

LESSON FIVE - THE RESURRECTION AND THE CONVERSION OF SAUL

INTRODUCTION:

This is an outline argument made by **Lord George Lyttleton**, which first appeared about 1747. Lyttleton and his friend, **Gilbert West**, were "Fully persuaded that the Bible was an imposter and determined to expose the cheat. Lord Lyttleton chose the conversion of Paul and Mr. West the Resurrection of Christ for the subject of hostile criticism...the result of their separate attempts was, that they were both converted by their efforts to overthrow the truth of Christianity."(*The Fundamentals*, Vol. V., p. 107, *Reprinted in Evidence Quarterly*, 1:2, p. 9)

Lyttleton lays down four propositions which he considers exhaust all the possibilities in the case:

1. **Either Paul was "an imposter** who said what he knew to be false, with an intent to deceive;" or
2. **He was an enthusiast** who imposed on himself by the force of "an overheated imagination," or
3. **He was "deceived** by the fraud of others;" or finally
4. **What he declared to be the cause of his conversion did all really happen;** "and therefore the Christian religion is a divine revelation."

I. PAUL WAS NOT AN IMPOSTER.

Men act from motive and there could have been no motive for imposture.

- A. **Wealth** could not have been the motive; wealth was on the side of those forsaken, poverty on the side of those espoused. Even though poor and in want, he refused to accept help when such would hinder the gospel (**1 Cor 4:11-13; 2 Cor. 12:14; Acts 20:33-34**). The closing picture of his life is that of an old man in a Roman prison, asking that a cloak be sent him to protect him from the cold (**2 Tim. 4:13**).
- B. **Reputation** was not the motive, for reputation lay on the side of the Pharisees, universal contempt on the side chosen(**1 Cor. 1:26-29; 4:11-13**).
- C. **Power** did not motivate him; that is, the desire for power. He had no eye for worldly ambition when he became a Christian. He addressed his inferiors as "co-laborers," "fellow-workers;" he neither lorded it over individuals, nor over the churches he established. Paul preached Christ as head, hid himself behind the cross, and rebuked sin of all kind in the churches, without fear or favor, but never with an air of superiority(**Philemon 23-24; 1 Cor. 1:13-17; 3:4-9; 2 Cor. 4:5**).
- D. **The gratification of fleshly passion** could not have been the motive. Some may claim revelations in order to indulge in loose conduct, but Paul preached the highest standard of morals, and condemned all departures from such a standard(**Eph. 4:17-5:33; Col. 3:5-17; Gal. 5:19-25**).
- E. **Was it simply a pious fraud?** Did Paul pretend conversion simply to spread Christianity? Answer: We are back where we started, "What was the motive?" Men have some motive for what they do. What was Paul's? Where did he get his knowledge? How do we account for his success?
- F. Paul gained nothing temporal from his efforts(**Phil. 3:1-11**).

II. PAUL WAS NOT AN ENTHUSIAST WHO IMPOSED ON HIMSELF.

- A. Define enthusiast: " Religious madman; a **fanatic**. One whose mind is wholly possessed and heated by what engages it...A fervent and imaginative person" (**Webster**).
- B. Elements of an Enthusiast:
 1. **Great heat of temper**. Though Paul was fervent, he was always governed by reason and discretion. Before all, his effort was to reach men with the gospel (**Acts 24:24-27; 26:2-29**). He had one aim only(**Phil. 3:13-14**).
 2. **Melancholy**. This is a mark of misguided zeal, but it is never found in Paul; he always rejoicing, never brooding(**Col. 1:24; Phil. 4:4-7**).
 3. Paul was not swept away as an enthusiast, for such men always see what they are looking for; he was looking for anything else. **He was persecuting Christ, not looking for him.**

III. PAUL WAS NOT DECEIVED BY OTHERS.

- A. Nor was he deceived by others, for such was a moral impossibility. While Paul was bitter against the disciples they could never have attempted such a feat as deceiving him in such a way - a moral impossibility.

B. It was physically impossible for them to have produced the light and the voice with which to deceive him.

C. Therefore, **Paul saw Jesus Christ** on the road to Damascus, **raised from the dead**.

CONCLUSION:

A. There is only one logical answer.

1. Jesus Christ was raised from the dead.

2. He is the Son of God.

3. The Bible is a Special Divine Revelation.

B. The evidence sustains the proposition with which the study began. It is more rational to believe than disbelieve.