

**PHILOSOPHY OF THE
PLAN OF SALVATION:
A BOOK FOR THE TIMES**

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Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation: A Book for the Times by James B. Walker

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JAMES B. WALKER

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377

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A Book for the Times.

BY

REV. JAMES B. WALKER, D. D.,

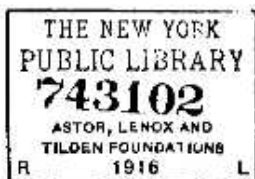
AUTHOR OF "GOD REVEALED IN CREATION AND IN CHRIST," "LIVING QUESTION," ETC.



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PUBLISHERS' ADVERTISEMENT
TO THE
NEW AND ENLARGED EDITION.

It is now more than twelve years since this work was first published. From the outset it met with a degree of public favor which the lapse of time has served only to confirm and extend. Year by year the sale has been large, constant, and increasing, and already *twenty thousand copies* have been disposed of in this country alone. Besides this general popularity, it has attained the rare distinction of being adopted as a text book in some of our higher seminaries of learning. Seldom indeed has a treatise written only for the public at large been exalted to that peculiar preëminence.

In Europe its success has been even more signal, if possible, than in this country. It has been honored with a place as a text book in the Theological Seminaries of the Free Church of Scotland, and in other literary institutions abroad. It has been translated into the Welsh, French, German, and Italian languages in Europe, and is now being translated into Hindoostanee in Asia; thus achieving a position in the literature of Christendom which perhaps no other American work upon theological subjects has gained. All this it has accomplished without a name and without vouchers, except those given voluntarily by reviewers and by readers interested in the work.

A new and greatly improved edition is now offered to the public. The distinguishing feature of this edition is the addition of a SUPPLEMENTARY CHAPTER. The original work was designed to meet the form of error prevalent at the period of its publication. But in the interval of years that has elapsed since, the form of error has somewhat changed. The necessity of a "book-revelation" is now denied. Infidels, disguised in the garb of Christian ministers, have stolen into the pulpit, and with much show of philosophy, have taught the people that man needs no revelation from without, inasmuch as the light within himself is all-sufficient for his guidance. The Bible is thus set at naught, and deprived of its divine authority. It is this "latest form of infidelity" which the new chapter is designed to meet. By a strictly philosophical method, the author undertakes to demonstrate the necessity of a Written Revelation. His line of argument is entirely original, and while it leads to the same general conclusion, differs essentially from that so ingeniously developed in the "Essays of Faith."

It will thus be perceived that the contents of this chapter make a distinct and important addition to the book. For young men who are in danger of being misled by the sophistries of the New Infidelity, it will prove highly salutary; and for that reason it is adapted to awaken fresh interest in those whose beneficence has heretofore been enlisted in promoting the circulation of the book.

PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION

THIS book is anonymous. With the exception of a few gentlemen, who kindly assisted in revising the sheets, and reviewing the authorities and notes, it is not probable that any individual out of the writer's family will be able to conjecture, with the least degree of probability, who is the author of the book. Even the personal friends of the author would not be likely to suspect him of writing this volume. The book will, therefore, stand upon its own merits before the public; and the author will be indulged in making some expressions which a becoming degree of modesty would forbid, were his name upon the title-page.

OCASION OF THE WORK.

During some of the first years of the writer's active life he was a skoptic; he had a friend who has since been well known as a lawyer and a legislator, who was also skeptical in his opinions. We were both conversant with the common evidences of Christianity. None of them convinced our minds of the Divine origin of the Christian religion although we both thought ourselves willing to be

convinced by sufficient evidence. Circumstances which need not to be named led the writer to examine the Bible, and to search for other evidence than that which had been commended to his attention by a much esteemed clerical friend, who presided in one of our colleges. The result of the examination was a thorough conviction in the author's mind of the truth and Divine authority of Christianity. He supposed at that time, that in his inquiries, he had adopted the only true method to settle the question, in the minds of all intelligent inquirers, in relation to the Divine origin of the Christian religion. Subsequent reflection has confirmed this opinion.

Convinced himself of the Divine origin of the religion of the Bible, the author commenced a series of letters to convey to his friend the evidence which had satisfied his own mind beyond the possibility of doubt. The correspondence was, by the pressure of business engagements, interrupted. The investigation was continued, however, when leisure would permit, for a number of years. The results of this investigation are contained in the following chapters. The epistolary form in which a portion of the book was first written will account for some repetition, and some varieties in the style, which otherwise might not have been introduced.

REASONS FOR PRESENTING THE WORK TO THE PUBLIC.

Book-making is not the author's profession. But after examining his own private library, and one of the best

public libraries in the country, he could find no treatise in which the course of reasoning was pursued which will be found in the following pages. Dr. Chalmers, in closing his Bridgewater Treatise, seems to have had an apprehension of the plan and importance of such an argument; and had he devoted himself to the development of the argument suggested, the effort would have been worth more to the world than all the Bridgewater Treatises put together, including his own work.

Coleridge has somewhere said, that the Levitical economy is an enigma yet to be solved. To thousands of intelligent minds it is not only an enigma, but it is an absolute barrier to their belief in the Divine origin of the Bible. The solution of the enigma was the clew which aided the writer to escape from the labyrinth of doubt; and now, standing upon the rock of unshaken faith, he offers the clew that guided him to others.

A work of this kind is called for by the spirit of the age. Although the signs of the times are said to be propitious, yet there are constant developments of undisciplined and unsanctified mind both in Europe and America, which furnishes matter of regret to the philanthropist and the Christian. A struggle has commenced — is going on at present — and the heat of the contest is constantly increasing, in which the vital interests of man, temporal and spiritual, are involved. In relation to man's spiritual interests, the central point of controversy is the "*cross of Christ*." In New England some of those who have