walk with God. And God wants you to walk with Him. But how can you walk with Him unless you agree with Him? You cannot. It matters not how much you want to walk with Him, it matters not how hard you try to walk with Him, you simply cannot walk with Him unless you agree with Him.

But when you do agree with Him, you can—yes, you will—walk with Him, just as certainly as you walk at all. There is no power in the universe that can keep you from walking with God when you agree with Him.

But it is not really walking with God at all, to walk with Him a while, and then walk apart from Him for a while. Really to walk with Him is to walk with Him all the time; it is to abide with Him, and walk. And in order to walk with Him all the time, it is only necessary to agree with Him all the time.

Do you, then, agree with Him all the time? Do you agree with Him in everything? He has told you all things that you ever need to know, in order to walk with Him all the time. In His Word He has told you all His counsel, in order that you...

2 Timothy 3

¹⁷ ...may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good

works;

—in order that you may know and have...

2 Peter 1

³ ...all things that pertain unto life and godliness.

Do you, then, agree with Him in everything that He has said in that Word? If you do, there is nothing in the universe that can prevent your walking with Him always.

But how shall you agree with Him, if you do not know what He says? Therefore, of course, you must diligently read His Word to know what He says, so that you can intelligently agree with Him. And when you have read His Word, do you then agree with Him in everything that you have read? Do you?

When you have read what He says, do you accept it at once as the settled truth, and say,

“That is so.”

Or do you hesitate, and query, and say,

“How can that be so? I cannot see that; I do not understand that.”

If this latter is the way—and you know that much of the time that is the way—that you do, then will you call that agreeing with the Lord?

When He has told you a thing, and you reply,

“How can that be?”

do you think that that is agreeing with Him? When you have read His plain Word, spoken to you in your own plain, everyday language, and you reply,

“I can’t see that; I don’t understand it,”

will you say that that is agreeing with Him? In so doing, de-

cidedly you are not agreeing with Him; and so long as you stand so, you cannot, simply cannot, walk with Him. But you will say,

“How can I agree with Him till I understand what He says?”

That is just where the whole secret lies; instead of agreeing with Him, you want Him to agree with you. Instead of yielding your ideas, and implicitly accepting what He says, whatever it may mean, you insist that what He says shall be submitted to your understanding; and if it agrees with your understanding, you will accept it, and agree with Him; otherwise you will not. But that is not agreeing with Him at all; that is insisting that He shall agree with you.

All that you need to know in order to agree with God, is to know what He says. And when you know what He says, if you have more confidence in Him than you have in yourself, if you allow that He knows more about it than you do, you will agree with Him whether you understand it or not. Therefore the Lord directs,

2 Timothy 2

⁷ Consider what I say; and the Lord give you understanding in all things.

Do you not see, then, that understanding of the Scriptures comes from God just as certainly as do the Scriptures themselves? Do you not know that you are to forsake your understanding as well as all the rest of yourself?

Proverbs 3

⁵ Trust in the Lord with all your heart; and lean not unto your own understanding.

Do not ask that what the Lord says shall be submitted to your understanding. No; but submit your understanding to what the Lord says.

2 Corinthians 10

⁵ Casting down imaginations [reasonings], and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

Find what the Lord says: that is easy, for it is all plainly said, in simple language. Then accept that as the settled truth, without any “if’s,” or “and’s,” or “but’s,” or “how’s,” or any queries of any kind whatever. Agree with it as the settled truth, saying,

“That is so.”

Do this with everything that is said in the Bible. As soon as you read it or hear it, say, without any hesitation,

“That is so.”

This, and this only, is agreeing with God. And so agreeing with Him always in all things, you will as surely walk with Him always.

Genesis 5

²² Enoch walked with God...three hundred years.

Enoch agreed with God, there was no difference of opinion between them, for three hundred years. Enoch walked with God only because he agreed with Him. Agreeing with God, it was impossible not to walk with Him.

So it is, and so it will be with you. Agree with Him always, and you will walk with Him always. You cannot possibly walk apart from Him when you agree with Him. That very Word of His, in which you agree with Him, will itself hold you in the way with Him.

Therefore,

Colossians 1

⁹ ...[we] desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that

you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.

17. Believing the Word of God

Present Truth, August 25, 1898

ONE of the leading preachers of the United States has published a book on the “puzzling” books of the Bible, of which he has found seven. This book is written not so much to tell how puzzling these Bible books are to him, nor why they are puzzling to him, as it is to make it appear to other people that these Bible books are puzzling books to them.

Another thing that may be noted is that in this book he has dealt only with the books—old books—that are puzzling to him, and therefore, as a matter of course, are, or ought to be, puzzling to everybody else; he has not touched the particular passages or verses of the Bible, outside of the special books, which are puzzling.

But why should even a preacher think that because certain books of the Bible are puzzling to him, this fact can be of so much importance to other people as to call for the publication of a book on it? Does it certainly follow that because something is puzzling to him, it must be puzzling to everybody else—especially as soon as it is known that it is puzzling to him?

Now the only possible way that any book, or any passage, of the Bible can be puzzling to anybody, is by his not believing it. And there are many things, even outside of the Bible, that are puzzling to the person who does not believe them. The A B C’s are exceedingly puzzling to any man who does not believe them. And neither the Bible, nor any book or passage in the Bible, is any more puzzling to the person who believes it, than are the A B C’s to the person who believes them.

But that is just the trouble with all these “critics,”—they do not believe the Bible, they do not accept it as the word of God. They are critics of the word of God, not believers of the word of God. They do not receive the word of God for what...

1 Thessalonians 2

¹³ ...it is in truth, the word of God.

They hold it off, and criticize it, and puzzle over it; and so it cannot work effectually in them, because they do not believe it. That they do not accept it as the word of God, even when they believe it to be true, is clear from this:

Ever since 677 BC the Bible has said that:

2 Chronicles 33

¹¹ ...the captains of the host of the king of Assyria...took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon.

One of the critics have said that until lately,

“This passage has always been a stumbling-block to the critics.”

And the only means by which it was ever a stumbling-block to the critics was solely because they did not believe it.

The stumbling-block that they found in this passage was in that it says that the Assyrians brought Manasseh to Babylon; while it was known that Nineveh was the capital of the kingdom of Assyria. The critics thought that it should have said that they brought Manasseh to Nineveh; and because it did not say what they thought, it was a stumbling-block.

But what caused this passage to cease to be a stumbling-block? Why, the records of Esar-haddon, who was then king of Assyria, were discovered; and these records told that Babylon was subdued and possessed by Assyria, and that Babylon was his residence in those years.

But now the point,—they did not believe, before, that the passage told the truth, and of course did not believe it to be the word of God. Now, however, they admit that the passage tells, and always did tell, the exact truth; but why do they believe this now? Not because it is the Word of God, but only

because of what Esar-haddon said. If they had not yet found these words of Esar-haddon, or others to the same effect, they would not yet believe that the passage tells the truth; it would still be to them a stumbling-block.

Therefore, as they believed it now only on the authority of Esar-haddon, and not on the authority of God, it is perfectly plain that though they now believe it to be true, they do not so believe it because it is the word of God. The authority which they accept and rest upon for the truth of the passage, is the authority of a man, not of God.

And whoever accepts the Word of God on the authority of a man, has only the word of the man; to him the Word of God is only the word of the man: the word of the man is put above the Word of God; the man is put in the place of God.

To the person who accepts the Bible as the Word of God, that passage never was, and never could be, a stumbling-block. It was the truth. And it was the truth because it was the Word of God. True, he might not be able to explain it to the critics, or even to himself; nevertheless, he knew that it was the truth; and he rested there.

And now he is no more sure of the truth of that passage than he was before. Now he knows exactly how it was done. But that it was done, he knew as well before as now or ever, because he had the word of God for it, and:

Isaiah 40

⁸ The Word of our God shall stand forever.

18. Heaven in the Home

Present Truth, December 11, 1902

HEAVEN in the home: it is possible to have it there. Heaven belongs on the earth, and of all places on the earth, surely most of all in the home.

The Lord Jesus came to this earth to bring heaven to the people as much as He did to take the people to heaven. Indeed, in a sense, He came for the purpose of bringing heaven to the people; for heaven must be brought to the people on earth and they must become acquainted with it, and desire it, and be made fit for it, before they can possibly be taken to it.

And even when the glad throng of every kindred, tongue, people and nation, have reached heaven, it is with joyous anticipation that they exclaim,

Revelation 5

¹⁰ We shall reign on the earth.

That will be when “The new heaven and the new earth” shall have taken the place of this old one; and the great voice from heaven announces,

Revelation 21

³ Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

⁴ And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.

Thus of very truth heaven belongs on the earth. But it is only Christ who has brought heaven to the earth; and only in Him can it be found on earth. So it is written that:

Colossians 3

³ [We give] thanks to the Father, who has delivered us from

the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.

And that kingdom is “the kingdom of heaven.”²⁰ The word of God is “the word of the kingdom” (*Matthew* 13:11-19), and the object of the Word of God is to cause that the days of men on the earth shall be as the days of heaven upon earth. For so is it written:

Deuteronomy 11

¹⁸ Therefore shall you lay up these, my words in your heart and in your soul...

¹⁹ And you shall teach them to your children...

²¹ That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children...as the days of heaven upon the earth.

The Word of God laid up in the heart and in the soul, and taught diligently to the children, makes the days of parents and children as the days of heaven upon the earth. And the Word of God, and the truth as it is in Jesus, if allowed to prevail in the home, makes heaven in the home.

God wants it so, and God has planned it so, that all who go to heaven, shall, as they go, have heaven within and all around to go to heaven in. And as the home is the one place on earth where all the life most centers, God has fixed it so that, of all places on earth, there shall be most of heaven in the home.

²⁰ Editor’s note: The phrase “kingdom of heaven” is unique to the gospel of *Matthew*, appearing 32 times throughout that book.

19. Why is This Thus?

Present Truth, February 5, 1903

MENANDER was a Greek writer of comic plays, who lived in the time of Alexander the Great. All his writings were lost, and for ages were known only by quotations in other authors.

Only lately some papyri were unearthed in Egypt containing nearly a hundred verses of what is said to be “one of Menander’s most celebrated plays.” How this is known is by the fact that in these verses there are found “three passages that are quoted by ancient writers as being from the play in question.”

We do not deny that this is all correct enough. But what we would call attention to is the fact that the Biblical writings are not accepted on like evidence by the same scholars who “know,” and fully accept upon this evidence, all these verses as the veritable words and work of Menander.

There have come to us in the Bible whole books purporting to be the writings of Moses. In the New Testament, in the writing of other hands, there are passages quoted from these writings of Moses, which are there plainly declared to be quoted from the writings of Moses. Anybody can turn from these quotations to the original books, and find there the quoted passages.

Yet this is not allowed to weight anything in favor of these books being the veritable writings of Moses; all that is allowed is that these particular quoted passages in the books are the genuine writings of Moses. It is the same way with other books all through the Bible.

Now what we want to know is, Why is not this procedure in the matter of the writings of Menander accepted and followed with respect to the writings of Moses and other Biblical

authors? Why is it that three quoted passages, when verified in purported writings of Menander, are accepted as sufficient proof by which to “know” that the whole document is genuine, when, by these same people, a greater number of quoted passages from the writings of Moses and of other Biblical hands are accepted only as evidence that the particular quoted passages are genuine, and prove nothing as to the books?

These “ways are not equal.” There is something wrong somewhere. Upon the verification of three quoted passages, the whole of a pagan, corrupt, idolatrous document is accepted as genuine; while with respect to divine, purifying, saving books, the verification of any number of quoted passages is not allowed of the particular passages themselves!

It all only illustrates the ready and stubborn infidelity of:

1 Corinthians 2

¹⁴ The natural mind [which] receives not the things of the Spirit of God, because they are foolishness to him.

