

Reprints from

GOSPEL GUARDIAN

JUNE, 1976

VOLUME 16/NUMBER 6

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST AND THE INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

Robert H. Farish

The evidence by which the resurrection of Christ is proved is the testimony of the apostles. This testimony was originally given orally and later put into writing by the apostles. This testimony asserts not only the miracle of the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20), but also the miracle of inspiration. (1 Cor. 2:12, 13.) In spite of this well known fact that the testimony affirms both of these miracles, it has been asserted that if the resurrection of Christ "can be proved, it would be no firm basis for verbal inspiration and the infallibility of the scriptures". In this article it will be shown that the proof of the resurrection of Christ is a firm basis for the verbal inspiration and the infallibility of the apostles' testimony.

If the evidence possesses the sufficiency to prove the resurrection of Christ, that same sufficiency prevails with reference to the claim of inspiration. In each instance the integrity of the witnesses plays the vital role. When it is shown that the integrity of the witnesses cannot be doubted in the one instance, there is, to say the least, a strong presumption that the same integrity exists in the other instance. To see the force of this point, just think of the effect that would be produced upon the mind if it could be proved that the witnesses were dishonest in their testimony to the resurrection of Christ. Would anyone contend that this is no firm basis for rejecting their claim of inspiration? Skeptics are unwilling to allow that the integrity of the witnesses with reference to other superhuman events gives firm basis to their claim to inspiration. Such an attitude reveals a woeful lack of intelligence. Consistency in such an attitude would require as much confidence in the testimony or a notorious liar as in the testimony of a man whose honesty was well established.

Ways By Which Inspiration May Be Proved

There are several routes by which one may travel to come to the conviction that the witnesses were inspired, that their claim to be inspired is true. The superhuman restraint seen in the writings of the witnesses could be studied with great profit. Such a study in which the style of human genius is contrasted to the style of divine inspiration will make a very positive contribution to conviction of the inspiration of the scripture. Another

line of study is to note the boldness with which details are given with reference to local customs, political arrangements, names and actions of public figures, etc. All of which could be checked, and if proved false, would discredit the witnesses. The course of one who sets out to deliberately deceive is to avoid particulars and deal only in generalities. One could also collect and examine the evidence of the integrity of the witnesses in cases where their testimony is the evidence in proof of a superhuman even. Their integrity being established in these instances, all their claims must be regarded as the claims of honest men. These and other courses could be followed, but in this article we shall confine our efforts to the last named course. The integrity of the witnesses, in connection with their testimony to the fact of the resurrection of Christ, will be proved. This proved, the question of veracity enter the picture to create doubt.

The possibility of an apostle being honest but mistaken can have very little weight when considered in connection with his claim of such a large number of living eye-witnesses. He could not have been "honestly mistaken" about this fact. Furthermore, the improbability of this large number of eye-witnesses being "honestly mistaken" about the fact of the resurrection of Christ, is so great that it could be properly called an impossibility. This brief notice on this point will have to suffice for this time.

This study will be confined to the testimony of 1 Cor. 15.

Some Facts In 1 Cor. 15

I. The fact that Christ "hath been raised from the dead" (1 Cor. 15:4) is the bold affirmation of this testimony.

II. Witnesses to this fact are cited and in some cases identified by name - "He appeared to Cephas; then to the twelve; then he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater remain until now, but some are fallen asleep; then he appeared to James; then to all the apostles; and last of all, as to a child untimely born he appeared to me also." (1 Cor. 15: 5-8.)

III. All the witnesses preached the resurrection of

(Continued on back page)

NEO-ORTHODOXY -- LIMITED INSPIRATION

Robert C. Welch.

Extreme modernism and liberalism have been found repulsive to many; and there is a great wave of reaction against the higher criticism, the rank infidelity and gross liberalism of the last century. This reaction is called **neo-orthodoxy**. It is not the position on inspiration which is declared by the Scriptures themselves. It is not a complete return to the position held by such reformers as Calvin. Some who hold the new position would not call themselves by this term, but some do; hence, the term needs to be used advisedly.

One reason for some not desiring to wear the term may be the elusive or ambiguous meaning of the term itself. One writer, whose name is not momentarily available, in a religious journal defines it this way; "The tendency to subordinate the Christian Revelation to contemporary religious experience, the influence in the church of various forms of optimistic rationalism or idealism, the extraordinarily uncritical acceptance of modern western culture." This statement is from one who considers himself to be of that position. Another modern writer and educator has put his position between fundamentalism and modernism in these words:

"We are mistaken if, with the fundamentalists, we deny or ignore the fact of this transfiguration and imagine that things always were as they later seemed; but we are likewise mistaken if, in the manner of modernists, we deny or ignore the value and truth of this transfiguration and thus fail to recognize the unity and transcendent meaning of the whole event and the exalted significance of the earthly life as a part of it." (John Knox, *Jesus: Lord and Christ*, Harper and Brothers, 1958).

New Revelation?

John Calvin of the reformation taught that the Bible was sufficiently inspired of God to be a complete and adequate revelation except that the Spirit must work in the man to enable him to understand and appreciate the inspired text (see a former article). Many people in religious and theological pursuits realized that they did not have this extra-spiritual power. As a result they turned to rationalism and there was a great wave of criticism of, and doubt in, the inspiration of the Text. Its greatest center was among the higher critics of Germany during the last half of the nineteenth century. It was a logical reaction to the Calvinistic theology.

Neo-orthodoxy is a swinging of the pendulum from that extreme. It holds that in a sense the Bible is inspired. However, it neither claims verbal inspiration nor inerrancy in the statements of the original Scriptures. On the other hand, it makes the Scriptures themselves subject to the conceptions which the early Christians had, and makes Truth or God's revelation down through time composed of the understanding and interpretation of religious matters as held by the Christian community. This is expressed in the first quotation in this article. It makes the Scriptures inspired only to the extent to which the Christian community considers them to be inspired. It will not conceive of a complete and final revelation having been made. It teaches that there is a spreading, additional and fuller revelation of God as the Christian community

grows and changes. This new theology is in direct contradiction of the Scriptures; "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." (Jude 3b.)

Neo-orthodoxy holds that the church now must have a degree of inspiration, bringing new revelation, just as Calvinism held that the individual must have a degree of inspiration to understand the Bible. A modern prominent theologian expresses it specifically; "Yet if the Church is the body of Christ . . . it, too, should be the vehicle of inspiration, and vested with an authority beside the authority of the Bible." (H. H. Rowley, *The Relevance of the Bible*, MacMillan, 1953). It is the doctrine that God's revelation is produced as a result of man's experience, when the Bible was written as well as now. The above writer says in the same book; "religious advance came time and again through the private experience of some individual, that the men who gave God's word to Israel constantly received their message through their own personal experience." This is a new version of the old "experience religion" of the past generation. It is in direct opposition to the statement of the Scriptures about inspiration; "knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: But men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." (2 Pet. 1:21,22.)

Evolutionary Process?

The incidents related in the Bible are not to be believed in as actual happenings or facts, according to Knox in the book already mentioned. He teaches that it is to be believed as a story rather than as facts; and compares it to believing the story, as a story, of Hamlet, whether such a character ever lived or not. He considers the resurrection as a fact, however, but does not consider the miracles as fact. He considers them as being added and multiplied as the early Christians saw the need of developing their story. Notice this explanation:

"The experiences and needs of these churches, as well as of their predecessors, have undoubtedly left their mark upon the traditions the Gospel writers have compiled. All of this being true, we are bound to ask how far the 'real facts' of Jesus' life and teaching have been overlaid by legendary, theological, and utilitarian accretion."

If the things which the writers recorded are not fact; then the writers are not worthy of confidence, because they stated them as fact; and the book is nothing but a hoax. But John said; "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name."

Perhaps the most elaborate instance in his work of showing that the Bible was of evolutionary thought and process of the early Christians is his explanation of the teaching on the pre-earthly existence of Christ. He argues that Paul was the first writer of Christian scripture, and that the church at that time was very little concerned with preserving in writing the incidents of Jesus' life, much less of his pre-earthly state; hence, seldom, if ever, re-

BROWSING THROUGH OLD PAPERS

Luther G. Roberts.

Brother William Wallace has done excellent work in reproducing articles from papers of several years ago. These writings were composed by some of the staunchest defenders of the faith in the church and are timely just now. In reading through some of the papers of twenty to thirty years ago I have found some articles that are just as applicable now as they were when first published. William will not think that I am intruding in his field by submitting some of these for reprint now.

Brother F. B. Srygley was advertised on the front page of an issue of the GOSPEL ADVOCATE in 1931 as "Senior Staff Editor of the Gospel Advocate 'contending for the Faith.'" In the issue of that paper of May 28, 1931 Brother Srygley wrote an article on the topic, "THE WORD 'MISSIONARY.'" The writing is as follows:

"Every one who has carefully noted the fact knows that the word 'missionary' is not in the New Testament at all. I know the word means one sent on a mission. In modern religious literature the word means one sent on a religious mission. God has told us all that is necessary for us to know about Christianity without using that word. We have not only adopted the words 'mission' and 'missionary' in this religious sense, but we have divided them into two classes by the use of the terms 'home missionary' and 'foreign missionary.' But there is no distinction in religious work of this kind in the New Testament. The word 'evangelist' is used in the New Testament, but the evangelist is not divided into the two classes of home evangelist and foreign evangelist. As best I can tell, the evangelist comes nearer standing for the missionary than anything else I know in the New Testament. The apostles were sent by the Savior, and they would fulfill that meaning of the word 'missionary;' but, of course,

ferred to by Paul. He goes on to argue that even the later book of Mark does not even deal with the birth of Christ. He argues that the theological development was such that by the time Matthew and Luke were written there was a need to establish the divine elements in the birth of Jesus. His argument continues that by the time John was written the theology of the church had grown to the extent that they must establish the eternal divinity of Jesus, so that he is spoken of in that book as having been God in the beginning. Thus, actually, to him, inspiration is nothing more than mere human addition to human theology as the day to day experiences occur. But the inspired Paul said; 'And the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.'

Why write on these things? This is the popular religious writing of the day. Preachers of the gospel and other Christians will be reading more and more of such material. They need to be on guard against the modernism of this neo-orthodox age. Though not as extreme as the liberalism of the past generation, it may have greater tendency to influence people who have a fundamental faith in the authority of the Bible. People may not find it so repulsive as the former and may read it with more credulity. We need to meditate on this phrase; 'Every Scripture inspired of God . . .'

we have no apostles now, except those that Jesus sent out, and they are still the apostles through their teaching. I have an idea that the apostle Paul had inspired men in view when he said: "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent?" Those that were sent were the apostles, who were not only sent by Christ, but were qualified by the Holy Spirit. It is all right to support a preacher while he goes, and support his family so he can go, but the man who makes no effort to go until some church sends him will perhaps do little good when he goes. But granting that a missionary is one who is "sent," and that a church is the only thing to send him, when he goes for a spell and returns to the place from which he was sent, is he still a missionary? He is not then "sent." How, then, could he be a missionary, seeing that a missionary is one who is sent? The man who is once "sent" and comes back, how can he continue to be a missionary? Has one church the right to send a man to other churches to keep up something which he calls a "mission" or build up something called a "missionary spirit?" He would be sent all right, and he might be a missionary of that church, but would he be a Scriptural adjunct to that church? Even granting that a church has a right to send a missionary, has it the right to send a missionary to other churches? What right has one church over another? If a church needs stirring up on the missionary spirit, has its leaders not the right to select the man or the means by which it is to be done? What right has one church to send a man to other churches for that purpose? Has one man the right to appoint himself as an agent for other men and churches on what is termed the "missionary spirit?" Is any individual called and qualified to take charge of other individuals and churches on this question? There are so few people now, it seems, who can be satisfied with living a humble Christian and being a submissive worker in a congregation of saints.

"The word 'mission' is used in the sense of a body of people sent to perform any work, and in this sense the church is a body of people sent by Christ on the mission of saving souls. Then all of God's people are missionaries with a mission to perform. This may account for the fact that the Bible does not speak of a missionary or the missionary. Christ came to the world on a mission, and that was to save the world, and his people are left here with the gospel and the same mission to perform. Every one should take that place in the kingdom in which he can do the most good in carrying out the mission of saving the world. This is the mission of the church."

THE REFLECTOR is published monthly by the church of Christ meeting at 1116 Walker's Chapel Road, Fultondale, AL 35068. Second class postage paid at Fultondale, Alabama 35068. Edward O. Bragwell, Sr., Editor.

THE REFLECTOR
P.O. Box 146
Fultondale, Alabama 35068

Second Class Postage
P A I D
Fultondale, Alabama 35068

Resurrection - - - - - (Continued from Page 1)

Christ — "Whether then it be I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed," (1 Cor. 15:11.)

IV. The apostle frankly states that if Christ hath not been raised — "we are found false witnesses of God," (1 Cor. 15: 15.)

V. The apostle makes an argument for his integrity based upon his actions in relation to the resurrection of Christ — "Why do we also stand in jeopardy every hour? I protest by that glorying in you, brethren, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If after the manner of men I fought with beasts at Ephesus what doth it profit me? If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die". (1 Cor. 15:30-32)

Some Observations on These Facts

The integrity of this witness is seen in his claim of a large number of witness to the fact and the possibility of these witnesses being consulted as most of them were still alive according to the apostle's testimony. The truthfulness or falseness of this could be readily established by those of Paul's day. To contend that the people of Corinth Athens and other centers of culture and learning of that day were too dull or lacking in interest to check up on this claim and expose the apostle as dishonest, thus disproving the fact which he affirmed, is to reflect most unfavorably upon the intelligence of the successors of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. It seems that modern skeptics are lacking in respect not only for the intelligence of those who believe the Bible, but that this lack of respect extends to their own kind as well.

This claim of a large number of living eye-witnesses to the fact is evidence that the document containing the claim was written soon enough after the event, to come within an average life span. If this were not the case, then the evidence of its falseness is on the surface. This evidence lends weight to the generally accepted date of the writing of 1 Corinthians as 56 or 57 A. D. Considering the later date in relation to the date of Christ's death A. D. 33, we see that twenty-four years had elapsed since he resurrection of Christ, the fact about which the testimony is concerned. The testimony being put into writing in such close proximity of time to the alleged fact is strong evidence in proof of the truthfulness of the testimony. Not enough time had elapsed to make it difficult to establish the character of the witnesses.

The dangers to which the giving of this testimony exposed the witnesses are proof of the integrity of the witnesses. If they were not fully convinced of the truth of what they testified, they could never have sacrificed their material interest and jeopardized their very lives as they did. "If Christ hath not been raised", what worthy explanation can be given for the actions of the witnesses? Paul makes this very argument in proof of the fact of the resurrection. "Why do we also stand in jeopardy every

hour? I protest by that glorying in you brethren, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If after the manner of men I fought with beasts at Ephesus, what doth it profit me? If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." (1 Cor. 15:30-32.) Let the skeptic grapple with Paul's argument: Here he presents the two courses open to him. He could pursue the course of fleshly gratification and that is the course that anyone will pursue who does not believe that "Christ hath been raised from the dead," or he could follow the course of suffering sacrifice and finally death. His following the latter course proved his depth of conviction that Christ hath been raised from the dead.

These considerations establish the integrity of the witnesses in this instance. Anyone who would question the honesty of a witness in these circumstances must surely have rendered himself incapable of conviction by closing his eyes and stopping his ears and hardening his heart. If the integrity of the witness be granted in this instance, upon what basis can it be withheld in the other instances? If the apostle is honest in his claim that Christ hath been raised, why should it be thought that he is dishonest in his claim of inspiration?

The proof of the resurrection of Christ is a firm basis for the verbal inspiration and the infallibility of the scriptures.

Our Religious World

