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Lenten Testimonies.*

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1. Who Is God?

There are two sources of information concerning God, nature and the Bible.

From nature we learn the *fact that there is a God*. "The invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead." Rom. 1, 20.

When Napoleon's generals down in Egypt one night were repeating the popular atheistic ideas of French revolutionary times, the great emperor said, waving his hands towards the starry heaven: "Who made that sky?"

Nature also reveals attributes of God. When we look out upon the wild mountains and the boundless ocean, we are impressed with the power of God. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork." The storm that sweeps over woodland and villages reveals the wrath of God. In the spring-time, when the flowers bloom and the birds sing, we say: "How gentle and good God is!"

But we do not know from nature who the true God is, neither how He is disposed toward us. For that knowledge we turn to the Bible.

The Bible does not prove that there is a God, it takes that for granted. The very first verse of the Bible says: "In the beginning, God," etc. And the last verse in the Bible says: "If any man shall

* Continuing a custom of former years, a series of Lenten talks is herewith presented that were delivered during the noon-hour of one week in Lent at the American Theater in St. Louis, Mo.

THE THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER.

The Synodical Conference. — The mission carried on among the colored people enters upon its fiftieth year in 1922, having been begun at the sixth convention of the Synodical Conference at Immanuel Church in Fort Wayne in 1877. — The Mayor of Atlanta has vetoed an ordinance of the City Council forbidding white preachers to serve colored congregations because that would signify social equality among the races. If Jesus came to Atlanta, — we shudder to think of it, remembering the instance of the “temperance” preacher of Brooklyn, who declared that Jesus could not be admitted to membership in his church because He turned water into wine. D.

The Ohio Synod. — The million-dollar offering has reached the sum of \$785,514.08, 504 congregations with 62,934 communicant members not having reported yet. — In Western Canada 52 pastors of the Ohio Synod are serving 41 organized congregations and 85 missions. Also a superintendent of missions and three professors of Luther Academy are in this field. D.

Augustana Synod. — Of the two sites offered for the new seminary of the Swedes at Rock Island, Ill., Zion Hill, adjacent to Augustana College, has been chosen and is now being reduced to the street grade. — The visit to the United States of the Swedish archbishop, Nathan Soederblom, upon invitation of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches, the Church Peace Union, the American-Scandinavian Foundation, and the Board of Directors of Augustana College and Theological Seminary, is looked for in the latter part of 1922, and it is expected that the archbishop will attend a session of the ULC convention at Buffalo in October. — In a thoughtful editorial on “Christian Liberty and Puritanic Phari-

sainism" *Augustana* (February 2) says: "It behooves us to hold fast faithfully God's Word and the leading doctrine of our Church, for there exists an aggressive and arrogant Puritanic Pharisaism, which with its rationalism and work-doctrine is rushing in upon us from all sides and seeks to rob us of our Christian liberty. If we yield, we are lost. . . . The aforementioned pharisaical and rationalistic tendency is revealed by keeping silent or saying very little about the great redemption-doctrine of the Bible: justification by grace for Christ's sake, or by substituting for it a crass work-doctrine. Men — so they teach — are to be saved by becoming good, instead of becoming good through being saved, as God's Word teaches." — The old question that is perplexing the earnest members of the Lutheran Church for some time, to wit, whether our congregations are becoming worldly, is put forward from a new view-point by Dr. Adolf Hult of the Swedish Augustana Synod in the *Lutheran Companion* for January 21, 1922. He calls attention to a fact that deserves to be fully investigated, to wit, whether the existing and increasing secularization of our modern congregational life is not due perhaps to a weakness on the part of the so-called Christian element in the congregations, which is losing its former leadership in the Church. Dr. Hult says: "We are in a new era. The generation that saw great spiritual awakenings, the majesty of regenerating grace, has soon gone the 'long, long trail' (not 'down,' as the song has it, but) up, Home. The two-centuries-old Protestant secret organization world-movement, the Protestant Biblical critique, the Protestant loss of world-dominion (almost), all of this has told heavily. The World War wrenched the 'Christian element' loose from its lingering grip on the affairs of the Church. These have prevailingly passed into the control of efficient business minds, whether of the 'Christian element' or no. Socially it is not dominantly the experienced Christian souls who could sing with the patriotism of their 'citizenship in heaven' (Phil. 3, 20): 'Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord,' that lead the societies and movements, but capable organizers, men of affairs, women of social standing. Beautiful receptions still remind of the past and prophesy of a possible new future. But even among us it is more and more the other way. Meanwhile, what is the so-called 'Christian element' of our churches doing? Commonly they sit back in gray reminiscence. Once in a while, in a private heart-to-heart fête, they unbosom. The tears spring forth like a river dammed up. Perhaps the quiet moments end in a prayer of wistful sadness. And the world-controlled church-work goes on as before. I notice this change especially in the festivities of the churches, beyond our Lutheran realm, and often within it. We see it in the choice of lay-members for boards and committees. And as all such ages have a priesthood akin to it, so ours, too. The minority, the 'Christian element,' in the Biblical sense of that expression, is puzzled, unnerved, confused, despondent, its former thoughtful purposiveness apparently slugged and prostrate. If we pastors have failed to note this situation, it simply reflects, from another angle, the stupor which falls on him

who but for a moment yields his inner self to the gas-vapors of the secular trend.

"Reasons are what? 1) The 'Christian element' still remaining has suffered an inner spiritual exhaustion. 2) It has yielded to the worldly elements in crises, when the Christian stand in doctrine and in life should be assertive. 3) It has, like worldlings, often bargained for the 'filthy lucre,' church-success, where it ought to have been true to principles, and awaited God's hour to fill the coffers with means consecrated by the Spirit. 4) It has neglected to study the times, the trend of men's minds, the doctrines of the world-Gospel, the unbelief of worldlings, the connivances of the secular element of the Church, the good practical sides of worldly men's business ingenuity, and the like. 5) The Word of God has lost its absolutely decisive authority in the control of the Church, its management, its ways and means. 6) The 'Christian element' has frequently not kept culturally apace with the worldlings of the fold. Hence it has been outfaced in the counsels of the Church. 7) Hosts of other reasons, which you, dear reader, ought to be able to supply. You have the same opportunity of study as the writer.

"How the edge of honest, earnest spiritual critique is often cruelly blunted by the cheap fling: 'We need constructive criticism'! Very well, I will furnish that, in brief suggestions only, of course: 1) The little 'Christian element' needs a strengthened faith and love. That is gained only by a new, daily conversion, a new attachment to Christ, a new search of the Scriptures, a prayerfully prepared frequent communing with Christ at the Lord's Table, whereby the solidarity (union) of the saints of God is tightened. 2) The 'Christian elements' should pray for more spiritual boldness. We are too afraid of the devil in the Church, while we shout at him screamingly in the world outside of the Church. We need more bold confessorship of Christ in word and deed. 3) We must ask for new grace to quit worshipping 'church success.' To be faithful to Christ in His Word and to leave the 'success' or failure to the Lord of the Church is apostolic, Luther-like, above all Christ-like. The 'Christian element' has too long demanded 'success' of their pastors at almost any price. So the pastors have often been whipped into line with the worldly element to obtain rapid success. And God knows how we have wept, anguished, bled in the secrecy of our life that the 'Christian element' has been just as hard-heartedly exacting of mere 'church success' as over the worldlings, until the clergy often lost heart with their spiritual vision of things. So God now lashes that unfaithful 'Christian element' with growing loss of leadership. The cure is to cure the original disease. 4) When the worldly element puts on its secular programs, we who abhor them will needs seek a cultured Christian substitute. Wrangling, criticism, a feeling of half-expressed disappointment will not suffice. There must be a cultural and life adequacy, capability, with us pastors, so that we have the spiritual and churchly and Lutheran substitute always at hand for the rank proposals of the secular element. That itself presupposes a continuous study and observation with skilled

practise. 5) Until a change in the large can take place in churches, gather the frail, scared 'Christian elements' at church gatherings where the full satisfaction for Christian hearts can be had. If the worldly element puts over its worldly banquets, which shame the name of Jesus, let us gather the Christian element to Christian joy-feasts. If the worldly element proudly dominates public counsels of the Church, gather the Christian element (which of its own free will comes freely together) into Scripture study, into meetings for counsel on Christian problems, into mission activities, and thus sustain this hard-pressed element, until God gives a great spiritual awakening. 6) Countless other advices which the good reader with Christian faith and experience can supply.

"The writer is not penning these lines as a mere theory. It has been the program of his ministry, its purpose, although God knows how frail the execution has been. I know that the advice works. I am assured in Christ that it is not futile for a pastor to have a big constructive program for church-leadership by the 'Christian element.' God fights on our side, then, please remember. His Holy Spirit guides us in those turmoils, forget not. And should we be called away to meet the 'Judge of all the earth,' we can at least with a blood-cleansed conscience confess in the sight of His eternal Majesty: Lord, it was my heart's desire to serve Thy little ones, the quiet of the land, those whom Thou hast called 'the apple of My eye.' (See Ps. 17, 8; Zech. 2, 8.) It is a fearful thing if we wound the apple of the Lord's eye, the 'Christian element' in His Church. It is divine tenderness and eternal statesmanship on the part of the simplest layman to find grace to confess in truth: 'My conscience is bound in the Word of God.' That word is the Magna Charta of the 'Christian element' of the Church. If any one questions the right to the name the 'Christian element,' we refer him to the Augsburg Confession, which has it in other words: 'the communion of saints.'" D.

The Merger Synods. — Rev. A. C. Ernst, of Stillwater, Minn., has been appointed second Commissioner to Europe, to assist Dr. Morehead, whose work has become far too extensive to be carried on by one man. Rev. Ernst will first follow Dr. Morehead and then work from Germany as his base. — Of the late Prof. Peer Stroemme, the "most famous professor" St. Olaf College has had, his classmate, O. G. Felland relates something that was not great: "He was one of our foremost chess-players. . . . When he was a student at the Concordia Seminary at St. Louis, it would sometimes happen that he was not interested in the lectures of Prof. Guenther, and he would pull out a problem that he had clipped from the chess column of the *Globe-Democrat*, hold it at arm's length under the desk, and have it solved before the professor had finished his lecture. I have several of these problems yet, preserved in one of his scrap-books." — Speaking of the course of study at Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, and advocating the retention of Greek and Hebrew in the college curriculum, Oscar L. Olson quotes from *Learning and Living* by Ephraim Emerton, professor emeritus of Harvard University: "Martin Luther was right

when he said: "This we cannot deny, that, although the Gospel came and daily comes through the Holy Spirit alone, still it came through the medium of the languages, has grown by them, and must be preserved by them. According as we love the Gospel, let us eagerly study the languages, and let us not forget that we cannot well hold the Gospel firm without them. The languages are the sheath in which the dagger of the Spirit rests; they are the casket in which this jewel is enshrined; the chalice wherein this drink is borne. Because the languages have now come to the fore, they are bringing such a light and doing such mighty things that all the world marvels. Therefore, although the doctrine and the Gospel may be preached by simple preachers without the languages, yet this is a dull and weak affair, and men at last tire of it and after all fall to the ground. But where the languages are, there all is fresh and vigorous, the text is made clear, and faith is ever renewed through new and ever-new words and works." I am not advocating an absolute requirement of either Greek or Hebrew for the first degree in theology, but I do think that it is a pity that any really serious student who desires to be something more than a 'simple preacher' should neglect the opportunity of help offered by his teachers to acquire a working command of both. For a higher theological degree I would make them an ordinary requirement. I urge this careful study of the original documents, fully appreciating the mass of material that has accumulated upon them to such a depth that they are almost buried out of sight, but realizing also, perhaps a little better than the enthusiastic youth, how in every time of crisis men are ready to throw off this whole superincumbent mass and go back to the first simple problem of the meaning of the Christian message. It is for such critical moments that the student should consciously prepare himself. If he is to lead then, he must get ready now." This is the truth; but as far as we know, this is no longer the standard at Harvard. D.

Australia. — A report has been circulated among our brethren in Australia that the Missouri Synod tolerates lodge-members among its congregations. The report was started by a pastor of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Australia. It is refuted by the *Australian Lutheran* (December 7, 1921) from our official publications in the *Lutheran Witness*. The fact is not blinked that there are lodge-members in congregations of the Missouri Synod, who are, however, subject to church discipline and are actually being disciplined. Such a practise cannot be classed as toleration. It would be impossible for a congregation that has adopted the policy of toleration towards lodge-members to obtain membership in the Missouri Synod. In Australia all Lutheran synods have declared themselves opposed to lodges; it only remains to be seen whether the opposition is a serious and active one. — German publications are now permitted by the Australian government "on condition that they are correct translations or faithful synopses or summaries" of English publications, are marked as such in the heading, and give page references to the respective English publication. D.

The Extra-Evangelican Christ. — “Were the person of Christianity’s Founder to be ruled off the pages of certain history for the lack of sufficient evidence,” says the *Catholic World* (December, 1921), “then by the same canon would fall nearly all the great figures of antiquity. F. C. Conybeare, of whom we may say only that he is less a radical than Professor Arthur Drews, whose extravagant theories he attacks as baseless and absurd, is willing to admit that the gospels and other Christian literature date back at least to within seventy years of the death of Christ, whereas, he points out, the chief sources of information regarding Solon, the lawgiver, for example, are Plutarch and Diogenes, writers who lived *seven and eight hundred years after him*. And this is but one example of hundreds that could be adduced of ‘individuals for whose reality we have not a tithe of the evidence which we have for that of Jesus.’”

Inveighing against the blatant suppositions of Higher Criticism of the Strauss-Drews type, the writer of the article, Edwards Roberts Moore, pleads for fair play in dealing with the voluminous evidence on behalf of the historical existence of Christ. He writes: “The enemies of Christianity had sought in many ways to devitalize and to destroy entirely the New Testament record of Christ; it remained for David Friedrich Strauss, in 1835, and after him, for Professor Arthur Drews and his associates, to seek not merely to strip Christ of supernatural power and mission, but actually to deprive Him of the *fundamental attribute of existence*. In their judgment, the gospels were *pure myths*, and Jesus a mere creation thereof!”

This “extravagant theory” Mr. Moore regards as unfair, unhistorical, and therefore unscientific. He says: “If the more scanty and unsatisfactory evidence dealing with those dim, but majestic figures of ages antedating by many centuries the opening of our era be accepted as conclusive, then, far, far beyond all thought of question should be the voluminous testimony corroborating in every detail the traditional account of the beginnings of Christianity, a testimony that includes the findings of *true* higher criticism, as well as a great mass of matter extrinsic to the text itself, consisting of quotations from scores of the early writers, countless indirect references, and last, but not least, innumerable monuments, if not contemporary with the Apostolic Age, at least *closer to the deeds* they commemorate by many hundred years than the earliest record we have of many an event universally regarded as unimpeachably historic.”

While the writer believes that “to-day *Das Leben Jesu* of Strauss and *Die Christus-Mythe* of Drews with their fantastic ramblings live but as *reminders of the absurdities* to which the human mind will descend in its attempt to defend a *preconceived notion*,” he claims that the favorite arguments of Higher Critical Mythists involve a *petitio principii*, “since, as a matter of fact, impartial history did not thus, by its silence, bear witness against Christ.” Referring to Josephus, he avers that even if Josephus had been silent, this might be explained satisfactorily by the *vanity and opportunism* of Josephus, who by “speaking of Jesus and Christianity might have *compromised*

the Jewish cause, which he had at heart, and also his own reputation as a man of letters, which he had still more at heart." However, Josephus has not been silent! As a matter of fact there are in his writings three distinct references to Christ and matters Christian. In the first place, we have a "splendid and unassailable account" (cf. Keim in *Jesus of Nazareth*, Vol. 1, p. 16) of the mission and death of John the Baptist which agrees with and confirms the Gospel-narratives of the same events. Moreover, we find in *Antiquities* (Bk. XX, chap. IX) a passage which describes the death of St. James the Less, the brother of Jesus, which cannot be stigmatized as a forgery, as Drews would have it, but must be regarded as authentic, since it is not only quoted in full by Origen, but also constitutes "genuine Jewish history, without a trace of Christian embellishment." If, then, this passage is genuine, what does it prove? "It has, in the first place, a direct reference to 'Jesus who was called Christ'; and the manifest identification of this Jesus with Him whom we know as the Founder of Christianity is undeniable, in spite of the far-fetched ratiocinations of Professor Drews and his school." "In the second place, this phrase, although it expresses no personal opinion of the author, does something far more significant and important: it indicates a wide-spread knowledge of — and shall we not say acceptance of? — the Messianic claims of the Jesus he mentions." "Finally, as Battiol points out, although it does not declare explicitly whether St. James and his companion were accused of violating the laws of the Law, the penalty inflicted — they were stoned to death — is that decreed in Deuteronomy against those who would serve strange gods. It is clearly implied, therefore, that their crime consisted in the desertion of Judaism for some other form of worship."

However, "it is about the third of these reputed passages from the Jewish historian that the greatest controversy rages." Quoted in the current translation the passage reads: —

About this time lived Jesus, a wise man, if it be proper to call Him a man; for He was a worker of miracles, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to Him both many Jews and many of the Greeks. He was the Christ. And when Pilate, at the instigation of the principal men among us had condemned Him to the cross, those who had loved Him at first did not forsake Him. For He appeared to them alive again on the third day; the divine prophets having foretold these and many other wonderful things concerning Him. And the sect of the Christians, so named after Him, are not extinct to this day.

Though this passage is thrice quoted by Eusebius, it has been declared to be a Christian interpolation, added to the text by some forger between the years 248 and 320. The basis of this contention, which is supported by Drews, Throburn, Linck, Schuerer, Father Lagrange, and others, is the theory that the sentiments contained in it are far different from anything Josephus could have written. Against this supposition the writer says: "But, you object, Josephus said of Jesus: 'This was the Christ.' What if he did? Does he thereby express his own belief in the Messiahship of our Savior? No more than a Protestant who calls a priest 'Father' by that word acknowl-

edges all that title connotes. 'Father' is simply the conventional title of the priest. In like manner, the writer of this passage was merely seeking to connect historically the character of Jesus, of whom he was speaking, and that of Christ, with which many of his readers would be familiar, without advancing any personal opinion whatsoever regarding the theological accuracy or significance of the identification. It is as if he said: This Jesus, of whom I am speaking, is the same person as Christ, the Founder of that sect you probably have heard of, the Christians. Would it take one of these same Christians to write anything so *simple and free of implication* as that?"

Again: "Immediately after this phrase, which the protagonist of the 'silence' would make so damning, we read the following: 'Now when at the instigation of our chief men, Pilate condemned Him to the cross, those who had first loved Him did not fall away.' Is this the style of a Christian apologist? Here we have merely a *cold, lifeless* statement of fact, with perhaps an implication of faint surprise that His followers did not fall away; no word of the *noble cause* in which He died, no word of *vindication*, no word of *praise or affection*, not a single *Christian thought or expression!* In the words of Professor Barnes: 'Why should a Christian trouble himself to make up such an interpolation as this?' So with the eminent author whom we have just quoted, we feel justified in concluding that the *content and style* of the passage under consideration furnish *no argument* against its authenticity."

After quoting passages referring to Christ and Christians, from Tacitus (*Annals* XV, 4, 4), Suetonius (*Life of Claudius* and *Life of Nero*), Pliny the Younger (*Epistle* X, 96), Celsus (*A True Discourse*), and tracing "the indisputable testimony of a very early date to the existence and person of Christ" as preferred by Lucian, Basilides, Marcion, Valentius, and Heracleum, all writers of the second century, the essayist concludes his researches by saying: "And so we see that after all Christ is not a mysterious personage, who left an impression only upon *history written by His friends* and, therefore, *open to suspicion*. In fact, when all circumstances are taken into consideration, the manner in which history was written in those days, the many reasons which would induce non-Christian writers of the period to be silent about Him, the peculiar character of His mission, life, and work, it is not surprising that we find, comparatively speaking, so *little* in contemporary profane history about Him; and, on the other hand, a source of the greatest wonder—at least to those not possessing a strong faith in the divine ordering of all things—is the *completeness* with which the Gospel-narrative, as it has been handed down to us, is verified by the findings of history certainly not prejudiced in favor of Christianity."

"One good thing, however, Mythism did accomplish,—to draw good out of evil is often the way of the Lord,—it constituted an occasion for us to search into the pages of secular history, and to discover the real strength that our case possesses. Strauss and Drews and the rest had eyes and saw not, and then, with the rash folly of

a moth that would seek, with its flimsy wings, to cut off from the earth the light of the sun, they thought to hide from their fellow-men Him whom they would not see. But the penalty of wilful blindness has been paid; they and their work are well-nigh forgotten, and the ghost of the monster conceived by their warped brains is laid and walks no more, while more glorious than ever, majestic, dominating, standing out like a towering mountain peak against the blue sky of Truth, is the eternal, resplendent figure of Jesus the Christ."

MUELLER.

The Marvelous Mr. Wells. — In a rather verbose and rambling sketch on Mr. Wells, author of the *Outline of History* and special reporter for the *New York World* at the Washington Conference, Charles W. Wood, in *Review of Reviews* (December, 1921), quotes him as follows: "I began thinking out the *Outline of History* when I was a boy in school. I did not appreciate this fully at the time, but I sensed a considerable disparity between the evolution of man as science explained it and the evolution of me as it was written in the history books. According to one I was a unit of the human race which had climbed out of the mire in a million years of struggle, until eventually there had arrived on earth a conscious, articulate, intelligent, and creative being. According to the other, I was an Englishman, and my enlightenment was principally due to that. From the one point of view my problems were human. From the other they were dominantly national. But from which point of view was our world-thinking done — from that of biological science or from that of nationalistic emotions?"

"It was this idea," so Mr. Wood delineates the further development of the boy Wells, "in the back of young Herbert Wells's head which eventually produced this epoch-making book. Wells was a poor boy with a thirst for knowledge. He worked in a draper's shop. A mere college education, apparently, did not appeal to him. What he wanted was to *know things*, and Professor Huxley at that time was committed openly to the near-crime of finding things out. In the minds of most people, Darwinism was akin to blasphemy. It was morally necessary, it was thought, to retain our romantic attitude toward biology. That man had legs was perfectly legitimate knowledge, and physiology of a sort was perfectly permissible. But how came he to have legs instead of fins? All inquiry in that direction was taboo as likely to upset some very necessary assumptions. But Wells asked, 'How come?' and he went to Huxley to find out. And the more he studied with Huxley, the more he threw himself into the fight for the right to report things *as they are*."

If Mr. Wells, whom the writer styles a superdreadnought, has thrown himself into the fight for the right to report *things as they are*, he has certainly not made use of that right in his *Outline of History*. In fact, the main criticism of Mr. Wells's book is to the effect that he has minced and mauled historic data, warping and twisting periods and epochs to fit them into his scheme. "The chief defects of the book," writes *Art and Archeology*, "are the faulty perspective and

proportions and the preposterous valuations. Nearly three hundred pages are wasted on geologic eons and conjectural prehistoric human history, for which a brief chapter would have sufficed. More space is given to Philip and Alexander of Macedon than to the civilization and literature of Greece from Salamis to Chaeroneia. The literature and law of Rome and their influence are altogether ignored. The Renaissance is lost to sight, and the entire political history of modern Europe from 1400 to 1800 muddled and skimmed in two confused and confusing chapters."

However, it is with Mr. Wells's lack of justly evaluating Christianity as a potent and revolutionizing force for good that a Christian student of history, above all, takes issue. The *Catholic World* (August, 1921) points out one statement which strikingly reveals Mr. Wells's utter lack of proper perspective and just valuation in this respect. We read: "Christianity, he tells us, was 'one of the numerous blood and salvation religions that infested the decaying Empire.' There he leaves it: there, we must assume, is his *compendious judgment of Christianity as a historical fact*. 'The numerous blood and salvation religions,'—were they so numerous? I suppose that those cults which used the *Taurobolium* are the 'blood and salvation religions' to which he alludes. It is not always easy to arrive at a clear knowledge of these ancient cults and their ceremonies, but of this particular one we have a full account in the works of the poet Prudentius."

Having described the *Taurobolium*, the writer continues: "It is a horrible picture, but we must look on it, if we are to understand what is implied by Mr. Wells's statement that Christianity was but one of the numerous 'blood and salvation' religions of the day. As far as scholars have been able to ascertain, this disgusting ceremony came into the Roman Empire with the worship of the Magna Mater, or Cybele, from Phrygia. The worship may be said to have been, in its origin, that of the great, beneficent earth from which all things spring, and the ceremony in question, with many another accretion, was grafted on to it, though not absolutely confined to it, for the first recorded *Taurobolium* took place during the reign of Hadrian at Putcoli and was in honor of Venus Caelestis, possibly by Roman syncretic methods associated with Cybele. At any rate, in A. D. 134 we hear of it for the first time in connection with the Romans. The last recorded instance seems to have been in the fourth century, and the scene was a minor temple of the goddess, the great temple being on the Palatine Hill. And, by the way, let us note that the *Taurobolium* must have been of rare occurrence! Further it seems probable, though not certain, that the *Taurobolium* became engrafted on to the worship of *Mithras*. No doubt, we have to thank Renan very largely for this (information), for it was his suggestion that it was a race between Christianity and Mithraism, in which the former did win, but the latter might have done so. Mithraism was essentially a soldier's religion, and the soldiery of Rome, which went everywhere, took this and other of their beliefs to all parts of the Empire. It was

a purely masculine religion, which excluded female adherents, a very potent reason why it never could have been a successful rival to Christianity. It had its various grades, its secrets, its initiation ceremonies, its ceremonial dresses. This religion was, however, quite distinct from that of Cybele; it was of Iranic origin, whilst the other was Phrygian. If, as is quite likely, the Taurobolium was introduced into Mithraism, then Mithraism may be counted as another of the 'blood and salvation' religions. But we are told that they were numerous. Where are the rest? Candidly, I see no justification for the word 'numerous.'"

Taking up the next statement of the Wellsian sentence, the writer goes on to say: "Nor do I think that the words '*infested the decaying Empire*' can be justified. No doubt, the desire is to describe Christianity with what might be called its *fellow puerilities like Mithraism*, as the *bacilli of decay which flourish on dead or dying bodies*. But is this historically correct? Rome fell, so the text-books put it, in 476, and whatever significance we may attach to that term, we can hardly quarrel with the statement that the Empire was then in a state of decay. But between that date and the date when Christianity had acquired some definite position in Rome, many years elapsed, more than have passed since white men first made a home in North America. And what happened in those years? In B. C. 29 Octavius, returning to Rome in triumph, closed the doors of the Temple of Janus and closed they remained until A. D. 242, when the great epoch of the *Pax Romana*, perhaps the most wonderful era that the world has ever seen, came to an end. With long-continued peace came the corresponding prosperity, yet this is just the time when Christianity passed through childhood into early youth. Was the Empire really a *decaying institution* during all this period?"

"Still less can I find," the writer continues, "any possible justification for the truly astonishing lack of historical perspective exhibited in the remaining member of the short paragraph with which I have been dealing. Christianity is *contemptuously dismissed as just one of those absurd and out-of-date religions* which pullulated in the empire at the time of its decay—just that, and nothing more! If that thesis is to be sustained, we must ask for an explanation of a fact which is carefully ignored in the paragraph and almost equally neglected in the whole book. Why did this particular absurdity go on whilst the others came to an end? None but the wilfully blind can fail to see that this is a matter which must be cleared up before we can even begin to discuss the thesis in question. Cybele and Attis are gone; gone is the Magna Mater Deorum, gone, too, Mithras with Astarte, Isis, and the whole heterogenous pantheon of later Rome. They have stayed so far from memory that it is only by the utmost patience and research that scholars can wring their secrets from slabs and from the furious comments of their Christian adversaries. Where is Christianity to-day? If it was just one of those numerous absurdities, why and how has it taken the place it holds to-day and has held for centuries? How is it that this particular absurdity has,

page Mr. Wells, secured the veneration and belief of an overwhelming preponderance of the best intellects of all ages? *Believers in revelation have a satisfactory answer* to these questions: no other explanation has been put forward which will for a moment hold water."

The following sentences, with which we shall conclude this discussion, no doubt reflect the sentiments of every Christian scholar as regards the warping of historical facts by antichristian writers of the Wells type, in order to suit their antireligious fancies. "The fact of the matter is that one almost loses patience when one tries to read the works of those who fondly imagine that they are dealing scientifically with the matter of comparative religion. Many of these writers *understand neither science nor religion* nor what is entailed in a just comparison." In his *Outline of History* the, marvelous Mr. Wells has certainly proved himself incapable of appreciating either of the two.

MUELLER.
