

conclusion is extremely scanty. The great number of observations of such practices in so wide an area during the nineteenth century might suggest that similar ideas were prevalent in Palestine in Bible times, but it would be very difficult to prove such a thing, either from statements in the Bible or from any other evidence.

The Biblical passages quoted would hardly prove such a custom. The few bits of ancient evidence adduced from Mesopotamia or from Egypt, are based upon rather questionable interpretations of obscure passages in archeological texts. Both of these sciences have moved forward tremendously in the seventy years since the book was published.

Of course your interest centers particularly in the one-third or less of the book which deals with the Bible. In writing this section Mr Trumbull doubtless intended to do service to the cause of Evangelical Christianity in two ways: (1) by laying stress on the central doctrine of the Scripture, the blood atonement, and (2) by stressing the vital fact that the atonement does not merely release us from penalty, but also provides living communion and fellowship with the Lord. In the making of these two emphases, real service is given.

At the same time there are present certain dangers. Thus the stress upon evidences from an alleged similarity to primitive life could unintentionally give someone the false idea that the Bible was simply the result of folklore rather than of a revelation from God, and that all that matters is communion with God, without deliverance from guilt through the death of a substitute. While I do not like to read motives into a person's mind, it is difficult to escape the possibility that this may have been to some extent in the mind of Dr Charles A. Briggs, the Union Theological Seminary professor who was later suspended from the Presbyterian ministry by the General Assembly for his theological views, when he wrote the commendatory words which are quoted on the back flyleaf.

Now that the whole evangelical world knows how Union Seminary threw off the control of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. in order to stand by this man whom that church considered heretical, it would impress me as quite unfortunate to issue an evangelical book with a recommendation by him occupying a prominent place on its jacket.