

whirlwind - earthquake - miraculous signs, especially an illuminous cross in the heavens so that the workmen either perished in the flames or fled from the spot in terror or despair. Now just how much of this is true and how much is exaggeration, we do not know. But this we know that he made the attempt to rebuild and that the attempt utterly failed. This we know. We have the statement of -----14 $\frac{1}{2}$, a professed pagan, a friend of Julian (his companion in arms) who says about Julian's important minister -----14, he said "Olympus therefore set himself vigorously to the work and was assisted by the governor of the province, when ~~great~~ ^{fearful} balls of fire broke out near the foundation and continued their attacks until they made the place inaccessible to the workmen after repeated scorchings and thus the fierce elements obstinately repelling them, they gave up the attempt". That is a statement from the pagan writer who was a friend of the Emperor Julian. We have at least 8 or 10 Christian writers from whom we have works preserved from the next few years who speak of the event and describe it although they differ somewhat in detail. They probably were not there to see it but have written what they heard. But it was ~~viewed~~ ^{used} by Christian preachers in sermons in the very next year as a proof of Christianity. Gibbon, the great ~~British~~ ^{English} historian, one of the greatest historians who ever lived, but a man who had a great hatred for Christianity, in his account of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, tells of this as fact but Gibbons says "this superstition of these Christians who thought this was a divine interposition when it was actually it was a -----13 which had been caught in the subterranean vault under the temple and which had gathered there, and when they dug and got into it, these gases burst out, they caught fire and exploded...so that it was entirely a natural occurrence". Well maybe God sent a thunderbolt from heaven and caused this to happen but we have no Biblical statement that he did and we have no reason to believe that he necessarily did. Supposing God caused the gases to form in such a way that when they would begin to build they would be released to explode in His time. And in the providence of God the place that the workmen began to work was one which would dig right into this place from which the gases would come out.