

prove the bad character of the Prophet. But we also know what credit must be attached to slanderers inspired by bigotry and hatred.

Were we to draw our information from such sources concerning Christ himself, we would have to reject even Him, the spotless Lamb of God. For the enemies did not fail to stain the character of Christ. "He casteth out devils through Beelzebub, the chief of the devils." (Luke 11. 15). "Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan (an infidel?) and hast a devil?" (John 8. 48). A special charge against Jesus was that He was a drunkard (Math. 11. 19), and generally he was accused of being on intimate terms with "sinners." (Luke 15. 2), by which term the Jews understood outcasts, reprobates, the company of which was contaminating in its influences. Finally, as is well known, our Savior was tried and condemned to death by the ecclesiastical authorities for blasphemy, and by the civil court for treason. Must all this be believed? Certainly not. We know that those charges were dictated by hatred. Neither must we believe what hatred has dictated against Joseph the Prophet.

After all, the most diligent slanderers have not been able to bring anything against the Prophet worse than was brought as a charge against the first Christians. When a great calamity befel the Roman empire, or a part thereof, the Christians were the originators. Pests and famines, it was thought, came on account of the Christians, or even that the Christians made them through secret exorcisms in their private meetings. During the reign of Nero, Rome was consumed by a conflagration that lasted for seven days. Five-sevenths of the city were laid in ashes, including temples, palaces and other monumental buildings. Although the embittered people had reason to believe that the emperor himself had caused the fire, yet as soon as the report was started that the Christians had done it, this was willingly believed and a persecution broke out in which most of the apostles of our Lord were cruelly put to death. That the Christians practiced bloody sins in their meetings, that they killed and ate the children and that they plotted against the State were common charges. But we know that these and similar accusations had no foundation in reality.

A very strong proof (as anyone acquainted with human nature will admit) that Joseph the Prophet was a man whose life corresponded with his teachings is the fact that those who knew him best from private intercourse with him are his most earnest admirers. His wife, his brothers, his parents, are all found among the first who joined the Church. How would this be if Joseph the Prophet had not in his daily life been a living witness to the fact that he really communicated with God? This is well worth consideration. A man who professes to have a divine mes-

sage must live accordingly or else stand rebuked as a liar before those who know him.

Not less remarkable is the fact that even apostates testify to the truth of the claims of Joseph. Thus David Whitmer, although his position towards the Church in later years was not exactly a friendly one, yet on being asked if he believed that Joseph was a true prophet, he invariably answered: "Do I still believe that Joseph Smith was a divinely inspired Prophet? I know he was; it is not a matter of belief," and this testimony the old man has given to the world on his very death-bed.

Considering all this, we must conclude that the life of the Prophet and the doctrines which he taught were in such harmony with each other as to impress his surroundings and friends with the fact that he was a man of God. If so, his message must be divine, for no evil power could operate through a righteous person.

This kind of evidence, however, is more to be felt, as it were, than described. Its force on the mind will depend on the moral character of the investigator. Pure minds, practical in holiness, will feel its force stronger than other less pure minds. All will depend on those "relationships of spirits" of which even poets have dreamed. The Nathaniel, the "Ismelite, indeed, in whom is no guile," could feel in the mere presence of Christ, through the Spirit, that emanated from Him, that here was more than man, and he had to exclaim "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel." So will men whose hearts are pure, in following Joseph the Prophet through his short but exceedingly eventful career, certainly feel in their heart that here is a messenger of God and perhaps sing with the poet:

"We thank thee, O God, for a prophet,
To guide us in these latter days."

DIRECT EVIDENCE.

With "direct evidence," theologians mean such evidence as is supplied by the Lord and His servants.

It is true that miracles are often appealed to as evidence of the divine mission of Christ. Nicodemus says: "No man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him." (John iii: 2.) Christ Himself supports this view. "I have greater witness than that of John; for the work which the Father has given me to finish, the same works that I do bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." (John v: 36.) "Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very work's sake" (John xiv: 11.) Also: "But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins (He says to the sick of palsy), I say unto thee, 'Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way unto thine house.'" (Mark ii: 10, 11.) Here, clearly, miracles are furnished as evidence of Christ's divine mission.

But it must be remembered that

the performance of miracles is not always a proof of divine authority. The Egyptian magicians worked several miracles, it seems, in the sight of Pharaoh, thereby turning his heart away from God. The disciples of the Pharisees at the time of Christ also performed miracles. They charged Christ with the crime of being connected with the powers of darkness, and that He by such aid cast out demons; to which charge Christ with holy indignation replies: "If I cast out demons with the aid of Beelzebub, by whom do *your children* cast out demons?" So that miracles were by no means something which Christ claimed as His exclusive prerogative. It has also been clearly foretold that anti-christ should claim miraculous powers and thereby deceive many. "His coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders." (2 Thess. ii: 9.) "And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast." (Rev. xiii, 13, 14.) From these passages it is clear that caution is needed in accepting this kind of evidence. Miracles may be evidence of the presence of God or the presence of antichrist.

Nor is the performance of miracles always necessary to prove divine authority. A man may be sent from God in order to fulfil a very important mission without having to prove this by miracles. Thus John the Baptist had a very important mission. He came to "prepare the way" for the appearance of Christ, yet it is not known that he proved his mission by miracles.

It is true that Christ and His Apostles after Him worked many striking miracles, even the rising of the dead, but these miracles were, after all, not so frequent as has sometimes been imagined. Those men of God did not touch everything with supernatural power, healing every sick person they saw, raising every dead one, changing the common day occurrences of life into scenes matching the stories of the "Arabian Nights." Not at all. Their miracles were comparatively scarce; they were exceptional occurrences. Thus when Paul was incarcerated in Rome, the cold prison walls forming but a poor shelter for his body during the winter, and his friends probably being up, he asks Timotheus kindly to bring with him the cloak which Paul had forgotten at Troas, at the house of one of the brethren, called Carpus. (2 Tim., iv. 13.) The passage is as prosaic as it could possibly be, and has nothing supernatural about it. Still more, in the same chapter we hear Paul diligently plead with Timotheus to come to Rome to him, for he was now alone. All except Luke had forsaken him, and among other misfortunes was this—that he had had to leave Trophimus sick at Miletum. "Erastus abode