

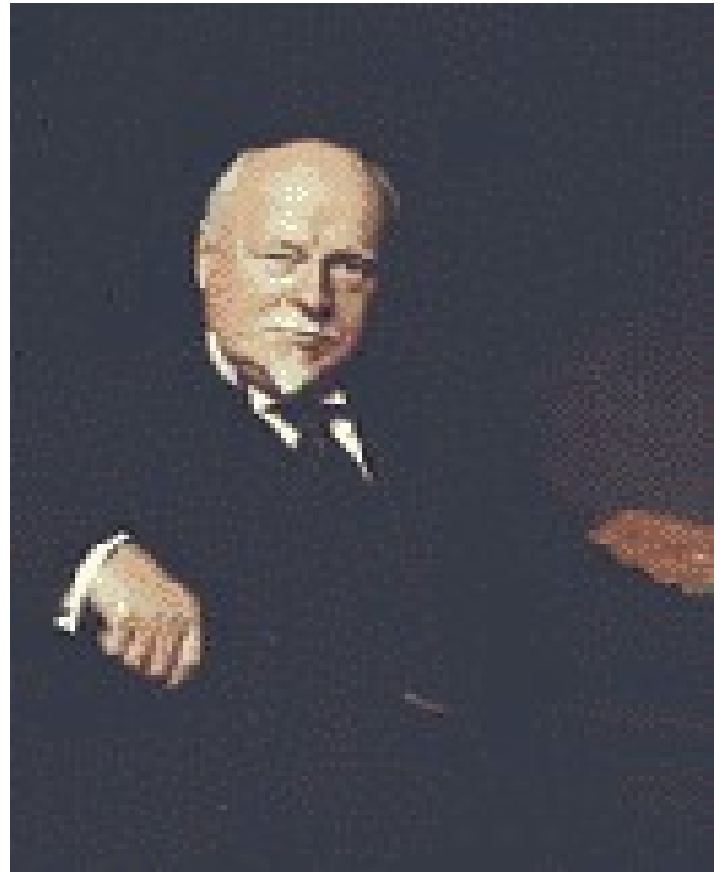
Why I Believe In The Virgin Birth

By **Howard A. Kelly, M.D., F.A.C.I.**
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Biography

Howard A. Kelly was born in Camden, New Jersey, and reared in nearby Philadelphia. He graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with an A.B. in 1877 and received an M.D. from the same institution in 1882. He interned at Episcopal Hospital (1882-1883) and then entered private practice in Philadelphia. In 1883, he founded Kensington Hospital for Women in Philadelphia. From 1888 to 1889, he served as associate professor and professor of obstetrics at the University of Pennsylvania. Between 1886 and 1889, he made various trips to Europe to study and visit hospitals. Recruited by William Osler, Kelly came to Johns Hopkins in 1889 as gynecologist and obstetrician and professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the school of medicine which was being formed. A few years later, he also joined the staff of a private hospital that his colleague Hunter Robb had established. In 1912, the private hospital was renamed the Howard A. Kelly Hospital. He retained an affiliation with the Kelly Hospital until it closed in 1940. At Johns Hopkins, Kelly rose through the academic ranks. He served as professor of gynecology and obstetrics (1889-1899), professor of gynecology (1899-1919), and emeritus professor of gynecology (1919-1943). Kelly was a highly innovative surgeon. He invented numerous surgical devices, pioneered many new operative procedures for the female sexual organs, kidneys, and ureters, and was an early proponent of the use of radium for the treatment of cancer. Kelly contributed significantly to the establishment of gynecology as a specialty. He was a highly effective teacher who taught mainly by demonstration in small groups. A prolific writer, Kelly published extensively on surgical subjects as well as medical biography, botany, and the natural sciences. He was a deeply religious man who engaged in an active course of civic work throughout his life.

<http://www.medicalarchives.jhmi.edu/sgml/kelly.html>



I have, within the past fifty years come out of all uncertainty into a faith which is a dominating conviction of the Truth and about which I have not a shadow of a doubt. It has been my lot all through life to associate with eminent scientists and at times to discuss with them the deepest and most vital of all questions, the nature of the hope of a life beyond this.

I have also constantly engaged in scientific work and am fully aware of the value of opinions formed in science as well as in religions in the world. In an amateurish, yet in a very real sense, I have followed the development of archaeology, geology, astronomy, herpetology, and mycology with a hearty appreciation

of the advances being made in these fields.

At one time I became disturbed in the faith in which I had grown up by the apparent inroads being made upon both Old and New Testaments by a “Higher Criticism” of the Bible, to refute which I felt the need of a better knowledge of Hebrew and of archaeology, for it seemed to me that to pull out some of the props of our faith was to weaken the entire structure.

Doubts thus inculcated left me floundering for a while and, like some higher critical friends, trying to continue to use the Bible as the Word of God while at the same beyond time holding it to have been subjected to a vast number of redactions and interpolations: attempting to bridge the chasm between an older, reverent, Bible-loving generation and a critical, doubting, Bible-emancipated race. Although still aware of a great light and glow of warmth in the Book, I stood out side shivering in the cold.

In one third the higher critics, like the modernists, however, overreached themselves, in claiming that the Gospel of John was not written in John’s time but well after the first century, perhaps as late as 150 A.D. Now, if any part of the Bible is assuredly the very Word of God speaking through His servant, it is John’s Gospel. To ask me to believe that so inexpressibly marvelous a book was written long after all the events by some admiring follower, and was not inspired directly by the Spirit of God, is asking me to accept a miracle far greater than any of those recorded in the Bible.

Here I took my leave of my learned friends to step out on another path, to which we might give the modern name of Pragmatism, or the thing that works. Test it, try it, and if it works, accept it as a guiding principle.

So, I put my Bible to the practical test of noting what it says about itself, and then tested it to see how it worked. As a short, possibly not the best method, I looked up “Word” in the Concordance and noted that the Bible claims from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22 to be God’s personal message to man. The next traditional step then was to accept it as the authoritative textbook of the Christian faith just as one would accept a treatise on any earthly “science,” and I submitted to its conditions according to Christ’s invitation and promise that, “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself” (Jn. 7;17).

The outcome of such an experiment has been in due time the acceptance of the Bible as the Word of God inspired in a sense utterly different from any merely human book, and with it the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ as the only begotten Son of God, Son of Man by the Virgin Mary, the Savior of the world. I believe, therefore, that we are without exception sinners, by nature alienated from God, and that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came to earth, the representative Head of a new race, to die upon the cross and pay the penalty of the sin of the world, and that he who thus receives Christ as his personal Savior is “born again” spiritually, with new privileges, appetites, and affections, destined to live and grow in His likeness forever. Nor can any man save himself by good works or by a commendable “moral life,” although such works are the natural fruits and evidences of a saving faith already received and naturally expressing itself through such avenues.

I now ever look for Christ according to His promises and those of the Old Testament as well, to appear again in glory to put away all sin and to reign in righteousness over the whole earth. To state fully what the Bible means as my daily spiritual food is as intimate and difficult as to formulate the reasons for loving my nearest and dearest relatives and friends. The Bible is as obviously and truly food for the spirit as bread is food for the body.

Again, as faith reveals God my Father and Christ my Savior, I follow without question where He leads

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me daily by His Spirit of love, wisdom, power and prayer. I place His precepts and His leadings above every seeming probability, and holding the wisdom of man as folly when opposed in Him discern no difficulty to a faith vested in God and Christ, who is the sum of all wisdom and knowledge, and daring, to trust Him even though called to stand alone before the world. Our Lord's invitation with its implied promise to all is, "Come and See." 