

Later still, a study of the Bible brings us face to face with Greece and its culture, and Rome and its institutions. One will not make a thorough study of Biblical history without also making a like study of Babylon and Greece and Rome. The history of the Jews after the captivity turns on the influences of Babylon, and a knowledge of the condition and character of the people in the time of Christ depends upon a knowledge of Greece and Rome. When the Book of the Acts is reached, the whole world is open before us; and in order to understand the history of the church we must understand the history of all nations.

The Bible does not cease to be a historical book when it leaves St. Paul at Rome looking out towards Spain. In the same sense in which it is a history of the beginning of the world, so it is a history up to its close. The Apocalypse—no matter now about its authorship, canonicity, or any such question—is, in its main features, a most simple and lucid piece of literature. It is the counterpart to Genesis; it is a prophetic picture of the future of humanity; the fulfilment of the purpose outlined in Genesis. The Bible begins with creation out of chaos, and ends with humanity lifted into the heavens; and the whole mighty sweep is *history*. The first part is symbolic, and the latter part is symbolic; but the symbols bear a most surprising relation to each other, and carry in them the substance of history. Each is keyed to hope. We believe Genesis because it offers us a hope; we believe the Apocalypse because it shows us the same hope drawing humanity on toward God. One who passes by the Apocalypse should also pass by Prometheus and Dante, for they are of the same order.

My point is this: the Bible gives us history in its broadest stretch and in its largest meaning. Its affiliations lead us into all history, and with an impulse that carries us on through the Christian centuries; for one will not follow the church through the Acts and the Epistles of St. Paul without feeling required to trace it along the twofold current of East and West.

But the great advantage of studying history through the Bible is that we thus follow the main current of human progress in all the ages; we are tracing an idea, a principle, a force, and that the greatest the world has ever felt. The Jewish nation was small, and its history has no great features, but it impressed the world as no other nation has done. It protested against Mesopotamia, it discarded Egypt, it conquered heathen Palestine, it won from Babylon all it had worth knowing, and it finally imposed its conception of God upon Greece and Rome and created modern civilization. When we study its history we are studying the fundamental ideas of present society, and in their original, largest, and most unprejudiced forms. Indeed it is only in the Bible that we get a large, free, and unprejudiced history, for the reason that it is taught incidentally. When we read Hume we read Toryism; or Macaulay, Whiggism; and thus nearly all history is shot through with human prejudice, and wears the limitations of a single mind. But the Bible simply reflects the ages; they shine through its pages by their own light. And, above all, it gives us the secret of history; it tells us why and for what end the nations have existed, and shows us whither they are tending. And this is what a true student of history desires to learn—not how the forces were marshalled at Waterloo, but by what force and toward what goal humanity is moving.—*Rev. Dr. Munger, in the Christian Union.*

“WHY SO LONG IN COMING?”

BY TRYON EDWARDS, D.D.

In Mrs. Johnson's book, “About Mexico,” is a most thrilling story bearing on the subject of missions, and bringing up the sadly touching enquiry as to the missionary disciples of Christ, “*Why are they so long in coming?*”