

The Inspiration of the Bible.

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NO. 3.

In the last number it was shown that Christ established and vindicated his claims by miracles—the same means which had been employed to prove the divine origin of the Old Testament; and, as he accepted the Old Covenant as a revelation from God, it therefore rests upon the same foundation and sustains the incarnation, the trinity and the doctrine of the new birth. To these new doctrines, taught by Christ, may be added the atonement which, up to the time of his appearing, had been expressed only in types and unfulfilled prophecies, neither of which had been understood. Indeed the same may be said of the incarnation, the trinity and the new birth. So the new cardinal truths given to the Jews by Christ, or the truths so unfolded and emphasized by him that they might be understood, were four instead of three. All these teachings were to the Jews strange and startling. It must, however, be said that among the people there were a few who by the Holy Spirit, had been so prepared that they recognized the Deliverer even when he was an infant. Anna and Simeon are examples of this class. The world-wide character of the Messiah's mission was intimated by the coming of sages from the East with their gold, frankincense and myrrh, to hail with joy his advent as the deliverer of Gentiles as well as Jews.

Reference was made in the last article to the manner in which the ruling classes, as a whole, were affected by the doctrines taught by Jesus of Nazareth. Mohammedans who have been stout, zealous and even fanatical, defenders of pure theism, illustrate in modern times better than any other religious people, the violent resistance offered by the Jews about two thousand years ago to Christ and his teachings. Of late, Mohammedans, feeling the aggressive power of the Christian nation, have given expression to their opposition and hatred to Christianity. Sheik Abdul Hagk of Bagdad, the head of the "Holy Islamic League," a general organization whose object it is to unite all the followers of Mohamet against Christians, has, in the name of the League, issued a circular, from which the following extracts are made:

"The hatred entertained by the people of Islam for Christianity is irreconcilable. O, ye wise men of Europe, ye must learn this, that a Christian, by the single fact that he is such, is in our eyes a blind man who has lost all the dignity and worth of a man. We know exactly what we are, and it is absolutely necessary for you to understand this fundamental fact that the whole structure of the Mohammedan faith is based on the doctrine of the unity of the one God, who is absolute, without limitations or restrictions, eternal, who has never been begotten and who has begotten none other. This article of our faith is in direct opposition to Christian teaching. Through this article, the Christian dogma of a trinity becomes the sworn enemy to the God of Islam. The absolute hostility of these two fundamental doctrines is a cruel trial to the patience of every Mohammedan. The Christians, educated as you are from your youth in the doctrines of your church, can have no conception of the terror and disgust that overcomes our soul at every mention of the word trinity. Know that as we are filled with an overwhelming awe of our doctrine of the oneness of the true God, it is absolutely impossible for us to permit or to excuse anything that would in the least conflict with the unity of the one invisible God. It is not possible that we should even for a second, submit to the rule of a God who was crucified, or a God who represents a humiliation of the Almighty, Lord of the world. What do we care for the things of this world? Victory or defeat are in the hands of God alone."

The spirit that animates this circular, of recent date, indicates that implacable hostility, turned against Christ by the governing class among the Jews of Christ's day. A strong indication of his divinity appears in the fact that the charm of his person and the irresistible power of his doctrines led a few military men of heathen antecedents, stationed in Palestine to keep in order the affairs of the empire, some Jews also, cultured and members of the temple staff and governing body, together with many of the common people, men and women, to accept his teaching and become his followers. They withstood the storm of Jewish fanaticism and contempt of the Roman soldiery in acknowledging themselves followers of the much-hated Nazarene, who, as it is here manifest, laid the foundations of his kingdom in the fires of persecution and in the tempests of hostile human passions, the fires made hotter and the tempests made more terrible by the presence of the prince of the power of the air who worked in the hearts of the children of disobedience.

It now remains, if possible, to ascertain the books of which the Old Testament accepted by Christ was composed. As we now have the Old Testament, it is a collection of thirty-nine books. From these books Christ made quotations, and also many clear references. He refers to the creation of man—God made them male and female—to the institution of marriage and of the Sabbath, also to the murder of Abel by his brother, to Enoch, Noah and the flood, Lot's wife, Jacob's ladder, the burning bush, incidents

in the wilderness, the manna, the plague of serpents and the brazen serpent as a God-given remedy for the healing and arresting of the plague, the shew breads eaten by David, Solomon's superior wisdom, the Queen from Sheba, Elijah and incidents in the famine of his day, the cure of Naaman, the story of Jonah and many other facts found in the books of the Old Testament which are included in the references made by Christ in which he accepted the books of the Old Testament now in our possession. Again and again he referred to the writings of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms.

About ninety years after the birth of Christ, the Jews held an assembly at Jebneh of Jamnia where they discussed the books of the Bible. They reaffirmed with some differences their belief in the divine origin of the thirty-nine books now found in the Old Testament. In the latter part of the first century Josephus, in writing to Apion, an idolator, told him that the Jews had twenty-two books which he divided as follows—five books of Moses, thirteen of the prophets and four of holy writings. The thirty-nine books now found in the Old Testament, were compressed into twenty-two books, and were regarded by Christians until the middle of the third century as the Scriptures referred to by Christ. In respect to the character of these writings, Josephus said in writing to Apion:—

"But what is the strongest argument of our exact management in this matter is what I am now going to say, that we have the names of our high priests from father to son, set down in our records for an interval of 2000 years. . . . nor is there any disagreement in what is written; they being only prophets that have written, the original and earliest accounts of things as they heard them of God himself by inspiration; and others have written what hath happened in their own times and that in a very distinct manner; for we have not an innumerable number of books among us, disagreeing from and contradicting one another (as the Greeks have) but only twenty-two books, which contain the records of all the past times which are justly believed to be divine; and of them, five belong to Moses, which contain his laws and traditions of the origin of mankind till his death. This interval of time was little short of three thousand years; but as to the time from the death of Moses till the reign of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, who reigned after Xerxes, the prophets, who were after Moses, wrote down what was done in their times in thirteen books. The remaining four books contain hymns to God, and precepts for the conduct of human life. It is true our history hath been written since Artaxerxes very particularly, but hath not been esteemed of like authority with the former by our forefathers, because there hath not been an exact succession of prophets since that time; and how firmly we have given credit to those books of our own nation, is evident by what we do for during so many ages as have already passed, no one has been so bold as either to add anything to them, or to make any change in them; but it becomes natural to all Jews, immediately and from their very birth, to esteem these books to contain divine doctrines and to persist in them, and if occasion be willingly to die for them." This testimony from Josephus ought to have some weight. He was born only a few years after the crucifixion, belonged to the priesthood class, was highly educated, fought in the last struggle with the Romans, was present with the Roman army when Jerusalem was taken by Titus, was taken to Rome, was given a house and pension by the Emperor in Rome, learned the Greek language and wrote extensively. He represented the belief of his people, and, in doing so, states the number of their divinely inspired books and the belief of the Jews through all their history that the books were written by men inspired of God, and hence they had been kept sacred throughout their ventennial national life.

In making the number of the Jewish canonical books twenty-two, Josephus counted the five books of Moses; and, as prophets, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Kings—four books including the two Samuels—Chronicles—the two books as one—Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Isaiah, Jeremiah, including Lamentations, Ezekial, Daniel, and the twelve minor prophets as one. The holy writings were Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiasties and the Songs of Solomon as one. The Jews of Alexandria in Egypt translated their books above enumerated, together with some apocryphal writings. This was done about three hundred years before Christ's time.

The twenty-four books reckoned by the Jews of Palestine are judged to be the same as the twenty-two by Josephus. The difference is accounted for by a different combination of the books.

Both the Old and New Testaments were translated into Latin about three hundred A. D., and with them some of the apocryphal books. But Jerome, one of the church fathers who died 420 A. D., said the apocryphal books were not reckoned by Christians as inspired books. There is, therefore, good evidence to show that the books of the Old Testament now in use, are the books indicated by Christ in his references to the Scriptures existing in his day. They have come down through the centuries as a sacred trust held by Christians. The Jews, as is seen in the specific statements made by Josephus, regarded them as inspired; and in the gospels are found the plain acceptance of these books by Christ when he referred to Moses, the prophets

and the Psalms, and also to many persons, events, and separate books of the Jewish canon.

In the next article I shall consider the books of the New Testament, and the separating of them as inspired records, from apocryphal writings—the writings of men uninspired.

The Christian's Treasures.

BY THEODORE L. CUYLER, D. D.

The constant question in the haunts of business men is—Where shall I find a safe investment? Our divine Master anticipated all such questions when he said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt and thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." Paul was probably accounted a poor man at Corinth; for he earned his daily bread with a tent-maker's needle. But in God's sight he was a millionaire. He could say, "I know whom I have believed, and that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." The great Apostle had made Jesus Christ his Trustee. He had put his affections, his soul, and his everlasting hopes into his Saviour's hands; and when he reached heaven he knew that he would find the great deposit safe. He had made up nothing that moths could consume or rascals steal. His investments were in the real estate that never depreciates, and the Son of God had charge of it. So may every true Christian—whether in a brown stone mansion or in an attic—congratulate himself that what is more precious to him is the keeping of his Saviour.

The grand old tent-maker had other treasures laid up on high also; all the glorious spiritual results of his life were there. Brother and sister in Christ, so are yours and mine, however humble. And whatever we give up for our Master's sake increases our heavenly treasure. The profits which we might make and which we sacrifice, in order to keep a clean conscience, add to our wealth, for they make us rich towards God. Hoarding money, stealing time from prayer, and Bible reading, nursing popularity, all are wretchedly impoverishing. Giving up for Christ is an enriching process. Whatever we lay down here in order to please and honor our Master will be laid up to our account yonder. Our God is a faithful Trustee; he keeps his books of remembrance. He will reward every one according as his works shall be. Two talents will pay a grand dividend; yes, and one talent will sparkle when some humble mission teacher presents her lasso on the last great day and says: "Here am I Lord, and these children I brought to thee!" When we speak of salvation as by grace and not "of works," we must not forget that other truth that God will judge us according to our works. They will be laid up there. If the selfish sinner's "wages" are paid in hell, a Christian's wages are paid in heaven.

Compound interest will make some of Christ's servants magnificent millionaires. All that Paul gave up of worldly pelf and profit and fame and ease and emoluments will stand to his credit up there; and the result of all this life of self-sacrifice for Jesus have been going on accumulating every day for eighteen centuries, and who can tell what they will amount to when the judgment morning breaks. People sometimes speak in a plying tone of "poor ministers with small salaries." Wait until the treasure chests are opened up yonder, and see if anyone will call that hard-working soul-winner poor. John Bunyan when in jail comforted himself with the thought that he had "rich lordships" in those souls whom he had led to Jesus. What a Croesus the old tinker of Bedford will be when he comes into full possession of his inheritance!

Benjamin Chidlaw in the hard struggles of his boyhood sewed the skins of trapped animals into mittens in order to earn a few shillings; that log cabin fitted him for his great work as pioneer of Western Sunday schools. I should not wonder if troops of children will salute him up in the Father's house. To John Eliot the converted Indian will be a star in his crown. Judson must have already met his "treasures" brought home from the mission fields in Burma. I have just been reading the letter of our young American brother, Mr. R. P. Wilder, announcing the conversion of that Brahmin in India; his soul is filled with joy; for such a convert may make a breach in the wall of heathenism through which others will pour in. Who says that investment in foreign missions do not "pay?"

The simple fact is that the only investments that do pay interest through all eternity are those which are made for the cause of Christ and in his service. The gains are very steady up there. Poor city missionaries and frontier preachers and Salvation Army soldiers and godly needlewomen have their savings bank at God's right hand. Those banks never break. The only change from heavenly treasures is their engagement. There is no corruption from within, and no consumption from without. The moth never gnaws there, and the burglar never breaks through to steal. It is impossible to compute the treasures every faithful, self-denying Christian may be storing away for his or her long life in glory. God keeps his record on high, and each good deed of love, each act of self-denial, each surrender of pride or worldly ambition for Jesus' sake will find sure remembrance there. "Follow Me, and thou shalt have treasures in heaven," says the Master. My dear reader, how much real estate have you got?—Evangelist.