

# **God's Holy Book**

B Y

Carlyle B. Haynes

AUTHOR OF

“Our Times and Their Meaning,” “The Return of Jesus,”  
“The Gift of Prophecy,” “The Promised Land,”  
“The Christian Sabbath,” “The Other Side of Death.”

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## **Contents**

Foreword  
The Place Of The Bible In The World  
Its Structure, Character, And Achievements  
Its Unique History And Miraculous Preservation  
The Ancient Manuscripts And The Book Today  
The Writers And The Writing  
Its Supernatural Unity  
Its Reliability A  
Its Reliability B  
Its Reliability C  
Its Reliability D  
Its Authority And Power  
Its Precision And Accuracy  
Its Prophecies  
Its Canonicity  
Its Divine Revelation  
Its Inspiration  
Its Scientific Accuracy  
Its Archeological Corroboration  
Its Versions  
Its Message  
Its Person  
Its Study  
Its Interpretation  
Conclusion

To the Memory Of My Mother

Whose life was glorified by her belief in, and her obedience to, the Book of which I write and the glorious Person of our Lord who walks through all its pages.

## **Foreword**

In the year 1933 the Faculty of the College of Medical Evangelists invited Pastor C. B. Haynes, the author of this book, to deliver a series of special lectures upon the general subject of “The Bible, Its Inspiration, Its Authority, Its Authenticity, and Its Reliability.” It was felt by our Board of Trustees, as well as by the teaching faculty, that some studies on this most vital subject would stimulate spiritual growth in the students. Moreover, we were of the belief that a deeper knowledge of the story of the canon and preservation of the great Word of God itself, would be invaluable in giving to those who expect to go out into the world as medical missionaries a solid foundation on which to plant their feet. We remembered that epoch-making book of which the late Honorable William Ewart Gladstone was author, “The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture.” And when we pondered upon the immense amount of

good which this treatise written by the greatest of all the Victorian statesmen had accomplished, we longed for something of a similar nature, but adapted especially to the needs of medical evangelistic students.

Mr. Haynes, in addition to all his splendid background for such a charge, spent months of time and devoted study preparing for the task before him; and his lectures showed the eminent and scholarly labor which he had bestowed upon them.

His coming amongst us was a godsend and resulted in a renewed and inspired interest in the Sacred Word. We are assured that his labors have resulted in molding the lives and characters of many of our students and the bringing of them into closer accord with the lives and characters which adorn the pages of the Great Book. Consequently, we feel a certitude that those into whose hands this book shall come will be blessed by the truths so well recorded upon its pages.

We are living in days when the new intellectuals are looking at life as though all the experience of the ages did not exist, or, if it does exist, they hold it worse than useless. Today this rapidly growing cult fill the faculties and throng the halls of our colleges and universities. In the press and on the platform they proclaim their doctrines-doctrines which destroy confidence in the faith of our fathers and give us in its place no anchor for the soul, nothing "sure and steadfast," naught "which entered into that within the veil." Because of this, thousands of our youth are without the "strong consolation" of the Holy Scriptures, a consolation made all the more necessary because of the troubled days in which we live.

These revolutionists are challenging and overthrowing the code of moral discipline which has been elaborated by the sons and daughters of men for their own safety and decent ordering throughout the long centuries which fill the dimming past. "Do what you please" sums up in one fell title the entire creed of these earth born rebels. They have declared war against godliness and chastity. "Do as you please," they cry, even though it means the breaking of loyalties in marriage, the instability of friendship, or the fulfillment of every evil passion to which the heart of man is heir. To them it matters little whether the soul or body of someone else is soiled or stained beyond the possibility of cleansing.

Hence this book comes at an appointed moment. It comes in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest the earth be smitten with a curse.

Surely Pastor Haynes has served his generation well in producing a work which exalts again the need of a living faith in the everlasting, eternal, immutable, and impregnable rock of Holy Scripture.

PERCY T. MAGAN. Los Angeles, California, May 17, 1935

## **The Place of the Bible in the World**

HERE is a Book, called the Bible. It claims to be God's Book. It professes to contain a revelation from God. We pass by its teachings to discuss the Book itself. Not what the Book contains, but what it is, what it does, how it has come to be, its own remarkable character as a book are to engage our attention; for this is no ordinary book. It is different from every other book we have ever seen, or read, or heard, of. It is not like anything else in the world. It is the outstanding Book of history.

Its own history is singular and unique. No other book has had a like origin. Nearly all books except dictionaries, encyclopedias, and like books of reference, have been produced by one individual. Certainly each book is the product of a single generation. But not the Bible. Its production stretched over a period of sixteen centuries. Forty men labored on the writing of it. They wrote not only in different centuries, but in different countries, and in different languages.

### **MIRACULOUSLY PRESERVED**

All of that is singular enough. But there are other things that are different about this Book. One is the manner of its preservation. It has been preserved, both from corruption and from destruction. Thus, miracle though it is, it has come down to us through the long centuries, and in our own language we have the words which were revealed to holy men of old.

It came from the Jewish nation. But it is greater than that nation. No Jew ever had the ability or wisdom to bring forth such a Book as this. That is admitted even by Jews. It is so superior to all their other productions, whether old or new, that they themselves not only acknowledge its superiority, but venerate it as sacred and inspired. Their nation was in perpetual revolt against the doctrines and objectives which it was the chief purpose of this Book to maintain. Instead of reflecting the spirit of that race, the Bible is, for the most part, diametrically opposed to it. That racial spirit is reflected in their own Hebrew literature; but how wide is the divergence between the Talmud and the Bible! If the Talmudic passages borrowed from the Bible are removed, it is difficult to imagine a more and desert of words. If this is the best that Jewish writers could produce, it is plainly impossible for them ever to have composed the Bible.

### **ABOVE RACE AND NATIONALITY**

There is another singular feature of this Book: It is altogether independent of race and above nationality. Far more than all other religious books, has this Book been received by a greater number of races and nations. The nation from which it came was exclusive, separating itself from the Gentiles by a "middle wall of partition." On the other hand, the Gentiles recoiled as strongly from the Jews as the Jews from them. But the Book transcends all national and racial antipathy, and is commonly and eagerly accepted by both Jews and Gentiles.

From its earliest years the Book has passed readily, by spontaneous reception, from race to race and from people to people. As the ages have rolled on, it has migrated without violence into new regions, and found a home among widely different tribes, separated though they have been by every conceivable difference of climate, government, custom, culture, and religion. As it

conquered the conquering Goths and other barbarians of the early centuries, so today its sway is felt throughout all the world, heathen and civilized alike.

So it is not a Book of one age, or one race, or one language. That its power is not derived from race or clime is demonstrated when it is taken to savage, cannibal islands, and converts head-hunters into civilized nations; when it transforms barbarians into peaceful, law-abiding citizens; when it changes a wild, native warrior into an editor of a paper, and a Negro slave into the president of an African republic. It changes human lives wherever its teachings are followed.

### **ITS PRODIGIOUS INFLUENCE**

Another singularity of this Book is the manner in which it has stimulated the intellects and energies, and attracted the love and veneration, of men. No other book, even the choicest product of human genius, has won the absolute self-surrender, the passionate love, the complete devotion, which this Book has inspired in millions of lives. Tens of thousands have laid down their lives, or have been ready to lay them down, rather than consent to renounce it, or deny the faith they have learned from it. Multitudes of martyrs have sealed with their blood their testimony to their vehement zeal for it and profound belief in it.

If by some satanic miracle the language and thought and imagery and truth of the Bible, wherever found, and by whomsoever repeated and employed, were stricken out of existence, men would begin to realize how profoundly this Book has influenced the world. The sweetest passages of the world's greatest writers would be changed into unmeaning nonsense. A vast sweep of literature would become worthless. Men would be amazed at the disclosure that where the greatest genius has been displayed, there is the greatest drawing on the thoughts and language and imagery and teachings of the Book. For the first time some adequate idea would be formed of the extent to which the Bible has molded and influenced the intellectual and moral life of this planet for the past twenty centuries, how closely it has fused itself with the habits of thought and modes of expression of humanity, and how naturally and widely its comprehensive and ageless imagery and language have been introduced into human writings through the centuries.

The literary geniuses of the world, in struggling to give utterance to their thoughts, have drawn largely from this source. The greatest masters of prose, Bacon, Milton, Ruskin, Macaulay, have, perhaps unconsciously but no less really, laid hold of Scripture phrase and metaphor. The influence of the Bible on Shakespeare's genius and writings is so striking as to have stimulated many writers to analyze and trace it.

The extraordinary influence of this Book, as compared with that of any other, is seen, too, in sculpture, painting, and music. It has stimulated genius in these fields as no other book has. Its majestic scenes have become the outstanding themes of painting and music. The greatest masters of these arts never weary of embodying the ideas it suggests to them. Its altogether unique word-pictures, its vivid narratives, its poetry and pathos, have served as an inexhaustible source of inspiration to painters. Every event of importance recorded in its pages has been made the subject of some great oratorio, on which the wizardry of their genius has been lavished by such masters as Handel, Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, and Mendelssohn. The greatest paintings of Raphael and Michel Angelo are to be traced to it. The greatest modern epic, "Paradise Lost," and the greatest musical creation, "The Messiah," have for their themes the great theme of the Bible.

### **ITS UNIVERSAL APPEAL**

The position the Bible has occupied, and still occupies, amidst such various circumstances, through such distant ages, among such different races, amidst such fluctuations of taste, regardless of such revolutions of history, and in spite of all the opposition of its enemies, is an altogether unique phenomenon.

Thus the Bible is one of the greatest facts in the history of the world. It is universal in its appeal. While it is an Oriental Book in its origin and background, its teachings carry a profound appeal to, and wield a strong influence over, every people and every race on the globe. It influences every type of mind, every degree of intellect, every gradation of life. Prince and peasant, mechanic and artisan, ruler and subject, laborer and employer, learned and unlearned, all alike read its fascinating pages, and are benefited thereby.

Children read its stories with pleasure and moral improvement. Philosophers ponder, and are impressed with, its profound wisdom. Scholars acquire knowledge from its sublime statements. Lost men eagerly grasp the salvation which it holds forth. Sick rooms are brightened and cheered by its psalms, which are sung alike by the mother over her infant, the child at school, and the bereaved over the grave.

In a passage of great eloquence, an eminent American preacher, Theodore Parker, has written this about the superiority of the Bible: "This collection of books has taken such a hold on the world as no other. . . . It goes equally to the cottage of the plain man and the palace of the king. It is woven into the literature of the scholar, and colors the talk of the street. It enters men's closets, mingles in all the grief and cheerfulness of life. The affianced maiden prays God in Scripture for strength in her new duties. Men are married by Scripture; the Bible attends them in their sickness, when the fever of the world is upon them; the aching head finds a softer pillow when the Bible lies underneath; the mariner, escaping from shipwreck, clutches this first of his treasures, and keeps it sacred to God. It is the better part of our sermons; it lifts man above himself. Our best of uttered prayers are in its storied speech, wherewith our fathers and the patriarchs prayed. The timid man, about to wake from his dream of life, looks through the glass of Scripture, and his eye grows bright; he does not fear to stand alone, to tread the way unknown and distant, to take the death angel by the hand, and bid farewell to wife and babes and home. Some thousand, famous writers come up in this century to be forgotten in the next. But the silver cord of the Bible is not loosed, nor its golden bowl broken, as Time chronicles his tens of centuries passed by."

## **SKEPTICS ACKNOWLEDGE ITS ASCENDANCY**

Even those who have been skeptical of its divine origin and opposed to its teachings have been constrained to acknowledge its singular ascendancy and altogether exceptional superiority over all other books. Professor Huxley, in a striking passage, says this:

“I have always been strongly in favor of secular education, in the sense of education without theology; but I must confess I have been no less seriously perplexed to know by what practical measures the religious feeling, which is the essential basis of conduct, was to be kept up, in the present utterly chaotic state of opinion on these matters, without the use of the Bible. The pagan moralists lack life and color, and even the noble Stoic, Marcus Antoninus, is too high and refined for an ordinary child. Take the Bible as a whole. Make the severest deductions which fair criticism can dictate for its shortcomings and positive errors. Eliminate, as a sensible lay teacher would do, if left to himself, all that is not desirable for children to occupy themselves with; and there still remains in this old literature a vast residuum of moral beauty and grandeur. And then consider the great historical fact that, for three centuries, this book has been woven into the life of all that is best in English history. That it has become the national epic of Britain and is familiar to noble and simple, from John o’Groat’s House to End’s End, as Dante and Tasso were once to the Italians. That it is written in the noblest and purest English, and abounds in exquisite beauties of a merely literary form. And, finally, that it forbids the veriest hind who never left his village to be ignorant of the existence of other countries and other civilizations, and of a great past, stretching back to the furthest limits of the oldest nations in the world. By the study of what other book could children be so much humanized, and made to feel that each figure in that vast historical procession fills, like themselves, but a momentary space in the interval between two eternities. And earns the blessings or the curses of all time, according to its efforts to do good and hate evil, even as they also are earning their payment for their work?”

“And if Bible reading is not accompanied by constraint and solemnity, as if it were a sacramental operation, I do not believe there is anything in which children take more pleasure. At least I know that some of the pleasantest recollections of my childhood are connected with the voluntary study of an ancient Bible which belonged to my grandmother. There were splendid pictures in it, to be sure; but I recollect little or nothing about them, save a portrait of the high priest in his vestments. What comes vividly back on my mind are remembrances Of my delight in the histories of Joseph and of David; and of my keen appreciation of the chivalrous kindness of Abraham in his dealings with Lot. like a sudden flash there returns back upon me my utter scorn of the pettifogging meanness of Jacob, and my sympathetic grief over the heartbreaking lamentation of the cheated Esau, ‘Has thou not a blessing for me also, O my father?’ And I see, as in a cloud, pictures of the grand phantasmagoria of the book of Revelation.

“I enumerate, as they issue, the childish impressions which come crowding out of the pigeonholes in my brain, in which they have lain almost undisturbed for forty years. I prize them as an evidence that a child of five or six years old, left to his own devices, may be deeply interested in the Bible, and draw sound moral sustenance from it.” – “Contemporary Review,” December, 1870, Pages 14, 15.

## **ABOVE EVERY OTHER BOOK**

Translated into more than nine hundred languages, used by nearly nine tenths of the inhabitants of the earth, the Book is everywhere. It wields an influence beyond all possibility of calculating. And yet men are not agreed about it. Is it God’s Book, or man’s book? Is it of heavenly origin, or earthly? Is it the product of divine or human mind? Is it God speaking to men, or just men reasoning about God?

These questions confront us all. The Book is here. It cannot be ignored. Its influence has not weakened; it grows through the years. Great as its past triumphs have been, it has not finished its course or reached the end of its triumphs. It is still going forth conquering and to conquer.

## **Its Structure, Character, and Achievements**

THE Book which we are discussing is made up of sixty-six. A distinct sections, or parts, each one entirely separate from all others, but at the same time closely connected with the others.

These sections were written by about forty writers, who lived in countries and periods often far apart. Collusion and conspiracy were altogether impossible. The earliest writer, who produced the first five books, wrote considerably more than three thousand years ago; the latest writer wrote eighteen centuries ago, a period of about sixteen hundred years stretching between them.

Among these writers were persons of all ranks of society. The Psalms-most of them-were written by a shepherd who became a king, David, the sweet singer of Israel. The Proverbs and Ecclesiastes contain the wise observations of David’s son, Solomon, one of the greatest kings of ancient times. Ezekiel, an exile priest in Babylon, wrote one of the books of the Bible. Daniel, a captive prince at the court of Babylon, wrote another. Amos was a herdsman when God called him. Paul, writer of wonderful epistles, was a lawyer of high distinction and scholarship. Luke was a physician. Peter and John were lowly fishermen. Matthew was a tax gatherer.

## **UNPARALLELED IN LITERATURE**

Yet these scores of writers of such diverse temperaments, writing on such widely different subjects, in various countries, and in different languages, did not conflict. In all they wrote there is the most amazing harmony. They produced one book. Such a thing is absolutely unparalleled in literature, and is in itself conclusive proof of the supernatural and superhuman origin of this Book.

The composition of this Book is as widely varied as its authorship. It contains every form of writing. It deals with every conceivable subject. It includes history, biography, poetry, speeches, petitions, proverbs, prophecies, parables, ethical teachings, legal enactment, elaborate ritual, romances, love lyrics, tragedies, sermons, plain precepts, moral maxims, drama, Oriental imagery, dialogue, psalms, etc.

Thirty-nine of the sixty-six books of the Bible comprise what is known as the Old Testament. The remaining twenty seven make up the New Testament. The Old Testament sets forth the manner in which the plan for human redemption was prepared and revealed through many centuries. The New Testament discloses how this religion was ultimately provided and proclaimed. The two together thus comprise a complete record of human sin and divine salvation. The nature and consequences of this sin are made clear; the character and effects of this salvation are set forth.

At least thirty authors labored on the Old Testament. Their lives cover a period of about twelve hundred years. Their thirty-nine books, written in Hebrew and Aramaic, are in three parts, the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms. The Law consists of the first five books, and because of this is called the Pentateuch (meaning, "five rolls"). The Prophets include the historical books of Judges, Samuel, and Kings, as well as the strictly prophetic books. The Psalms, as a sectional division, is called by that name after the title of the first book in it. The remainder of it includes those books not contained in the other parts.

The English Old Testament has a different order from that of the Hebrew. It comes from the Greek Version of the Old Testament. It consists of four parts, Pentateuch, History, Poetry, and Prophecy.

Twenty-seven books comprise the New Testament. Right men wrote it. They were Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, James, and Jude. The writing covered a period of about fifty years. Five of the writers were apostles of Christ. Three were associates of the apostles.

The New Testament has three main parts. They are History, as contained in the Gospels and Acts; Doctrine, as covered in the Epistles; and Prophecy, in the Revelation. These three parts set forth respectively the beginning, the course, and the triumph of the religion of Christ.

## **THE LITERATURE OF HEAVEN**

Vastly different from all other literature is the literature of heaven comprising these sixty-six books. Its words are living words. Ancient as are its letters, there is about them a vital, pulsating breath, a glowing, celestial brightness. Compared with them, all other literature is dead. This alone is alive.

These ancient manuscripts have proved imperishable. Recorded by men, they are, notwithstanding, the Word of the living God. It was said of them when uttered that they would "not pass away." They have not passed away. The kingdoms then known have perished, and many another since has dropped out of history. But firmer than the everlasting hills, these words of the eternal God live. There is in them the imperishable spirit of God himself.

Through the centuries this Book has had an unvarying effect. Wherever it has come into contact with human lives, it has moved them as nothing else has ever moved them. The hardest hearts, steeled against all human emotion and love, stained with cruelty and crime, impervious to the softening influences of human affection, granite like against all human power to impress, have been broken into contrition and love by this Book. The weakest of women, trembling and timid, have by this Book been fortified to dare the arena, the rack, the fire, and the cross. Martyrs by the million have endured the agonies of torture and death, rather than utter one word or perform one act of denial or renunciation of this strangely powerful Book.

## **THE LIVING BOOK**

The words of this Book are not only living, but life-giving. That is altogether unaccountable, but it is true. Though the tongues of the men who first spoke these words have been silent for millenniums, yet there is in them now as then the power of God unto salvation. He who reads these words today finds in them life. They are not dead words. The very thrill of the life of God is in them. And they have power to impart life to their readers.

Many foes of the Bible, powerful, determined, persistent, have endeavored to destroy it out of the world. They are dead. It lives. The words of this divine Book have so wrapped themselves about the thoughts and hearts of men that human literature itself, and human knowledge, must be destroyed before this Book can perish. Human society must fall to ruins, human history must be blotted out, before this Book can drop out of the world.

What is the explanation of such a phenomenon? Here is a Book which has proved itself practically omniscient, disclosing even the thoughts and intents of the heart; practically omnipotent, building civilizations, swaying human society, turning the very world upside down; practically omnipresent, manifesting its presence in all races, through all languages, to all peoples. What will explain it?

For every effect there is a cause. Both philosophy and science unite in teaching this. Here is an effect, - the unvarying effect of the Bible throughout the world. And there is but one adequate, sufficient cause that explains it. A divine force must be hidden in this Book. A divine energy must there be at work. God is in it. Nothing less than this, nothing other than this, is an adequate explanation.

## **Its Unique History, and Miraculous Preservation**

THE Bible had a supernatural origin. It has been super naturally preserved through the centuries. Its very existence today is a standing miracle.

Before reaching us in any copy or translation, the divine word of God which is contained in the Bible passed through four successive forms. It existed first in the mind of God from all eternity. From His mind it was conveyed to human minds. From their minds to whom God gave it, it passed into human speech, and took shape in words. This was its first translation, and this was supervised and controlled by God so that it became His Word. Since then men have copied, translated, and reproduced it through the centuries. By such translations it has passed from country to country, and from one human language into another human language.

Three of these operations were supernatural and divine, its being in the mind of God, its passing from His mind to the minds of men, and its being translated from the minds of men under the operation of the Holy Spirit into the forms and symbols of human language. The fourth operation, that of its being copied and translated, is human and fallible, although God has exercised a wonderful control over His Word and preserved it from gross errors.

These living oracles of God were at first committed to the Jews for safe-keeping. These writings contained the severest denunciations of their ways. They abounded in rebukes for their sins and unfaithfulness. There were many predictions of their destruction as a nation. It would have been natural for the Jews to seek to rid themselves of such documents. Instead of this, however, age after age they guarded and preserved these holy writings with the most scrupulous care.

Among the Jews there were scribes, or doctors of tradition, called Masoretes, whose duty it was to transcribe the Scriptures. These learned men carried respect for the letter of God's Word to such a degree that they were required, before being permitted to copy the sacred text, to count the number of words and letters in the manuscript they were to copy. They knew exactly how many words and how many letters there were in the entire Old Testament, and in every separate book of the Old Testament. They knew which was the middle word in the entire book, and which was the middle word in each separate book. They knew how many thousands of times each letter occurred in the original manuscripts. They were not permitted to make any erasures. If they found, after copying, that a mistake had been made, they were required to destroy that copy and begin again. They could not change a letter after it was copied. Their blunders must not be corrected, but destroyed.

The result of such care was that a remarkable degree of accuracy was maintained in the Hebrew Scriptures. The original text was astonishingly preserved through the centuries. Providence watched over it; the mighty hand of God intervened in behalf of it; and we have to this day what God gave "holy men of old."

## **INTEGRITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT**

That God has exercised the same providential protection of the integrity of the New Testament may be seen by a study of the various readings in all the manuscripts of New Testament books now in existence and known.

In Europe, in Asia, in Africa, for 1500 years, the sacred text was copied and recopied by thousands of transcribers. In monasteries, in colleges, in palaces, in churches, in houses of the clergy, scholars of many nations, with extreme care and strictness, have translated and copied the books of the New Testament. And the product of their labors has come down to us in the form of thousands of manuscripts in many languages.

The extent of the labors expended on the examination of these manuscripts in the search for differences, is unparalleled in any other field of literary research. Friends and enemies have, during the past three centuries, with immense patience and unflagging energy, scrutinized with scrupulous and minute attention these thousands of manuscripts in many languages, Greek, Latin, Armenian, Ethiopic, Sahidic, Arabic, Persian, Slavonic, Coptic, Syriac, and Gothic, and compared them one with another, and then with the ancient writings of the church where they have been quoted.

The differences in the readings of the manuscripts have been tabulated and listed until every such difference is known. And when they have been collated and brought together, the sum total of all the different readings which have yet been discovered has been found to be so small as scarcely to change the essential meaning of any single verse in all the Bible. Such differences as have been found are merely in a single word, and more often in a single letter; and when all of them are put together, and allowed to have their full weight instead of the received text, not in any instance is any part of the teaching, the significance, the meaning, the doctrine, the truth, of the Bible changed in the shadow of a single degree.

On this point we can do no better than to quote from the writings of L. Gaussen, D. D., professor of Systematic Theology, Oratoire, Geneva, as found in his "Theopneustia," without doubt the ablest and most learned book on this subject Dr. Gaussen says:

## **HERCULEAN LABORS**

"The Lord has watched miraculously over His Word. This the facts of the case have demonstrated.

"In constituting as its depositaries, first, the churches of the Jewish people, and then those of the Christian people,, His providence had by this means to see to the faithful transmission of the oracles of God to us. It has done this; and in order to the attainment of this result, it has put different causes in operation, of which we shall have again to speak afterwards. Late learned researches have thrown the clearest light on this great fact. Herculean labors have been bestowed, during the whole of the last century (particularly in its last half) and the first part of this, on the task of bringing together all the various readings that either the detailed examination of the manuscripts of Holy Scripture preserved in the different libraries of Europe, or the study of the most ancient versions, or the searching out of the innumerable quotations made from our sacred books in all the writings of the Fathers of the church, could furnish. And this immense toil has ended in a result wonderful by its insignificance, and (shall I say?) imposing by its nullity.

"As respects the Old Testament, the indefatigable investigations and the four folios of Father Houbigant; the thirty years' labors of John Henry Michaelis; above all, the great Critical Bible and the ten years' study of the famous Kennicott (who consulted 581 Hebrew manuscripts). And, in fine, Professor Rossi's collection of 680 manuscripts. As respects the New Testament, the no less gigantic investigations of Mill, Bengel, Wetstein, and Griesbach (who consulted 335 manuscripts for the Gospels alone); the latest researches of Nolan, Mattlisei, Lawrence, and Hug. Above all, those of Scholz (with his 674 manuscripts for the Gospels, his 200 for the Acts, his 256 for the epistles of Paul, his 93 for the Apocalypse, (without reckoning his 53 Lectionaria). All these vast labors have

so convincingly established the astonishing preservation of that text, copied nevertheless so many thousands of times (in Hebrew during thirty-three centuries, and in Greek during eighteen hundred years), that the hopes of the enemies of religion, in this quarter, have been subverted, and as Michaelis has said, 'they have ceased henceforth to look for anything from those critical researches which they at first so warmly recommended, because they expected discoveries from them that have never been made.'

"The learned Rationalist Richhorn himself also owns that the different readings of the Hebrew manuscripts collected by Kennicott hardly offer sufficient interest to compensate for the trouble they cost! But these very false reckoning, and the absence of those discoveries, have proved a precious discovery for the church of God. She expected as much; but she is delighted to owe it to the labor of her very adversaries. 'In truth,' says a learned man of our day, 'but for those precious negative conclusions that people have come to, the direct result obtained from the consumption of so many men's lives in these immense researches may seem to amount to nothing. And none may say that in order to come to it, time, talent, and learning have all been foolishly thrown away.' But, as we have said, this result is immense in virtue of its nothingness, and all powerful in virtue of its insignificance.

"When one thinks that the Bible has been copied during thirty centuries, as no book of man has ever been, or ever will be; that it was subjected to all the catastrophes and all the captivities of Israel; that it was transported seventy years to Babylon; that it has seen itself so often persecuted, or forgotten, or interdicted, or burned, from the days of the Philistines to those of the Seleucide;-when one thinks that, since the time of Jesus Christ, it has had to traverse the first three centuries of the imperial persecutions, when persons found in possession of the holy books were thrown to the wild beasts; next, the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries, when false books, false legends, and false decrees were everywhere multiplied; the tenth century, when so few could read, even among princes; the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, when the use of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue was punished with death, and when the books of the ancient Fathers were mutilated, when so many ancient traditions were garbled and falsified, even to the very acts of the emperors, and to those of the councils then we can perceive how necessary it was that the providence of God should have always put forth its mighty power, in order that, on the one hand, the church of the Jews should give us, in its integrity, that Word which records its revolts, which predicts its ruin, which describes Jesus Christ; and, on the other, that the Christian churches (the most powerful of which, and the Roman sect in particular, interdicted the people from reading the sacred books, and substituted in so many ways the traditions of the Middle Ages for the Word of God) should nevertheless transmit to us, in all their purity, those Scriptures, which condemn all their traditions, their images, their dead languages, their absolutions, their celibacy; which say, that Rome would be the seat of a terrible apostasy, where 'the man of sin would be seen sitting as God in the temple of God, waging war on the saints, forbidding to marry, and to use meats which God had created;' which say of images, 'Thou shall not bow down to them;' of unknown tongues, 'Thou shall not use them.' Of the cup, 'Drink you all of it;' of the Virgin, 'Woman, what have I to do with thee?' and of marriage, 'It is honorable in all.'

"Now, although all the libraries in which ancient copies of the sacred books may be found, have been called upon to give their testimony; although the elucidation given by the fathers of all ages have been studied; although the Arabic, Syriac, Latin, Armenian, and Ethiopian versions have been collated. Although all the manuscripts of all countries and ages, from the third to the sixteenth century, have been collected and examined a thousand times over, by countless critics, who have eagerly sought out some new text, as the recompense and glory of their wearisome watching. Although learned men, not content with the libraries of the West, have visited those of Russia, and carried their researches into the monasteries of Mont Athos, Turkish Asia, and Egypt, there to look for new instruments of the sacred text, 'Nothing has been discovered,' says a learned person already quoted, 'not even a single reading, that could throw doubt on any one of the passages before considered as certain. All the variants, almost without exception, leave untouched the essential ideas of each phrase, and bear only on points of secondary importance. Such as the insertion or the omission of an article or a conjunction, the position of an adjective before or after its substantive, the greater or less exactness of a grammatical construction.'" - Page 167-71.

Everywhere, then, we have the same Scripture. Given by God so many centuries ago, it is still the same literal Word of God for the people of today. The miracle of its, origin is equalled by the miracle of its preservation.

## **BEGINNING OF ITS WRITTEN FORM**

The Bible has come to be what it is today by gradual development. At first and for long years, the revelation of God was oral. "The word of the Lord came unto Abram." Genesis 15:1. This was sufficient for generations. The time came, however, when something more was needed. Then the divine revelation began to assume written form.

Traces of the building up of the Sacred Writings are found throughout the Old Testament. Moses began it. The Lord commanded him: "Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua." Exodus 17:14. Other writings of Moses were added to the first. "And Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys by the commandment of the Lord." Numbers 33:2.

When Joshua succeeded Moses as leader of Israel, the writings of Moses were known as the "book of the law." Obedience to it was the basis of success. Joshua was commanded by God to study it, meditate upon it, obey it.

"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shall meditate therein day and night, that thou may observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then shall thou make thy way prosperous, and then thou shall have good success." Joshua 1: 8.

Joshua added to the sacred Scriptures. "Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God." Joshua 24: 26.

Additions were made by Samuel (1 Samuel 10: 25); Jeremiah (Jeremiah 36: 2; Daniel 9: 2); and by many others. Thus the Old Testament grew by the process of accretion. Tradition associates Ezra with the complete volume. No reason is known for doubting this.

## **WRITING THE NEW TESTAMENT**

In a similar manner the New Testament came into being. First there were the oral accounts of Christ, His ministry, and His gospel. The apostolic letters followed, confirming and enlarging this oral teaching. These letters were sent to various churches, and were read in these churches. (1 Thessalonians 5:27; 2 Thessalonians 3:14) Then they were interchanged among the churches. (Colossians 4:16.)

Then a record of the life of the Founder and Head of the churches became imperative. To supply this need the Gospels were provided. (Luke 1:1-4; John 20:30) Very naturally this was followed by the story of the early church in the book of Acts. And The Revelation, with its outlook on the future, fitly crowns the whole.

Thus by a very gradual process, and in a very natural way, the Bible came to be. It is only when the process is complete that one realizes how altogether supernatural the process is which produced this Book of books.

It is here that the important question arises as to how we may be certain that the Book we hold in our hands is actually the same as these original writings which have been thus naturally and simply collected together into one volume in the past. Is our Bible today identically the same as the people of God have had through the centuries?

The answer is not hard to find. We can start with the Bibles we own today and trace the writings back to the men who, under divine inspiration, wrote them. This we will now proceed to do.

### **The Ancient Manuscripts and the Book Today**

THE Book we hold in our hands is not a new Book. It has had a long, an honorable, and a most fascinating history.

There are some who claim to believe, and who endeavor to get others to believe, that it is not so old a Book as it claims to be. They like to claim that it is a fraud, foisted upon credulous dupes as very old and venerable, when, in reality, so they declare, it is a comparatively modern production. Thus would they discredit both its story and its teachings.

We are told that it was not written by the men whose names are connected with its various parts; that these men never really existed, but were invented by the deceivers who actually wrote the Bible; and that, therefore, the Bible is a forgery to begin with, an imposition, the fruit of depraved hearts, lying tongues, and corrupt minds.

## **HAS A LIE SUCH POWER?**

Of course, to every rational being it would be sufficient to reply to this by pointing out the work which the Bible accomplishes wherever it is accepted and followed. A lying forgery has no power to transform human lives into the likeness of the divine. Lying, lustful, murdering idolaters cannot be changed by the millions into honest, peaceable, virtuous men by telling them a great lie. It does not appear possible to any but a very biased and scrambled brain that men could lie so well, while at the same time teaching their followers such principles as "Me not one to another," and, "All liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone," as to turn immense multitudes of wicked men, as a consequence of such lying, to a life of virtue and purity and honesty and truthfulness. There is no such power in a lie, even though it be well told.

There can be no denying the fact that the people who possess and receive and follow the Bible are the most advanced people in the world. The lands where the people have good clothing and comfortable homes, and work well-tilled farms; who have intelligence to harness powerful streams to do their work, to build railways, and invent labor-saving machinery; who erect churches in all their towns and schools in every village. Whose blacksmiths are thus wiser than the priests of Egypt, and their Sabbath-school scholars more learned than the philosophers of Greece, are lands where the Bible has free course and is glorified.

These things in themselves are a sufficient answer to the foolish charge that the Book is a fraud and an imposition.

Nothing is quite so dogmatic in the investigation of the truth of the Bible as to dismiss the whole matter out of hand with the assertion that the whole thing is a fraud. This is not investigation at all. It is the blind refusal to investigate. It is the quintessence of dogmatism.

## **TRACING THE BOOK'S HISTORY**

The better method is to begin at the present time, and carefully trace the history of the records and documents back to the time when the Book was written. It ought not to prove impossible to begin with the Bible as we now have it, and proceed from one well-determined position to another, until we have covered the whole ground of the genuineness of the writings. The truth of the story, and the authority of the teachings of this great Book.

Indeed, the question of the truth of the Bible cannot be worth considering until such an investigation has been made. We hold in abeyance, then, the question as to whether the Bible is true until we know where it came from, and who wrote it, and how it came to us.

## **A VERY OLD BOOK**

We begin, therefore, with the fact, which no one will dispute, that the Bible is in the world. It has been here a long time. We learned its stories in our childhood. We repeated its sublime poetry and parables and proverbs and psalms in school. And the old men of our childhood told us they had done the same thing when they were children. So it has been here a long time. It is printed by Bible societies; but only the very, very ignorant believe it originated with them.

Very old copies are still in existence. They can be seen in many libraries, and the dates when they were printed show clearly on their title pages. They can be traced back, copy by copy, through the nineteenth, the eighteenth, the seventeenth, the sixteenth



century, to the very beginning of the art of printing. Indeed, standing in a museum in Europe is a very old and authentic reproduction of the first printing press ever made. And down by its side is the first book ever printed, a copy of the Bible in Latin. So the Book is very old, we know-as old, at least, as the art of printing.

## **OLDER THAN PRINTING**

But when we have reached the beginning of the art of printing, we have not reached the beginning of the Bible. It is older than that. In the British Museum in London is an incomplete copy of Wycliffe's translation of the Bible into English, made in the year 1380. Hence we know that the Book is more than five hundred years old.

But the Bible goes back beyond 1380. Wycliffe translated it from another language. Many copies, numbering thousands, are still in existence in other languages. It was translated into the Greek, the Armenian, the Coptic, the Egyptian, the Arabic, in the early centuries of the Christian era, and many of these copies are in the possession of men and institutions today.

These copies, when one learns to read them, will be found to be the same Bible that we know now. And some of these manuscripts of books of the New Testament date back well into the fourth and even into the third century of the Christian era. So we know the Bible is very old.

This is not, however, to intimate even for a moment that age gives authority to the writings that have come down to us from remote times in the form of what we now call the Bible. Their authority rests upon very different grounds, as we shall show.

For the purpose of answering critics, however, let us see if we can learn how old the Bible is. It is a matter of common knowledge that the entire Old Testament was translated into Greek before the time of Christ, the work beginning in the days of Ptolemy Philadelphus, BC 289, and continuing at intervals until BC 150, when the translation was finished.

## **HOW ITS AGE IS KNOWN**

Very often the inquiry is made in this connection as to how we know the age of the New Testament manuscripts. How can it be determined that a manuscript belongs to an early century instead of a much later century? Deception is sometimes practiced in such matters. How can we be sure that there is no deception in connection with the manuscripts of the Bible?

It is true that there is deception in connection with old manuscripts, sometimes. But there is not much, and usually it is discovered very readily. It is not easy to deceive in matters of this kind. Men did not write eighteen centuries ago in the same way that we write now. Books were not made then as they are made now. Changes in manners and customs and practices are constantly occurring. By studying these changes, it is comparatively easy to determine the time of certain writings.

Eighteen hundred years ago the writing of manuscripts was done on parchment or papyrus, and "books" were generally scrolls. There were no small letters and capitals such as we have now. All letters were capitals, or, as they are called, uncial letters. There was no punctuation, or at least very little. It was not then the custom to separate words and sentences. All the words were run together until each line looked like one long word made of capital letters.

For a thousand years it has not been the custom to write in the way they wrote eighteen centuries ago. Therefore, when old manuscripts are discovered, written with uncial letters, with the words and sentences all run together, with, little or no punctuation, we know they were written very long ago. Cities that were buried under volcanic ashes and lava eighteen centuries ago, such as Pompeii and Herculaneum, have been uncovered during recent years, and in their libraries, books have been found written in this ancient manner. When they are found, it does not require either great learning or great faith to believe that they are books which were written more than eighteen hundred years ago, for they have lain buried during all that time.

Now there are copies of the New Testament manuscripts which have come to light written in exactly the way in which men wrote books in those early centuries. They bear in themselves clear evidence, therefore, of the early date at which they were produced. We know that the New Testament existed during the early centuries of the Christian era.

## **OLDER THAN THE COUNCILS**

Opponents of the Bible were accustomed a few years ago to make the foolish claim that the New Testament was produced by the Council of Laodicea, in 364 AD. Quite generally they have discarded this claim at the present time, although now and again some of the less intelligent will run across it in some old infidel book and revive it with all the ardor of a new discovery. As a matter of fact, the Council of Laodicea, instead of making the New Testament, appealed to it as the source of its own authority.

The Council of Laodicea assumed no overlordship in this matter, but simply recognized an authority generally acknowledged by the Christian communities of that age. As expressed by one writer, "The heart of this whole question has been well put in words that deserve special emphasis and careful consideration: 'The New Testament is not an authorized collection of books, but a collection of authorized books.' The authority lies in the books, not in the collection." And we may add, not in the Council.

Again the claim is made by some that the New Testament was brought into existence at the Council of Nicea, in 325 AD. It is easier to claim this twice than to prove it once. The very making of such a claim demonstrates that those who make it know nothing at all about the Council of Nicea.

If those who make such a claim would take the pains to inquire, they would learn that the members of the Council of Nicea, believing the teachings of the New Testament that a Teacher had been sent of God into the world about three centuries before, and a difference of opinion having arisen among themselves as to whether this Teacher was God himself or an angel, they had assembled from every part of the Roman Empire to inquire into, discuss, and endeavor to settle this question. In the discussion of it both sides

appealed to the writings of the apostles as found in the New Testament. That this is true any one may learn who cares to read the history of this Council in such standard works as Mosheim's "Ecclesiastical History," Neander's "History of the Christian Religion and Church," Lardner's "Credibility of the Gospel History," and Stanley's "Eastern Church."

Instead, then, of the Council of Nicea making the New Testament, the facts are that at the very time of that Council the books of the New Testament were known and accepted throughout the Christian world, and the Council, so far from giving any authority to them, rather bowed to their authority, for both Arian and Orthodox united to acknowledge that the entire Christian world received them as the writings of the apostles of Christ.

### **ROME COULD NOT DESTROY IT**

Then, too, it is easy to demonstrate, by decrees of the Roman Empire, that the New Testament did not come into existence in 325 at the Council of Nicaea. For example, it was twenty-two years before this Council, that is, in 303, that Diocletian, the emperor of Rome, issued his infamous decree to burn all Christian writings and destroy all Christian churches. Strange, indeed, that the Roman emperor should be so concerned about a book which had no existence until twenty-two years later.

The New Testament, and the whole Bible, was well known, ancient, and of undoubted authority among all Christians, long before the Council of Nicea. This is an established fact.

It is not alone by examination of the early manuscripts and the refutation of the claims of its modern enemies that we learn something of the age of the Bible. We learn much from the enemies of the Bible in those early centuries. Indeed, we are under great obligation to them, for their denunciations of the Bible make it easy for us to prove that they had a Bible at that time, which it would not be so easy to do without their formulations against it.

### **KNOWN IN THE SECOND CENTURY**

At the close of the second century after Christ an Epicurean philosopher named Celsus wrote a book against Christianity, and called it "The Word of Truth." No copy of this work remains today, but Origen, a celebrated Christian philosopher, replied to Celsus' book, and in his reply quoted long extracts from it. In these quotations from Celsus there are more than eighty quotations from the New Testament itself, so many, in fact, and of such length, that we can gather from them all the principal facts of the New Testament story.

Now it is plain that if a man takes the pains to quote the New Testament in order to prove that it is not 'true, no matter what else he succeeds in proving, he certainly does prove that there was a New Testament in his time. If he writes a book to overthrow it, it is obvious and self-evident that the book he tries to confute is at least in existence, in circulation, and possessed of influence. Celsus did not claim there was no New Testament. He tried to show that the New Testament, which he freely admitted existed then, was not true. He did not succeed; but his attempt makes it easy for us to prove that the New Testament existed in his day.

But we go back beyond the time of Celsus. There lived, early in the second century, the celebrated heretic, Marcion. He had been excommunicated from the church, and therefore had every reason to say the worst of it. No one ever had a better opportunity of discovering any forgeries which might have existed in the alleged writings of the apostles. He traveled all the way from the center of Asia to Rome, through all the countries and cities where the apostles had preached, and where the churches were located to which their epistles had been sent, and he never found one single individual to suggest to him that the writings of the New Testament were not genuine. He claimed that the Gospel of Matthew, the Epistle to the Hebrews, and those of James and Peter, were for Jews only, but he never thought of claiming that the New Testament did not exist.

### **NOT FRAUDS AND FORGERIES**

Thus the books of the New Testament can be traced right back to the times of the men who wrote them. An the cavils of unbelievers are not sufficient to overthrow the truth of history. The records of the past are clear and plain. The Sacred Writings are not frauds and forgeries. They were written by the men who claimed to write them.

Indeed, a little consideration would make it plain to anyone how impossible it is that these writings could be forgeries, or written by any one besides those whose names were attached to them, and by whom they were sent to the churches.

The manuscripts of the New Testament were directed to be publicly read in the Christian churches to which many of them were addressed. They were so read publicly in the days when their authors were still living. If an epistle written by Paul was publicly read during Paul's lifetime, there would be no difficulty in determining whether or not Paul wrote it. If a forged epistle were read with the claim that Paul wrote it, and Paul was still alive, there would be no trouble in learning of its fraudulent character. It is altogether unlikely that an impostor would direct his forgery to be publicly read. He would certainly know this would mean exposure.

In the churches to which the Pauline epistles were addressed there were those who knew Paul personally, who were acquainted with his manner and his teachings. They had been, brought into the faith by him. They would be easily able to prove or disprove the genuineness of each epistle which claimed to be his. Thus it is plain that the primitive churches to which these writings of the New Testament were first sent had the most conclusive proof of the genuineness of these writings of the apostles and evangelists who produced the New Testament.

### **PRESERVED BY DIVINE PROVIDENCE**

It is certain, therefore, that we have today genuine copies of the writings of the New Testament. They have come from various parts of the world. They are in different languages. They have been closely scrutinized for many years. The most critical

scholars have enumerated and listed their different and various readings, even such variations as would be equivalent to the dotting of an “i” or the crossing of a “t” in English. And the total result of all this scrutiny and criticism and tabulation has finally resolved itself into a list of about twenty unimportant changes in the received text of the 7,959 verses of the New Testament.

By the special providence of God, then, we are in actual possession of true copies of the Gospels and Epistles first written by the companions of Jesus, just as truly as we are of true copies of the American Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. This we can rely upon, while we thank God for it. When we hold our Bible in our hands, we may be altogether certain that it is our Father’s revealed will, the word of the eternal God.

## **The Writers and the Writing**

THE men who wrote the books of the Bible used the words which God gave them. It is His book, not theirs. The Spirit of God spoke by its authors. His words were upon their tongues and flowed from their pens.

Some have thought that God’s control and God’s inspiration would manifest themselves in uniformity of style, similarity of form, sameness of language, and resemblance of conception, excluding all diversity due to a difference of writers.

As just the opposite of this is plainly apparent in the Bible, the claim is made that it is the product of the men whose individual styles are stamped on the various books.

As they tell us what they saw and heard, and just how they saw and heard it, it is obvious that their memories were at work, their imaginations were called into exercise, their affections were drawn out, their whole beings were employed, and what they wrote, both as to its essence and form, is marked by its writer’s individual circumstances and peculiar turn of mind.

This very diversity which is used to produce unity is itself an evidence of the divine origin of the Scriptures. We recognize the differences, we distinguish between individuals, we acknowledge the human element in their writings. Yet what they wrote was God’s book, God’s word, God’s truth.

## **PROVIDENTIAL TRANSMISSION TO US**

In the realm of creation, God gives us plants by using all the elements of heat, moisture, electricity, atmosphere, light, the mechanical attraction of atoms and molecules, and all the various operations of the organs of vegetation. In the realm of providence, He accomplishes the development of the most gigantic plans by manipulating the amazing diversity of a thousand million human wills, some intelligent, others ignorant, some yielding themselves, others rebellious, all influenced by diverse and opposing passions and purposes, and yet, when “gathered together,” doing “whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done.” (Acts 4:27:28.) In the realm of prophecy, He brings His predictions to fulfillment, using in doing so the diverse ambitions and conflicting purposes of earthly rulers. In the realm of miracles, He uses many inferior agents, dividing the Red Sea not alone by the outstretched rod of Moses, but as well by a mighty cast wind which blows all night and makes the waters go back, or healing a man born blind by clay made with spittle and therewith anointing his eyelids. In the realm of redemption, He converts souls by employing many agencies, calling attention to His word, sending preachers to teach the gospel, manipulating circumstances to impress His truth, and commissioning His Spirit to produce conviction. Thus, in sending forth His word into the world, He caused it to enter human life through the understanding, the heart, the life, the mind, the lips of His servants, associating what they revealed to us with their personalities, employing their sentiments, their history, their training, their experiences, their habits of thought, and even their personal idiosyncrasies, in the inspired transmission to us of the divine Word of God. The diverse styles, then, of Moses, Ezekiel, Daniel, David, Paul, and John are, at the same time, God’s style - all employed by Him in the process of inspiration. One of His servants may write like a herdsman, another like a priest, another like a ruler, another like a fisherman, and another like a philosopher; but in all is found the style of God, the manner of God, the Word of God. He used their manners, their styles, their personalities, and made them do His work.

## **GOD SPEAKING TO MEN**

Just as a versatile musician might, in order to express the sentiments of some great composition, employ in turn the harp, the trumpet, the violin, the flute, the comet, so the God of heaven, in sending His Word to men, chose His instruments to fit His purposes, and used all their peculiar traits in producing His divinely inspired message of salvation.

So, while sometimes the Bible discloses the tender simplicity and sublime artlessness of the beloved disciple, at other times the moving logic and rousing energy of the great apostle to the Gentiles, then again the impulsive fervor and rugged forthrightness of the Galilean fisherman, and still again the majestic and lyrical poetry of Isaiah and David, or the concise history of Moses and the axiomatic wisdom of Solomon, still, in it all, and through it all, and by it all, God is speaking to men.

## **NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS**

The companions and apostles of Jesus wrote the books of the New Testament. Step by step in our investigation of these writings we have been led backward, until we have come to the time when they were written.

And when we get back to the men who wrote these books, we find one supporting another, the book of one verifying and confirming the book of another. The later books refer to and indorse the earlier ones. The different writers accept what the other writers had written, and declare that God led them in the writing. All of them, when brought together, are found to be one Book.

When Peter wrote his epistles, he referred in them to the writings of Paul. Peter and Paul had not always seen things exactly alike. Paul on one occasion had found it necessary to rebuke Peter. It will be interesting, therefore, to see what Peter has to say about the writings of Paul. This is what he says: "The long-suffering of our Lord is salvation. Even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things. In which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction!" 2 Peter 3:15,16.

"Our beloved brother," Peter calls Paul. Paul wrote his epistles, Peter says, "according to the wisdom given unto him." The "unlearned and unstable wrest" Paul's writings, "as they do also the other Scriptures."

Peter, then, clearly puts Paul's writings on an equality with the Old Testament, which was at that time acknowledged, by all the people of God to be the Holy Scriptures. In this passage Peter gives clear evidence that before his death Paul had written epistles, and that these epistles were accepted by the apostles of the Lord as from God, and were placed on the same plane as the sacred writings of the Old Testament.

## **PAUL AND LUKE**

Turning now to these accepted writings of Paul, we discover him writing this: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture said, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treads out the corn. And, The laborer is worthy of his hire." 1 Timothy 5: 17, 18.

Paul declares here that the Scripture says two things; he makes a double quotation from Scripture. First, "The Scripture said, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treads out the corn." The scripture which says that is Deuteronomy 25:4, written by Moses. Secondly, the Scripture says, "The laborer is worthy of his hire," or reward. Now where does "the Scripture" say that? There is no place in the Old Testament where such a statement is made. This, then, is not a quotation from the Old Testament. But it is a quotation from the "Scripture." The statement will be found in Luke 10:7.

Clearly, then, 'before Paul's death Luke had written some things which Paul puts on an equality with the writings of Moses, calling them both "Scripture."

## **LUKE'S TWO BOOKS**

Luke wrote two of the books of the New Testament, the Gospel which is called by his name, and the book of Acts. He began the book of Acts in this fashion: "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach." Acts 1:1. To the man Theophilus, to whom Luke wrote this book he declares he had written a "former treatise." There can be no question that Luke is here referring to the Gospel which he had written.

Turning back to this former treatise, the Gospel of Luke, we find him addressing this same Theophilus in the following manner: "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word. It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou might know the certainty of those things, wherein thou has been instructed." Luke 1:1-4.

Luke here declares that before he started to write his Gospel others had written of the same matters that he proposed to cover, and that they had been eyewitnesses of the things concerning which they wrote. Certainly he is referring to the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, already known and accepted when he started to write. Thus these men, writers of the New Testament, confirm the writings of one another.

## **THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS**

The New Testament, too, upholds and supports the Old Testament. The two are a unit, standing or falling together. What is said in the New Testament of the inspiration of the Scriptures refers to the Old Testament.

There are some who say they believe the New Testament, but do not believe the Old-which remark in itself demonstrates their ignorance of both Old and New. There is no contradiction between them. The Old Testament is the foundation of the New; the New Testament is the superstructure of the Old. The New Testament does not teach one doctrine while the Old is teaching another. Their references to historical facts are the same. There is no confusion of spiritual facts between them. The unity between them is altogether remarkable.

As a matter of fact there is a considerable part of the Old Testament which will be found in the New. It is reckoned that there are 263 direct quotations from the Old Testament in the New Testament. Dr. S. H. Brooks affirms that Genesis is quoted nineteen times in nine New Testament books; Exodus, twenty-four times in twelve New Testament books. Leviticus, twelve times in nine books; Numbers is quoted or alluded to in nine books. Deuteronomy, twenty-six times in thirteen books; the Psalms, fifty-nine times in twelve books. Isaiah, fifty times in eleven books. Proverbs, six times in six books; and Zechariah, six times in four books.

## **THE REVELATION**

Writing of the book of Revelation, Professor Milligan says: The book is absolutely steeped in the memories, the incidents, the thoughts, and the language of the church's past. To such an extent is this the case that it may be doubted whether it contains a single figure not drawn from the Old Testament, or a single complete sentence not more or less built up of materials brought from the same

source. It is a perfect mosaic of passages from the Old Testament, at one time quoted verbally, at another referred to by distinct allusion; now taken from one scene in Jewish history, and now again from two or three together.”

There are 404 verses -in the book of Revelation. About 265 of these contain Old Testament language, and about 550 references are made to Old Testament passages.

In all the New Testament there are only three quotations from secular writers. These are all by Paul. They are found in Acts 17:28, where Paul says: “As certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also His offspring, “which was taken from a play by Aratus. In 1 Corinthians 15:33, “Evil communications corrupt good manners,” which was taken from the writings of Menander; and in Titus 1:12, “One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies,” which is from Epimenides.

## **THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT**

But there are hundreds of quotations in the New Testament from the Old Testament, taken from every book in the Old Testament with the exception of Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and the Song of Solomon. And in addition there are other hundreds of allusions and references to Old Testament history and customs and scenes and worship.

Thus the New Testament confirms and verifies the Old; it is of the very warp and woof of the Old. The New is the consummation of the Old. Nothing is stated or taught or prophesied in the Old that is not transfigured in the New. Some one has likened the Old and New Testaments to a Damascus blade, which was made of the cloth of woven wire, heated, forged, and tempered in such a manner that the edge was irresistible. So the Old and New, Testaments are interlaced, intertwined, inter braided, and interwoven, and then heated and welded in the fire of divine inspiration until they come out to us “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” (Ephesians 6: 17)

And when we get back to the Old Testament itself, we find here also the later writers referring to, and confirming, the earlier. Almost the last statement in the Old Testament is this: “Remember you the law of Moses My servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.” Malachi 4: 4.

Thus the prophets quote from the Psalms, the later books from the earlier ones, and we move back step by step, from writer to writer, all upholding and confirming the others, until we come at last to the very first words of the Bible. There we stand, as it were, at the entrance of a stately, beautiful, and awe inspiring cathedral, on which, it is true, many builders have labored, but over the entrance to which is written the name of the Great Architect himself: “In the beginning GOD.”

## **Its Supernatural Unity**

THE Bible is more than a Book. It is a library. It was not composed or compiled by one man. Its separate parts were written at different times over a period of sixteen hundred years. There is a surprising variety and diversity in both the style and the character of its many sections. Some are historical, others poetical. Some contain laws, others lyrics. Some are prophetic, others symbolic. The New Testament has four Gospels, one book of ecclesiastical history, twenty-one letters to churches and individuals, and closes with a prophetic book filled with mystic symbolism and Oriental imagery.

Notwithstanding all this diversity, there is such an obvious unity running through it from Genesis to Revelation, from Moses in the wilderness to John on Patmos, that this very unity constitutes one of the most impressive evidences of the divine origin of this Book.

## **NO COLLISION AND NO COLLUSION**

In such a collection of writings the presumption against unity would naturally be strong. No other book was ever composed and compiled under circumstances so disadvantageous to unity and harmony. Yet all the criticism of more than thirty centuries has failed to discover one important and irreconcilable contradiction even in the writings of those most widely separated in time. There is no collision. Yet there could be no collusion.

The unity of this unique Book manifests itself in many ways. There is a unity of purpose seen throughout. That purpose is to set forth the record of God’s scheme of salvation. In the early books are the promises of that salvation. In the following books are the providence making that salvation possible. In still later books are the prophecies of that salvation. In the Gospels is revealed the Person who wrought out the salvation. In the Acts is the record of the preaching of the salvation. And in the Revelation are the predictions disclosing the outcome of this salvation.

So, too, there is a unity of subject. Christ is the key of Scripture throughout. It is Christ who gives it its historical and spiritual unity. He is the One whom the earlier books foretell. It is He who leads His people out of Egypt, who speaks the law on Sinai, who preserves them from destruction by their enemies, who establishes them in their own land of promise, who speaks through their prophets, who finally appears as the Messiah, who lays the groundwork of salvation in His ministry, death, and resurrection, who now ministers in heaven as an intercessory priest, and who is to come in the clouds of heaven to establish His long-awaited and everlasting kingdom. To Him all the writers of the Sacred Books give witness.

## **ITS NEVER VARYING THEME**

The unity of the Bible appears, too, in its never-varying theme. It runs from Genesis to Revelation. It is the cross of Christ. In the older writings that cross appears in the promises, in the prophecies, in the pictures. Sacrifices and types symbolize it. Prophets and seers foretell it. Psalmists and priests sing of it. Rites and ceremonies reveal it. Lawgivers and rulers fix their hopes upon it. And in the Gospels we are led up to it. And there Christ provides it. Then the Acts proclaim it. The epistles explain it. And the Revelation glorifies it in the universal song: "Worthy the Lamb that was slain."

The unity of the Bible is seen, again, in its symmetry. This is apparent everywhere. It is in the literary structure as well as in the doctrinal teaching. In the Old Testament Moses and the prophets teach the same things as do Christ and the apostles in the New Testament.

In the Old Testament a foundation is laid in the five books of the Pentateuch. Everything following is built upon these and the truth they set forth. In the New Testament a foundation is laid in the four Gospels. Everything following is built upon these and the truth they set forth.

### **NO PART CAN BE REMOVED**

Every book fits into the general scheme. Not one could be lost without maiming the whole Bible. Each section demands every other. The Decalogue is not complete without the Sermon on the Mount. The narrative of the gospels is made necessary by Isaiah's prophecy. Revelation is the complement of Daniel. Leviticus cannot be understood without the Epistle to the Hebrews. The Passover foreshadows the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper fulfills and interprets the Passover. We read in the first book about the first creation, and in the last book about the new creation. Here is the account of the creation of the heavens and the earth. There of the new heavens and the new earth. Here is the account of the rivers that watered the garden. There of the pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, Here of the tree of life in Eden; there of the tree of life in the midst of the Paradise of God. Here of God who came down to talk and walk with man; there of the tabernacle of God restored to men. Here of the curse that came by sin; there of the eternal removal of the curse.

How can this unity be accounted for? There is no possible answer which can be given unless a supernatural superintendence is admitted. If only men worked on this Book, without divine guidance, then the Bible is the most unaccountable miracle ever known. But if God actually superintended the production of this Book, and all who labored on it were guided by Him, then its unity is that of a divine plan; its harmony is that of a supreme intelligence and will.

### **PROOF OF DIVINE SUPERINTENDENCE**

Consequently the impressive unity of the Bible is among the most convincing proofs of its divine origin. Only divine guidance, divine superintendence, could have planned and fitted together the work of so many men of different lands, different times, different speech, and different talents, into a perfect, harmonious whole. Even if these men had failed to claim divine inspiration, we would have been compelled to invent such an explanation to account for the otherwise unaccountable phenomenon of this Book.

We are, therefore, inevitably impelled to one conclusion. Some years ago the Vehicular Holland Tunnels were driven under the Hudson River, connecting New Jersey with New York. Many shifts of men worked towards each other from opposite sides of the river. They worked practically in the dark so far as knowing where the others were or what they were doing. Finally they met, far under the bed of the river, and the tunnels they were driving fitted so well together that no one needed to be told that there was a directing mind which had planned the whole enterprise.

In the same way the writers of the books of the Old and New Testaments, while working separately, little knowing either what the others did or the meaning of their own words (1 Peter 1:11), finally had all they had done brought together. Then it was seen that they had worked together, and their work fitted together in every part. No one should need to be told that this demonstrates both the power and the presence of a Master Mind, controlling and directing throughout. This is none other than the Spirit of the living God.

## **A. Its Reliability**

OUR attitude toward the Book will, of course, be determined by our confidence in it. And this is the fundamental question of every reader about the Bible, not, "Is it inspired?" but, "Is it trustworthy?" Can we rely on its statements? We can be entirely without any theory of inspiration and still greatly enjoy and greatly benefit from the Bible if we can only be assured of its reliability.

There are many who think the question of the Bible's trustworthiness can be settled only by experts, scholars, or critics, and is beyond the limits of possibility for the ordinary person who is without special technical equipment. But this is not true.

God gave man an intelligence. With this he can perceive, compare, reason. It follows, therefore, that all men, to a greater or less degree, possess the ability to examine and decide concerning matters which affect their interests.

Learning, while of great value, is not everything. No amount of critical knowledge and erudition can take the place of plain common sense. No class monopolizes all wisdom. The possession of great intelligence does not preclude the possibility of making great mistakes. No general assumption of learning, authority, or infallibility in this realm can settle these matters. It is better in this important matter of the trustworthiness of the Bible to use whatever of intelligence and common sense our Maker has granted us in an endeavor to come to right conclusions than to sit down in dumb and awful silence, abashed by the majesty of some learned professor or college president and consider his word law and his decision an end of all controversy.

### **CRITICS MAY MAKE MISTAKES**

Learning is neither logic nor common sense. It is altogether possible for men of cultivated minds to find themselves lost in the labyrinths of their own theories, and assume positions which contradict the common sense of the world. No man knows everything. What the uncultivated man knows he knows. What the learned man does not know he is just as ignorant of as is the most uncultivated ignorant. He may be able to talk vaguely. He may be able to conceal his ignorance under learned words and obscure phraseology. He may tell you what he does not know in a dozen different languages. But the fact of his utter ignorance remains.

It is not necessary, therefore, for any person in considering this question of the Bible's trustworthiness to abandon either his faith or his common sense and incontinently swallow the vague speculations, crude interpretations, and rash and contradictory assertions of men who would have us consider them critical oracles and encyclopedic geniuses. He does not need to be so dazed at displays of learning, which may be either bought or borrowed, that he accepts with unquestioning confidence the unsupported assertions, the undigested fancies, and the unmitigated follies, of the so-called higher critics. It is not necessary for him to accept as teachers those who clothe themselves with an air of inerrancy. These critics should not be allowed to take over upon themselves the trouble of thinking, studying, analyzing, comparing, investigating, and deciding for us. We are fully able to do our own thinking in this matter, and capable of arriving at our own conclusions.

## **METHODS OF DECIDING**

It is not only possible, but it is the duty of every person to test this question of the Bible's reliability for himself. There are many ways of doing this, five of which will be used here as illustrations. These five are the history of the Jewish nation, the findings of archeology, the testimony of Jesus Christ, the seal and endorsement of the Holy Spirit, and the spiritual experience of the church. Each of these, taken separately, is sufficiently convincing. Taken together, they will be seen to supply the searcher for truth with opportunities and methods of reaching a positive, final decision regarding this matter which is altogether satisfying to the candid, sincere inquirer.

This matter of reaching a decision on this question is so vital and altogether important that without an assurance of the substantial reliability of the Scriptures, both the life and the testimony of the seeker for light must be seriously damaged. In order that he may arrive at this bedrock of assurance for himself, by his own investigation, these five ways are indicated, and, in connection therewith, certain fundamental principles are set forth.

Frederick the Great, on a certain occasion, said to one of his marshals, who was a devout Christian, "Give me in one word a proof of the truth of the Bible." The laconic, and altogether unanswerable, reply was, "Sire, the Jews."

## **THE JEWISH NATION**

The nation of the Jews is a fact in history. The record of this nation is set forth in the Old Testament. Very little contemporary history exists by which to enable us to verify the Scriptural record. Archeological discoveries afford us some assistance but only on points of detail, not for any long, continuous period.

But this record of the history of the Jewish nation can be demonstrated to have remained the same over many centuries of time. And all that is known from other sources is found to be in exact agreement with the Old Testament.

Here, then, is a great outstanding fact: the Jewish nation. The Old Testament originated in this nation. It contains the record of the nation. It developed with the nation. It molded and formed the nation. It witnessed against the nation. We can look to this nation, then, for the earliest and most convincing testimony to the reliability of the Old Testament.

And on this basis the trustworthiness of these writings is convincingly evidenced. The Old Testament is altogether in accord with the historic development and position of the Jewish nation. Consequently we can test the Old Testament by the history of the Jews. So testing it, we discover it in complete accord with all we know of the national life of the Jewish people.

Not only in its historical parts, but also in its prophetic parts, does the Old Testament witness to its own unerring accuracy and reliability in relation to the Jewish nation.

Of the Jews God said long centuries ago: "Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." Numbers 23: 9. This is apparently, but not really, contradicted by these other predictions of the Lord: "I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you." Leviticus 26:33. "Lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth." Amos 9: 9.

## **NATION DESTROYED PEOPLE PRESERVED**

Their national destruction was further threatened: "Among these nations shall thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest. But the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shall fear day and night, and shall have none assurance of thy life." Deuteronomy 28:65,66.

Notwithstanding all this punishment, and dispersion, and persecution, it is predicted that the Jews shall exist as a people, contrary to all expectation: "Yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly." Leviticus 26: 44.

In these passages we have four distinct predictions: national peculiarity, world-wide dispersion, grievous oppression, and remarkable preservation. The fulfillment has been before the eyes of the world through the centuries. To this day the Jews remain a distinct people not amalgamated with any other race. Probably more oppressed, more fervently hated, than any other people of history, they have endured the wrath and persecutions; of their "enemies through the ages, but instead of diminishing they seem to grow more numerous.

## THE DISCOVERIES OF ARCHEOLOGY

A second way of testing the Bible's trustworthiness is offered us by the evidence of archeological discoveries. During the past three quarters of a century many diligent investigators of ancient civilizations have been digging in the earth in Egypt, Palestine, Assyria, and Babylonia. They have made many discoveries. They have added to our knowledge of ancient peoples, customs, cities. Many of these discoveries have had a bearing on the records of the Scripture.

There is a very special advantage attaching to these archeological discoveries. It is that they are easily within the comprehension of ordinary men. They do not require expert technical scholarship to interpret or appreciate their meaning. The bearing of this on the trustworthiness of the Old Testament is obvious.

We cannot here set forth these discoveries in detail. To a limited degree we shall do that in a later chapter. What we here desire to emphasize is that not a single discovery of archeology, anywhere in the world, at any time, has set aside or even weakened one statement or record of the Scriptures, or undermined in the slightest degree the trustworthiness of these remarkable writings. More, while discoveries are now being made more rapidly than ever, each one that has any bearing at all on the Biblical record only provides additional corroboration of its statements.

## THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS

A third method of determining the reliability of these ancient writings, especially for those who believe in Jesus Christ, is to become acquainted with His view of these writings. It certainly comes with convincing significance to those who look to Him as Lord and Master to learn that He regarded the Old Testament writings as infallible truth. Indeed this is made so plain that one conclusion alone can be reached: If the Old Testament is not true, then Christ himself was altogether mistaken, and hence cannot be looked on as divine. Christ and the Bible stand or fall together. But neither will ever fall.

It is not sufficient to reply to this by saying that Christ did not know what modern scholars have in recent years claimed to discover about the Old Testament. Or that He was not chiefly concerned with historical questions anyhow, but only with divine principles and doctrines of truth. These very divine principles and doctrines are involved in the historical statements of the Old Testament. And it is quite likely that every "modern" position which seeks to undermine the reliability of the Old Testament was quite well known to Him. He certainly had ample opportunity to learn all these modern views, for "modernists" continually dogged His steps and pressed their arguments upon Him. And they disbelieved about the same things that the modernists of today disbelieve, except, of course, the miracles of our Lord, which they were reluctantly compelled to accept because they saw them with their own eyes.

It is claimed by the critics that when Christ emptied Himself, and laid aside His glory, and became man, His human knowledge was limited. They tell us we must take this limitation into account when we consider His statements regarding the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

That Jesus emptied Himself we know. But that this self limitation, mysterious as it is, does not touch the subject before us is made abundantly clear from many facts brought out in the records of the New Testament. These facts reveal the range of Christ's knowledge as a man upon earth.

Nathanael's heart, as he stood under the fig tree, was open to His vision. The coin in the mouth of the fish in the depths of the sea was not hidden from Him. The whole past life of the woman of Samaria, whom He had never seen before during His lifetime, was easily read by Him. He knew that Judas would betray Him. He saw the man waiting on the road with the ass and her foal. He saw the other man with the pitcher of water and knew exactly the spot where His disciples would meet and follow him.

Jesus was the Searcher of hearts. He knew what was in man and needed no one to tell Him. He knew more. The whole invisible realm of angels and devils was open to Him. He said, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat." In all the demoniacs He saw the power of the evil one.

And more. Jesus saw God. Heaven itself was open to Him. "Neither knows any man the Father, save the Son," He said.

This Divine One, who saw the depths of humanity and the whole realm of invisible spirits, who knew God absolutely, who is Himself the truth and light of the world, is the One who testifies, "The Scripture cannot be broken." We can believe such testimony. He was supremely qualified to speak.

Jesus began His ministry by indorsing the miracles of both Elijah and Elisha, the famine of three and a half years, the supernatural sustenance given the widow of Sarepta, the healing of the leper, Naaman. (Luke 4: 24-27)

He declared the very voice of God was in the Old Testament; and consequently, "the Scripture cannot be broken." (John 10: 35) When He was about to close His ministry He directed the minds of His disciples to the prophecies of Daniel, thus indorsing their trustworthiness. (Matthew 24: 15) Following His resurrection He rebuked His disciples for not believing "all things which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, "which includes the whole Old Testament. (Luke 24:25-27,44)

No one can read the record of our Lord's work and words and ministry without being convinced that He accepted the Genesis account of creation and the Flood, the whole record of God's dealings with the Jews, defended as from God what Moses wrote about divorce and every other question, accepted all the writers of the Old Testament as holy men of God "who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

He not merely quoted this or that verse from the Old Testament. His whole attitude towards these writings was one of profound confidence.

And in this He was followed by all His apostles. Paul accepted every statement of these writings as true, believed the record of the creation, the fall, the Flood, every detail of the history of Israel, and based the most vital doctrines of the Christian faith upon



them. Peter did the same, looking upon the narrative of the Flood and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah as serious statements of accurate and reliable history, and even accepting the miracle of Balaam's "dumb ass" speaking in an intelligent voice. (2 Peter 2: 16)

So our Lord and His apostles, the writers of the New Testament, looked upon the Old Testament with profound reverence, constantly used it as authoritative in all matters with which it dealt, referred to Bible names, incidents, records, miracles, or to its deep teaching about God always with an evident conviction that it embodied a divine revelation.

### **SEAL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

A fourth fact that has a bearing on the trustworthiness of these sacred writings is the evident seal and endorsement of the Holy Spirit upon all loyalty to their authority and inspiration. The clear, obvious blessing of the God of heaven rests notably upon those who, in their Christian ministry and service, hold and teach the trustworthiness of the Bible. There are men around all the circle of the globe who are doing outstanding evangelistic and pastoral work, and who cling tenaciously to the inerrancy of the divine Word. And God witnesses by "signs following" to their belief and their constancy. Their belief has not operated as a bar to the grace of God. Blessing has come to them richly as they have used these sacred writings in impressing lessons of spiritual grace, in molding their own methods of service, in obeying the ancient teachings and precepts, and in emphasizing the spiritual value of the Bible.

As any view of the Bible which is to be accepted as true must bear the seal of the Holy Spirit, and as this view of its absolute trustworthiness does bear this determining seal, having been, and being now, abundantly blessed of God, it becomes plain that in this consideration alone we have a convincing demonstration of the reliability of the Holy Scriptures.

### **SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S PEOPLE**

There is an additional test which must be set forth here. It comprises the testimony of the spiritual experience of the followers of God. Truth produces its own verification in the spiritual man. Once bring the divine Word to bear upon the mind, heart, conscience, and will of human beings, and it will carry its own conviction and demonstrate its own reliability and truth. There is a value in every divine truth which, relied upon, always makes its own response to faith, and thus supplies undeniable evidence of its own genuineness. It is this never-failing response to faith which brings any man having this experience to the position of the psalmist when he said, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. Thy Word is very pure: therefore Thy servant loves it." Psalm 119:105,140.

## **B. Its Reliability**

WHEN we come to examine the New Testament there are several outstanding things by which its trustworthiness may be tested. There is first the record of a Character, embodied in a Person, unique in all literature, unknown and unimagined anywhere else. The fact of the Christian Church which can be accounted for in no other way than the one the divine record sets forth; the conversion and ministry of Paul the apostle. The amazing agreement of the New Testament with the Old; the unique claim of this Book to set forth the only true religion in the world; and the singular spiritual power which flows forth from these writings.

Observing these tests in their order we are first struck by the singularity of the Person of Christ. Nowhere else in the world's literature is there a trace of human effort to depict a perfect character. Wonderful as some of the characters have been which have been portrayed for us by novelists, philosophers, dramatists, essayists, and poets, not one of them sets forth, or attempts to set forth, the perfect man or woman.

### **THE PERFECT CHARACTER**

With that fact in mind consider how amazing it is that some Galilean fishermen, not accomplished writers, not literary geniuses, just ordinary men, have done what no others have ever done-depicted the perfect character.

How can that be explained? Did their record create the Person or did the Person create the record? If these men invented this character, the perfect man, Christ Jesus, then we are confronted with a miracle before which other miracles sink into insignificance. It is easier, much easier, to believe the only other explanation of their delineation of Christ: their presentation of His character is true.

We can come to no other conclusion when we analyze the record of His character in detail, as it is set forth by these simple fishermen. One man of all the sons of men has been found to be sinless! How could these unlettered peasants ever come to conceive of such a character? How could they possibly, without divine aid, ever imagine a Person having the amazing combination and marvelous balance of qualities which they describe as being possessed by Jesus Christ, which had never been found or even imagined before or since in any one else? The answer is, They did not create this character; they knew this Man, and wrote of Him just as He was.

The stupendous claims which Christ made for Himself bear on this same point. No one can believe in His morality, His ethics, His teachings, and refuse to believe in the record and claim of His deity. He said He was God. Either He told the truth, or He was an impostor. And no one can believe in the morality, or desire to be counted as a disciple, of an impostor. There is no middle ground that can be taken here. It is ridiculous to take the position that Jesus was a good man and then refuse to believe what He says.

There are those who say they accept the teachings of Jesus, His great moral teachings, His wonderful ethics, and who look upon Him as a great moral leader, but who do not accept His deity. But we will not permit them to hide under such a flimsy pretense. One of the chief teachings of Jesus was that He was the divine Son of God, and all His other teachings have value only as they are viewed in the light of His divine authority.

## **ONE WITH GOD**

Jesus came as God. He did the works of God. He spoke the words of God. He lived the life of God. He claimed to be God. Is His claim true?

Certainly the claims of Jesus are not those of a mere human teacher. He said, “I and MY Father are one.” John 10: 30. He said, “I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.” John 16:28. This certainly implies pre-existence and eternity of being. He said, “What and if you shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before?” John 6:62. He said, “No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man.” John 3: 13. And again He prayed to God, “Glorify Thou Me with Your own self with the glory I had with which Thee before the world was.” John 17: 5.

In these words He claims to have existed with God, “from the days of eternity,” before the world was, before He came into this world nineteen hundred years ago. This is clearly claiming to be God. And when He came into this world, He was God incarnate.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” John 1: 1, 2, 14.

## **JESUS IS THE CREATOR**

Existing with God from the beginning, He it was who made the world, and all created things. Jesus is the Creator.

“All things were made by Him [the Word]; and without Him was not anything made that was made. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not.” John 1: 3, 10.

“In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins: who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature. For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.” Colossians 1: 14-17.

“God has in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds.” Hebrews 1:1,2.

“Thou, Lord, in the beginning has laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Your hands: they shall perish; but Thou remained. And they all shall wax old as does a garment; and as a vesture shall Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but Thou are the same, and Thy years shall not fail.” Hebrews 1: 1012.

## **JESUS CLAIMED PRE-EXISTENCE**

Jesus claimed pre-existence. “Before Abraham was, I AM,” He said. John 8:58. “I came down from heaven.” John 6: 38. “The glory which I had with Thee before the world was.” John 17:5.

Jesus claimed omnipotence. “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.” Matthew 28:18. “All things are delivered unto Me of My Father.” Matthew 11:27. “The Father loves the Son, and hath given all things into His hand.” John 3:35. “Thou has given Him power over all flesh.” John 17:2.

Jesus claimed infallibility. “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.”

Matthew 24:35. In fact He claimed to be the very truth itself. “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” John 14:6.

Jesus claimed to be without sin, and He challenged His adversaries to convict Him of sin. “Which of you convinces Me of sin?” John 8: 46.

## **EXCLUSIVE DOMINION**

Jesus claimed an exclusive kingship over the lives and souls of men. He called upon men to leave everything they had and follow Him alone. He assured them that He would not permit even the closest and dearest ties of nature and blood to release them from the ties which bound them to Him.

He claimed to know God as no other being did or could, with a knowledge that was exclusive and peculiar. “Neither knows any man the Father, save the Son.” Matthew 11:27. “No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” John 1:18.

Jesus claimed to have been sent by God into the world. “I am not come of Myself, but He that sent Me is true, whom you know not. But I know Him: for I am from Him, and He hath sent Me.” John 7: 28,29.

Jesus claimed to possess and give to others everlasting life. “He that believes on Me hath everlasting life.” John 6: 47. “I am the living bread that came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever.” John 6:51.

## **JESUS CLAIMED OMNIPRESENCE**

Jesus claimed omnipresence. “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Matthew 28:20. Jesus claimed power to forgive men their sins, a power that belongs to God alone. “The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins.” Matthew 9: 6.

Jesus claimed that it will be His voice that will raise the dead to life at the resurrection. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.” John 5: 25.

Jesus claimed to be the judge of all men. "For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself; and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also." John 5:26,27.

Jesus makes the stupendous claim that at the day of judgment all nations shall be gathered before Him to account for the deeds they have done in the body. He declares that they are to be accepted by Him or rejected solely on the ground of their attitude towards Him. "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations." And they are judged in accordance with their attitude toward Him. (Matthew 25:31-46.)

### **"SON OF THE LIVING GOD"**

Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, the Son of God. When Peter said unto Him, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus admitted the accuracy of the statement, accepted it as referring to Himself, and declared that on this truth He would build His Church. (Matthew 16:13-18) And it is upon this rock of the divine Son ship of Jesus Christ that the Church is built, and it is because of this fact that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Jesus healed a man who was born blind, who was later cast out by the Pharisees because he professed to believe in Jesus. Later Jesus found him, and said, "Does thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him? And Jesus said unto Him Thou has both seen Him, and it is He that talks with you. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshiped Him." John 9:35-38.

When the high priest at His trial demanded that He tell them plainly whether He was the Christ, the Son of God, Jesus once more claimed to be the Son of God. Matthew 26:63,64.

God the Father also testified to the truth of the deity of His Son. At His baptism there came "a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:17) On the mount of transfiguration there came a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear you Him." (Matthew 17:5) And we have the further record of the Father that "unto the Son He said, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Thy kingdom." (Hebrews 1:8.) Here the Father speaks to His Son, and calls Him "God."

Not only did Jesus make these tremendous claims, but He did mighty works to support them. He performed miracles, healed sickness, cured leprosy, opened blind eyes, unstopped deaf ears, made lame men walk, and brought the dead to life.

### **THE LIVING WORDS OF CHRIST**

He not only did mighty works; He also spoke miraculous words, -words that live to this day. Ordinarily there is nothing so evanescent as words. People use them all the time. There are millions who have talked from childhood to the grave and no single word they ever uttered is remembered. There are other millions who are talking now, and everything they say is forgotten within five minutes after they have spoken it.

But Jesus said of His own words, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." He wrote no books. He did not put His words down. His speeches did not appear in public journals. Yet His words have lived, and they live today. They live in the records of His apostles. They live in the literature of the ages. They live in the hearts of His people. And they live because the power of life is within them.

### **THE STUPENDOUS CLAIMS OF JESUS**

Now, sum it all up. Jesus said He came from God. He said He was God. He claimed to be the Messiah, the Son of the living God. He said God sent Him that He came forth from God. He claimed to be God's messenger, to speak God's words. He said He and God were one. He claimed pre-existence, omnipresence, creative power, omnipotence, infallibility, sinless, exclusive dominion over the souls of men, exclusive knowledge of God, to have and to give eternal life, power to raise the dead, power to forgive sins, power to judge the world.

He wrought great signs and wonders and miracles to support His claims, ruling the winds and waves, controlling the fishes of the sea, healing the sick, casting out devils. And then He claimed that the words He spoke were given Him of God, that they would outlast the world, and would judge men at the last day.

These things are true. They have been proved true. They have demonstrated their truthfulness. The words of Christ have endured. They are here today. They will continue to endure until heaven and earth are no more. Not one of them has failed.

### **THE PROPHECIES OF CHRIST**

Some of the words which Christ spoke dealt with things to come. He stood upon the Mount of Olives and wept over Jerusalem, declaring that the time would soon come when her enemies would lay her "even with the ground." (Luke 19:41-44.) He said there would not be left one stone upon another in Jerusalem. (Matthew 24: 1, 2.) He predicted the coming of false Christs and false prophets, and said that "the desolation thereof [Jerusalem] is nigh." (Luke 21: 20.) He declared the inhabitants of Jerusalem should fall by the sword, and "be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles." He spoke of nation rising against nation, kingdom against kingdom. He spoke of famines, earthquakes and pestilence to take place. He told of the abounding iniquity, the waxing cold of the love of many, the affliction which should come upon the faithful, and of their final deliverance from the enemy when the city should fall.

In fact, there is no feature of Jewish history from that time to the present that He did not foresee and foretell—the horrors of the siege of Jerusalem, the overthrow of the city, the slaughter and dispersion of the people, the false christs and prophets which should arise, the scattering of the Jewish people among all the nations of the earth, all of these were faithfully portrayed by Jesus, the rejected Messiah.

And every one of them, without exception, has come to pass exactly as foretold by Him. His words have lived.

Jesus himself was despised and rejected, and given up to be slain by wicked men. But the generation addressed did not pass until Jerusalem was overthrown. The chosen nation was rejected of God, and scattered to all the countries of earth. And there has not been a year since His words were spoken that the dispersion, the captivity, the oppression of His ancient people, their deception by false prophets, their varied persecutions, have not borne the most positive and infallible witness to the truth of the words that Jesus spoke.

## **THE TESTIMONY OF THE APOSTLES**

Not only the testimony of Christ himself, the testimony of His Father, the evidence of His works and His words, witness to the deity of Christ, but the other writers of the Bible unite in giving Him a pre-eminent place.

Paul declared that “in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” (Colossians 2:9) He also declared that God “hath put all things under His feet.” (1 Corinthians 15:27.) He declares it to be the purpose of God in the fullness of time to “gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him.” (Ephesians 1:10) He tells us that God has “set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only, in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet.” (Ephesians 1: 20-22.)

Peter writes that Jesus “is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him.” 1 Peter 3: 22.

John calls Him “Lord of lords and King of kings.” (Revelation 17: 14) He speaks of Him also as “the bright and morning Star.” (Revelation 22:16.) And John reports the words which he heard Christ say of Himself, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.” Revelation 22:13.

From this altogether unique record, as set forth by Galilean peasants, no serious doubt can arise regarding either the consistency of the picture or the trustworthiness of the record, notwithstanding all that unfriendly critics have endeavored to do during the past century.

It is useless to tell an open-minded scanner of this record that a conception such as this was invented by Galilean fishermen. Credulity will not extend to the degree required to believe such a fanciful theory. That would be more of a miracle than anything recorded on their pages. No, these writers of the New Testament never created such a character as they portray in their record. The Character created the record.

## **C. Its Reliability**

IF THE records of the New Testament are not trustworthy, there is no possible way of explaining the Christian Church. Its very existence constitutes what amounts to an absolute demonstration of the reliability of the Bible.

Among all the institutions established in the world there is not another one like the Church of Christ. Before assailing its foundations, its enemies would do well to give some study to its origin, its nature, and its construction.

It cannot be explained on other than supernatural grounds. It certainly is not a human institution. It bears within itself the evidence of its divine origin. It cannot be overthrown by men or devils. “The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

There is a power in the Church inexplicable to its enemies. And that power has been constant and unfailing over a period of nineteen hundred years. It has bound the members of the Church together by forces beyond the power of the human mind to estimate. It has laid upon the brotherhood of Christians obligations which have been paramount to every earthly obligation. A bond more potent than any ties of blood, than any of the charms of pleasure, than the authority of kings, than any and all motives, from the highest to the lowest that sway the minds of men, has controlled them.

Through all these nineteen centuries there have been members of this mysterious brotherhood of the Church who have put aside earthly ambition, and suppressed every appetite, desire, passion, and hope that has been contrary to the mystic influence that has swayed their souls. This strange power has changed enemies into lifelong friends. It has, in an instant, made friends of those unknown to one another before.

It has linked in closest sympathy individuals of different dispositions, tastes, customs, manners, habits, and culture. It has caused men to yield their dearest ambitions and highest hopes to go forth as strangers in unknown lands. It has separated them from fellowships and associations in: which they have found the keenest delight. It has sent them far from home across the seas, traversing deserts and waste places, their feet pressing the sands of every shore, building their homes in far-off islands, climbing Alpine and Andean heights, making their dwelling among savages and cannibals. It has sent them out from homes of luxury and ease to endure hardship, poverty, and toil. It has given them courage to brave the cold of the Arctic Circle and the burning heat of the tropics; it has made them cheerfully endure hunger, thirst, reproach, and every kind of hardship, until with a smile and a song they have suffered scourging, chains, imprisonment, and death itself.

And all this they have done, not because they have been reckless adventurers, indifferent to their own interests. On the contrary they have been men of prudence, wisdom, understanding, and the highest culture, fitted to fill the most exalted positions in social life. They have turned their backs upon the delights of home and the love of friends to confront the malice of foes; and they

have done all this, not from any motives which ordinarily influence men. It has not been for honor, or grandeur, or personal gain, or fame.

For many, many centuries this has been going on. It is going on now. There are still leaders to be found for forlorn hopes, and thousands ready to step into the broken ranks when a hero goes down. For ages they have fought on and on, without having won either wealth, or honor, or power. Toil, conflict, affliction, and death have been their portion, hunted through life, hated and defamed in death.

### **UNDER WHOSE COMMAND?**

Can their enemies explain it? Let them say what mighty force has bound this brotherhood together, what mysterious power has sent them into the world and held them true and steadfast through the passing centuries, under whose command they have gone, and under whose direction they have acted. And let those who attempt to answer remember that the members of this brotherhood spurn human authority in the highest concerns, that they do not bow to any ruler's orders, that emperors have never awed them, that monarchs have never controlled them, that warriors have never frightened them. How, then, can they be accounted for? From what motives do their actions spring, what has drawn them from all earthly associations and made them such a mighty power in the world?

### **THE ABSENT LORD**

Stranger, and more unaccountable still! They have a Commander, a Leader-but they have never seen Him nor heard His voice! During all these nineteen centuries He has been the "absent Lord," having taken His journey "into a far country," and in all that time He has not made one single appearance. But His influence has never diminished, and His word is still clothed with mighty power.

But not yet is the wonder ended. This Commander is no great historic conqueror, no ruler of millions of warriors, with an iron cross on His breast.

Ah, who, then, is He? One entirely without wealth or prestige, a poverty-stricken, despised Jew, laboring with His hands in a carpenter shop, a person whose very existence is doubted, whose authority is denied, whose words seem to many as idle tales, whose very birth is discredited, and who went to His ignominious death as a malefactor. And this Man promises poverty, offers suffering and death, foretells reproach to His followers, and makes the loss of all things one of the conditions of fellowship with Him.

Nineteen centuries ago, this Man, standing on the slope of the Mount of Olives, speaking to a few poor fishermen and lowly toilers, quietly and seriously gave utterance to amazing words. He said: "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth., Go you therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Matthew 28:18-20.

It is this word, spoken so many centuries ago by an obscure Jew to a little group of laboring men, that is the warrant, the obligation, and the marching orders of this mighty brotherhood. It has held them steady in their allegiance, true to their loyalty, devoted to their Master's service. To doubters, to scoffers, to deniers, both in and out of the Church, it is the word of a dead Jew who has not been seen for nearly two thousand years. To them it is an idle tale, a dream, a fancy.

### **WIDE SWAY OF THE NAZARENE**

But that Word has power today. Tens of thousands of men who never saw that Leader are ready now to risk life itself to carry out His word. No monarch ever lived on earth who had a sway so wide, so grand, so glorious, as that of this despised Nazarene.

What manner of Man, then, is this, whose very whisper stretches over twice a thousand years of history, whose quiet command, spoken to a group of lowly toilers, rolls through the ages and centuries to the end of time, penetrating hearts, convicting consciences, controlling minds and ruling the lives of such millions of men as conquerors never dreamed of?

Surely such power is more than human. Surely the One who spoke such words is more than man. Standing on Olivet, He has dominated the Christian centuries. His influence has made and unmade kingdoms. He has "lifted with His pierced hand empires off their hinges, and turned the stream of centuries out of its channel, and still governs the ages." Jean Paul Richter.

Only on supernatural grounds can His power be explained or accounted for. He is a supernatural Man, not of the "earthly," but "the Lord from heaven."

And even this does not tell it all. There is more to add to the explanation. The conquerors of history wielded mighty power, and influenced millions of men, while they lived. But they are dead. And their power and influence are ended. But Jesus, the great Commander of the Church, is not dead! He is the living Christ. And He is alive forevermore. It is because He imparts His own glorious life to His word and His people that His Word has power, and that His Church cannot be overthrown even by "the gates of hell."

It is, therefore, or ought to be, no source of surprise that the enemies of the Word of God and of the Church of Christ deny and assail the fact of Christ's resurrection. If Christ were not raised, there would be no Christian Church. It is here that the question of the trustworthiness of the Bible comes in.

Few today attempt to deny the fact of the birth of Jesus. Some question that He was born of a virgin, but not that He was born. No one denies today the fact of the death of Christ. Some question that it was a substitutionary death, but not that He died.

But that is not enough to explain the existence of the Christian Church. The Church did not result from His birth, His life, or His death, and none of these great facts can account for it. The fact that Jesus was born did not create the Christian Church. He might

have been born, even miraculously, and have accomplished all the wonders attributed to Him, and have died in the way recorded in the Sacred Writings. And if that were all, there would have been no Church.

### **THE DISCIPLES HOPES DESTROYED**

As a matter of fact, His death brought an end to the hope of His followers which had been created by His birth, His life, and His miracles. While His death did not change their love for Him, it did practically destroy their belief in His Messiah ship. They had looked forward while He lived to His heading a great movement which would develop into the kingdom of God. At His death they abandoned these hopes, and their glowing expectations were buried with Him in Joseph's new tomb.

It was a dreary Friday night after the crucifixion. It was a hopeless Sabbath. And then on Sunday morning, not to greet a living Christ, but to anoint and weep over a dead Christ, they returned to the tomb, to say a last farewell to hope.

### **BELIEF THAT CHRIST WAS RAISED**

In the morning they were hopeless. By night they were a group of men and women holding a belief that has turned the world upside down, and still dominates the minds of men. That belief is the belief that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead.

The resurrection of Christ is denied today, and by those who claim the name of "Christian." Such need to give an explanation of the existence of the Christian Church. It cannot be explained on any other ground than the fact of Christ's resurrection.

Those early disciples believed that they had seen Him. That belief transformed them from a group of discouraged, disheartened, depressed, dejected, hopeless men and women, into such a vital, powerful, resistless force—that the strongholds of paganism crumbled before their cry of "Jesus and His resurrection."

From that day to this, through all the generations intervening, and in all countries and climes, that message has been repeated with tremendous power, winning believers by the million who have clung to this truth so tenaciously that they have been willing to part with life itself before yielding their faith. And today this message is being preached more widely than any other truth in the world.

## **D. Its Reliability**

CHRISTIANITY has existed in the world for many centuries. What created it? There can be only one answer. This reliable Old Book gives it: Christ and His resurrection.

There would have been no Christian Church if the early disciples had not believed that Christ was raised. It was the belief in that resurrection which brought the Christian Church into existence, established it among men, and has maintained and increased it ever since.

Were those men mistaken? Did they believe something that was not true? Did they accept something which cannot be demonstrated?

It will be said, and most truly, that it does not constitute proof of Christ's resurrection to prove that the Church resulted from the belief in that resurrection on the part of the early Christians. They may have been deceived and mistaken. The belief may have created the Church. But is the belief itself based on fact?

It is true that the very fact that the Christian Church with its unsurpassed moral teachings and spiritual principles grew out of a belief in the resurrection of Christ is in itself strong evidence of the accuracy of that belief, and is in itself testimony to the fact of the resurrection. Delusions do not have the power to establish and maintain such a system as Christianity. But is there other evidence than this to the credibility of this stupendous truth?

### **FACT NOT THEORY**

If the resurrection of Christ be a fable and not a fact, one question clamors for a solution. How did the apostles, who certainly must have known whether they were telling the truth, persuade such multitudes of Jews and pagans, to believe their story of the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus?

The apostles could not possibly be deceived themselves. They knew whether they were telling the truth or lying. They unitedly and solemnly and most earnestly testified that they had seen Christ after He was risen from the dead, that they ate and drank with Him, that their hands handled His body, that they conversed with Him during forty days, that they saw Him go up to heaven. If these things were not true they knew they were lying when they said them. They told them for the truth.

Here is no matter of doctrine about which men may differ in opinion. Here are matters of fact—matters about what men say they saw, and heard, and felt—matters about which no man in his right mind could possibly be mistaken. John writes: "That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you." 1 John 1:1-3.

Such is their language. Either it is true, or they lied. They could not have been mistaken about it. Either they did see what they said they saw, or they lied when they said they saw what they did not see. Their testimony must either be taken as the truth, or rejected as a falsehood. It is utter and complete nonsense to talk about hallucinations and powerful impressions produced upon their minds by a fervent religious experience. Such hallucinations might come to one person, but not to a whole group. And we are not referring to impressions produced upon their minds, but impressions produced upon their eyes, ears, and hands. Either these men did eat and drink and talk with Jesus after His resurrection, or they lied when they said they did.

If they lied, and these things are not true, and Jesus did not rise from the dead, then we are compelled to accept a miracle just about as great as His resurrection would be. These few despised Jews, without power or prestige, went into all the provinces of the Roman empire, to men of other races and heathen religions, and other languages, and persuaded them to believe this lie-if lie it be-not by scores, or hundreds, or thousands, but literally and ultimately by millions, and of all ranks, of both sexes, young and old, natives of the provinces and Roman citizens, even some in the very entourage of the Emperor.

They persuaded Roman citizens to believe this lie when to believe it was to suffer persecution, ridicule, and death. The whole power of the empire was against them. Nothing could be more absurd in the eyes of the philosophical Greeks and Romans than to speak of the resurrection of the body. No plan could be devised more certain to arouse the fury of the pagan priesthood than to introduce the worship of another God, one Jesus, a Jew. Then, too, the most degraded criminal who dies in the electric chair could not be more contemptible to us than the crucified malefactor was in the eyes of the Roman people.

#### **CONVERSION OF THE HEATHEN**

And yet during these early centuries millions of pagans renounced their idolatry, gave up their heathen sacrifices and the rites of the Os, and forsook their temples, to believe this alleged lie. This is in no wise mythological or doubtful. It is an established historical fact.

And these converts from paganism embraced this new religion at a fearful cost. It did not increase their wealth or obtain for them a higher social or political prestige. On the contrary, every one who renounced paganism and professed the name of Christ knew very well that he must suffer for it. They were plainly told the result, and they candidly considered the cost. They were warned of the "fiery trials" they would have to endure. They knew of the torture and public execution of others, both men and women, who had embraced Christianity. Hence the terms of discipleship were well known to the whole world. Yet in the face of such dangers, "great numbers of persons, of both sexes, and of all ages, and of every rank," as Pliny wrote to the Emperor Trajan, accepted this lie, if lie it be.

It would be easy to understand how a mere theory of religion, unconnected with practice, involving no change in life, may be readily received by those who care little for any religion, provided it brings no suffering or inconvenience, and offers an avenue for the gratification and indulgence of fleshly lusts, passions, appetites, and ambitions. But this is not the case in the acceptance of Christianity. It demands clean hearts and pure lives. It denounces an indulgence of the flesh. It requires the most rigid virtue and morality.

Thus their new worship required of the heathen a great departure from the religion they had been reared in, and demanded a still greater departure from their former mode of life. The moral codes of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle permitted lying, thieving, adultery, and murder. To those who were raised under such codes it is scarcely possible even to imagine how unattractive and unpopular would be such teaching as the apostles laid down. Read it, and see. (1 Peter 4:1-5; 2:1; 1 John 3:6-8.)

There is nothing desirable to the fleshly nature, nothing that would make any appeal to the natural ambitions of men, in these sharp, stern, strict virtues which Christianity demands of its converts. Here is upheld a standard of morality unknown to the ancient world, and repellant to all the natural passions and lusts of men.

#### **HAS A LIE SPIRITUAL POWER?**

And again, in this connection, we must raise the question, Is there such power in a lie that, if it be well told, it can transform human lives into the semblance of the divine? Does it seem credible that a small group of Galilean fishermen, without wealth, arms, power, or worldly education, could convert millions of lying, thieving, lustful, murdering idolaters, and change them into honest, peaceable, virtuous men, just by telling them an enormous lie?

Does it appear possible that men can concoct such a fraud, and then lie so well, while at the very time they are teaching their converts to "lie not one to another," and warning them that an liar would find their place at last in the lake of fire and brimstone. That these very men, while they were so teaching, lied themselves, lied publicly, lied privately, lied repeatedly, lied while life lasted, lied in the very face of death. That the very business of their lives was to propagate a lie, and they died with that lie on their lips; that such men as a consequence of such lying turned immense multitudes of wicked men to a life of virtue and purity and honesty and truthfulness? Does it, I say, seem credible?

Can we believe that it was the belief of a lie which produced such blessed results? If so, then there is no such thing as truth in the world, nor any use for it. And, besides, those who can believe such a thing reveal a mental credulity far surpassing that of those who believe in the literal resurrection of Christ.

#### **PREDICTED HIS OWN RESURRECTION**

The very fact, therefore, of the past history and the present existence of the Christian Church is strong evidence, not alone of the belief in the resurrection on the part of the early disciples, but of the fact of the resurrection.

But is there other evidence, direct evidence, of the fact of the resurrection? We believe there is. First, there is the fact that, before His death, Christ predicted His resurrection. He plainly foretold His death, but declared He would not remain in the grave. He did this to encourage His disciples, and He did it also to confound His enemies. Both His followers and His enemies plainly understood that He was predicting His own resurrection from death.

On one occasion the Scribes and Pharisees came to Him and demanded a sign that He was the Messiah. His reply was that He would remain but three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. (Matthew 12: 39, 40)

He told His disciples that He would be killed and “be raised again the third day.” (Matthew 16:21) Another time he foretold His death and added, “the third day He shall be raised again.” (Matthew 17:22,23)

On their way to Jerusalem He again told them of His approaching death, and again added, “And the third day He shall rise again.” (Matthew 20:17-19.)

On the night of His betrayal, after He had eaten the Last Supper with them, Jesus once more told them of His resurrection, and their desertion of Him. He said, “After I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.” (Matthew 26: 31, 32)

He told the Jews that they might destroy the temple of His, body, and in three days He would raise it up. (John 2: 19-22)

So the enemies of Jesus were fully aware of the predictions which He had made regarding His resurrection from the dead. And after they had put Him to death they recalled His words, and were afraid of them. They went to Pilate and called his attention to these predictions, and asked him to set a special watch to see that His disciples did not steal His body and make it appear that these predictions were fulfilled. (Matthew 27: 62-65)

The statements of Jesus before He arose that He would arise do not necessarily prove that He did arise. Yet they do have a decided bearing on the fact, and for this reason are introduced here.

## **NUMEROUS APPEARANCES**

Very early on the morning of the resurrection some of the women who were among His followers came to the sepulcher to embalm and anoint His body. They found an empty tomb. But this was not all they found. They found a living Christ. In seeking for an explanation of the empty tomb they were met by an angel who told them what had happened. (Matthew 28:5-9) Some of the women who saw Him that morning are named. Among them were Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James. (Luke 24:10) After this, on the same day, He appeared to two other disciples, one of them named Cleopas, the account of which will be found in Luke 24:13-35. The same day He appeared to Peter, who early that morning had been to the sepulcher with John, and found only an empty tomb. Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5) Then the evening of the same day He appeared to the whole group of His disciples, with only Thomas absent, demonstrating to them that this was no hallucination, by asking them to behold the wounds in His hands and feet, and to handle Him and see that a spirit did not have flesh and bones as they saw Him have. Luke 24:36-43) He then ate a meal with them. Eight days later when the entire eleven were together, including Thomas the skeptical one, He appeared to them all, and told Thomas to use his own proposed test to prove His literal resurrection. (John 20:27) Still later He appeared to seven of His disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and ate a meal with them. (John 21:1-14) Later, He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once. (1 Corinthians 15: 6)

## **SEEN, HANDLED, TALKED WITH**

In fact, for forty days He was seen, handled, talked with and eaten with, and He talked to, and instructed, His disciples in the things of the kingdom of God, and with reference to the establishment and carrying forward of the Church of Christ. (Acts 1:3) In testifying to these things the disciples were testifying to events which could easily be disproved, if they were not true. They were not speaking of things which had happened centuries before, but were then current events.

As a matter of fact, the very manner in which these fearless apostles published their testimony bears every mark of truthfulness. If they had been conscious of lying and deception, then they would have been rather cautious as to where and when they told the tremendous thing they had to tell. Forgery and deception do not stand up boldly and face the world. They skulk and hide and dodge and look for corners and holes. But he that does truth comes to the light.

So these disciples, knowing they were telling the truth, told it in the very streets of Jerusalem. Indeed, they went into the very courts of the temple itself, the most public place of resort of the Jews who had seen Him die on the cross, and in the very teeth of the men who had put Him to death they declared He had risen from the dead.

When brought into court they did not quail. They knew their story was true. And knowing this, they dared, even before the high priest and the council of Israel, to assert that “the God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him.” Acts 5: 30.

## **APPEALED TO THEIR JUDGES**

Would men who were conscious of relating falsehood, or who had any reason to believe their story could be disproved, have dared to call on their very judges to witness the truth of what they said? When Paul was on trial for his life, he appealed to his judge as to one who knew the facts, for, he said, “the king knows of these things, before whom also I speak freely. For I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.” Acts 26: 26.

Would not such appeals and such statements have been contradicted, if the testimony was known to be false, or could have been proved to be false?

It is related that some one asked Emerson the question: “Could you say, ‘I am the resurrection and the life’?”

“Yes,” said Emerson, “I could say that.”

“Well, could you make anyone believe it?”

There is the great difficulty. It is easy to say, but it is not so easy to demonstrate and convince. Jesus convinced men that He was speaking the truth.

## **THE SINCERITY OF THE DISCIPLES**



Nobody denies today that Such men as Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, James, Peter, and the other disciples lived, preached, and were persecuted because they taught that Jesus died and rose again. If these men were consciously telling falsehoods, they must have had some motive for doing so. What was the motive?

Certainly it was not to gain popularity, for what they told was supremely displeasing to the rulers of the Jews who had crucified Jesus, and who had every disposition to treat the disciples in a similar manner. It was also displeasing to the Roman rulers, for to preach another king, one Jesus, was to bring against them the whole power of the empire. It could not please the Grecian philosophers, for nothing could be more absurd to them than to preach the resurrection of the body. It would not please sensual men, for it called for the crucifixion of the fleshly lusts and passions. There could be no design for making money of it, for the new religion made no provision for any such thing. The disciples were practically penniless until the day of their death.

The apostles lived lives of persecution, suffering, and hardship for the truth they taught. The last and most convincing testimony which any man can offer for the truth of a statement is to suffer rather than deny it. The disciples did not need to suffer. They might have escaped persecution by abstaining from preaching Christ and His resurrection. But they cried, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

They were placed in bonds, they were whipped, they were stoned, they were killed. And yet to their last breath they continued to teach the resurrection of Christ. Men who know they are lying do not so. Men can give no higher proof of their honesty, their sincerity, and their truthfulness, than lives such as these. They can do no more than seal their testimony with their blood. This the disciples did. And men who do this are not to be charged with doing it to uphold a lie, an intentional lie. It is easier, far easier, to believe in the resurrection of Christ than to believe the disciples lived such lives and died such deaths to uphold a lie which they knew to be a lie.

No, at least the disciples believed what they taught. They have given the highest proof of that. And they could not have believed it if they had stolen His body away. Therefore they did not hide His body. They believed He was raised.

The gospel is not a collection of dogmas, but rather a relation of facts. The disciples did not preach the death and resurrection of Jesus because they had read them in a creed, but because their own eyes had seen those things. They lived lives of toil, of purity, of hardship, of poverty, of suffering, while preaching these truths to the world. They died painful and shameful deaths as martyrs for their gospel. These things are admitted. And I ask, "What more could either God or man do to convince men of the truth?"

One of the most reliable witnesses to the fact of the resurrection of Christ from the dead was Paul. His account was among the earliest written and about the most carefully arranged. It will be found in the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians. In reading his testimony to this historical fact it should be borne in mind that the writer had been a bitter opponent of Christ and the Church.

There are men today who speak against Christ, who write against Christ, who hate Christ, and who work against Christ. But none of them hate Him so ardently as did the raging Jew, Paul. He devoted his life to the extermination of an who followed Christ, and to the uprooting of the Christian faith. He sought and received credentials for the purpose of persecuting Christians to the death, and went about "breathing out threatening and slaughter."

Then suddenly Paul was completely changed. And he says the change was wrought in him because he had seen Christ alive, and talked with Him. He became a flaming firebrand for Christ, carrying His evangelist to all the provinces of the Roman Empire. One of the profoundest intellects the world has ever seen was convinced that Jesus was raised from the dead, and he devoted all his life that remained to preaching the great truth to all who would listen.

## **SIX DIFFERENT APPEARANCES OF CHRIST**

Paul lists six different appearances of Christ after His resurrection. After speaking of His death, he says, "He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures: and that He was seen of Cephas [Peter], then of the twelve: after that, He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once. Of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, He was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." 1 Corinthians 15: 4-8.

This testimony was given at a time when Paul was nearer to the time of the resurrection than we are to the Spanish-American War. There were plenty of men alive who knew all the facts, and who, if Paul's account had been false, could have refuted him with ease. But there was no refutation. One was not even attempted. One has never been made.

## **TESTIMONY OF THE OTHER DISCIPLES**

Not only Paul, whose writings compose a large part of the New Testament, but also the other disciples testify to the fact of the Lord's resurrection, and their account cannot be lightly swept aside. Indeed, one of them, Luke, is recognized as one of the most reliable historians in the world. He takes great pains to put in every fact that has any bearing at all on the subject matter of his story, and which will serve as a help to anyone who cares to check up on his statements. No man who is conscious of writing falsely would begin his account as Luke does.

In this passage (Luke 3:1,2) are twenty historical, geographical, political, and genealogical references in one sentence, any one of which can either be verified or proved to be untrue. The gospels abound with such references. There are hundreds of them in the New Testament. And not one of them has ever been proved to be untrue by any or all of the enemies of the Church from the beginning until now.

A man who knew he was going to write a lie would not have started in such a fashion. He would have known that he would contradict himself before he had gone very far, unless he left out references to facts which might be used to upset his statements. So he

would have written vaguely, and dealt gingerly with known facts of any kind. Writers of forgeries avoid such things as names, dates, places, manners, customs, and every well-known fact.

But the writers of the Bible deal with such a wealth of facts that their story could easily have been verified when first given to the world, or proved to be untrue. It has stood the test of every assault that has been made upon it.

Luke, in the book of Acts, declares that “by many infallible proofs,” Jesus showed Himself alive after His resurrection to His apostles, “being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.” (Acts 1:3.)

One of these “infallible proofs” of the resurrection is the utter failure of the enemies of Christ to account for the belief in His resurrection on any other grounds than that it actually took place. They see plainly that it needs explaining. They grant the fact that the belief in the resurrection is the only way of explaining the establishment and development of the Christian Church. But they are at a loss to provide any other explanation. Baffling every theory they can invent and overthrowing every hypothesis they have been able to advance is an empty tomb outside of Jerusalem. The only explanation that can be given for that empty tomb, the only explanation that truly explains it, is the explanation that is given for it in the New Testament. That is that Jesus was raised from the dead by the power of God, and is now the living Christ.

Proof for that I have already set forth. The records of the Bible are true. There is no more reliable Book in the world than the Bible. But there is other testimony, and I cannot rest until I tell it. And this is the highest of all evidence, and the most satisfying. Nothing verifies the ancient records of Holy Writ as this. I know Jesus was raised from the dead because I have evidence He is now alive. He, Himself, in His own blessed Person, has brought forgiveness of sins to me. He has accepted me as His own. His life is in my heart. No one can have more satisfying, convincing evidence of His resurrection than that. And that evidence He will bring to the inner consciousness of every soul willing to receive it.

### **Its Authority and Power**

THE introduction of sin into this world resulted in uncertainty and weakness. Two things, therefore, are essential to life-knowledge and power.

To supply that knowledge a revelation is necessary. God has supplied that revelation and embodied it in a Book.

By this it is not meant that the Book is the sole revelation God has made. But the revelation God has made in many ways is summed up more fully in that Book than anywhere else.

In nature God is revealed; in providence; in history. Preeminently He revealed Himself in Christ. “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds.” Hebrews 1:1,2.

For the first disciples, Christ’s presence was a complete revelation. We today do not have His presence. We do have His words. These are sufficient for us. For “these are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through His name.” John 20:31.

And “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” 2 Timothy 3: 16, 17.

The authority of the Bible as a revelation of God may be demonstrated in three ways: its genuineness, its credibility, and its divine origin.

It is genuine. The men wrote it who claim they wrote it. There is no fraud about it. For this we have the testimony of the church through all the centuries; the direct testimony of the books themselves; the confirmation of this testimony by the allusions to Jewish, Roman, and Greek history contained in them, allusions which could not have been made accurately by later writers; and by the testimony of the opponents of Christianity through the centuries, who, while opposing the teachings of the Book, have, by their very opposition, confirmed the truth that such writings by such writers existed in their day and were genuine.

The Book is credible. It is worthy to be believed. Other books may be genuine, but not true. The Bible is both. Its credibility is evidenced by the untarnished character of its writers, its agreement with the known facts of history, the unvarying beneficial and helpful effects of its contents, and the corroboration of archeological research. Of all the discoveries of archeology, not one has been in conflict with the Bible, or proved it untrue.

### **OF DIVINE ORIGIN**

The Bible is of divine origin. That is the only possible conclusion an observer could arrive at from its infallible accuracy in prediction and prophecy. From its conception of the Person of the Lord Jesus, with His superhuman balance and combination of qualities and the sinless perfection of His character; from its, unvarying effects on human life in all centuries, in all races, in all places, in all conditions, of its teachings.

And this last is the great and determining test. “By their fruits you shall know them.” If you want to know the divine or human character of a religion, look at what it does. If you want to know the character of Confucianism, look at China. If you want to know the character of Mohammedanism, look at Turkey and Persia. If you want to know the character of Buddhism and Hinduism, look at India. Then look at Christianity, and the unvarying, never-failing effect it has on those who accept it and the lands where it has free course.

It is different. In all these others, man is seeking God. In Christianity, God is seeking man. These others are, all of them, only human aspirations, poor, feeble, inadequate. Christianity is a divine revelation, supplying every human need.

## **ULTIMATE AUTHORITY**

So God has spoken to man. And the revelation of His truth is in the Bible as it is nowhere else. That being so, the question of the ultimate and final authority in religion is settled. The last and supreme word concerning God, man, life, and eternity has been spoken. That supreme authority is the Bible.

This does not agree, I know, with the teachings of the schools. There are those who would have us believe that the source of authority is in human reason. I would not depreciate reason. It is valuable and altogether indispensable. It is necessary in order to test the claims of any professed revelation. It is necessary in order to receive the revelation thus tested. But it is not the source of authority.

Man's reasoning faculties have been affected by the fall. Sin has unsettled their delicate balance and accurate functioning. Absolute reliance cannot be placed on their operation. And were this not so, there is such a thing as truth and reality entirely apart from, and independent of, reason. Truth is not what I believe. Truth is not even what I know. Truth is fact. I may not believe it or know it. But it is there nevertheless, waiting to be discovered and believed.

Truth does not depend on the unsettled and changing opinions of men. It was truth before it was believed. It remains truth whether it is believed or not. Reason does not originate it or create it. Consequently, reason is not a source.

Others would have us believe that the Church is the source of authority. But that is not true. The Church, rather than originating truth, is the product of truth. It came into existence by accepting divine revelation. It is not the source of that revelation.

No, it is in the Bible that we have the source of authority. The Bible embodies and preserves the revelation of God in its clearest, its purest, its fullest form. It is true, and it contains the truth. In it we possess the best available form of God's revelation to man.

## **NEAREST APPROACH TO ABSOLUTE RELIABILITY**

The reason that a book seems essential to the maintenance and permanence of religion is that literature is the nearest approach that can be made to reliability. Written truth possesses qualities that neither reason or the Church can possibly have absolutely. It has durability that enables it to stand the test of time; universality that makes its appeal to the whole world; permanence, that makes it supremely valuable for humanity; and purity that cannot be assured by any other method.

The authority of the Bible is supreme. It is above reason. Not that they necessarily conflict, but the Bible is the light of reason, of human thought; it comes from God. Reason may be, should be, employed upon it. Reason examines its claims, weighs its evidence, tests, sifts, inquires, and studies, but the moment it has become convinced, it accepts the truth, and then takes a subordinate place, and makes the Bible, the revelation of God, supreme. Thus reason demonstrates its reasonableness.

The authority of the Bible is supreme. It is above the Church. The Church is a witness to the Bible; it is not its author. It is a keeper of the Bible; it is not its maker. The Bible is the law of the Church-its God-given law.

## **NOT "BIBLIOLATRY"**

No, this is not "Bibliolatry." We do not interpose the Bible between ourselves and truth. We use it as a channel to learn the truth which is embodied in it. We do not interpose the Bible between ourselves and Christ. We employ it as a medium by which to come to Christ. When I desire to study the stars and use a telescope for that purpose, I do not interpose the telescope between myself and the stars. I use it as a medium. And thus it becomes a help to me, not a hindrance.

The Book is not bowed down to because it is a book. Reason is not repudiated because it is reason. The Church is not set aside because it is a Church. The situation is merely this: We want the best available form of the revelation of God to man. And we have this in the Bible and nowhere else. Thus the Bible becomes our final and supreme authority.

This authoritative Book carries a vitalizing power with-it wherever it goes. Out from it flows an energy and an influence which changes lives, transforms human character, gives strength to the weak, imparts courage to the depressed, and brings hope to the dying. In brief, the Bible is a real dynamo of spiritual power.

Nor is this to be wondered at, for "where the word of a king is, there is power." Ecclesiastes 8:4. And this is the word of a King, the King of the universe Himself. The Bible, therefore, is clothed with vital, life-giving power. Its words are living words, having in them a glowing energy and a heavenly brightness which makes all other literature cold and dead in comparison.

## **KINGDOMS PERISH; THIS BOOK REMAINS**

The Bible is old, but it has not grown feeble and weak. Its power grows as the years go by. Kingdoms perish, but it remains. It outlives its enemies, marches in triumph over the graves of its critics while the broken weapons of those who have assailed it lie broken and impotent all about it, shattered by its impregnable might.

And is this not a fulfillment of the word of Christ: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away"? Matthew 24: 35. The empire of Caesar, then dominating the world, is gone. The pride of the Pharaohs is fallen. Tyre is a rock for bleaching fishermen's nets. Sidon has scarcely left a relic of its one-time glory. But the word of Christ still endures. It speaks today with undiminished power. It spreads-through the world with unimpeded speed. Every weapon formed against it has perished. All things which threatened to extinguish it have only aided it. It proves every day how transient is the noblest monument man can build, and how enduring is the least word which God has spoken.

Many a grave has been dug to bury it in. Many a fagot has been lighted to burn it with. Many a Judas has betrayed it with a kiss. Many a Peter has denied it with an oath. Many a Demas has forsaken it. But it has passed down the centuries unharmed, its

influence and power growing as the years go by. Its prophecies are still testifying to its divine foreknowledge. Its promises are still bringing comfort and strength to millions. Its invitations are still being accepted by millions who are thus finding peace and forgiveness.

Its words are spirit and life. How different that is from every human product! Milton's "Paradise Lost" is poetry. Shakespeare's writings are drama and tragedy; Cicero's writings are eloquence. But Christ's word is life. "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

Single sentences from God's Book have humbled proud spirits; bound up broken hearts; dried up tears of bitterness; replaced sorrow with joy. Other voices leave only distorted echoes behind them. This voice leaves an impression that never fades. It imparts life. Through it men are born again.

### **TRANSCENDS RACE AND NATIONALITY**

Filled with living energy, pointed with penetrating power, are the words of the Bible. "The word of God is quick [living], and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Hebrews 4: 12.

The influence of this Book on human lives has been constant and unvarying through the centuries, and quite independent of race, culture, tradition, or national characteristics. It has enabled minions to rise above their sufferings and find satisfaction and rest in God, to live lives of gentleness and goodness, to bear the scorn of the world while remaining devoted to God, to be an influence for righteousness and truth in every part of the earth.

The Bible has in it a power which enables it to transcend the bounds of race and nationality. Hated as the Jews have been and are by all nations, the Hebrew Scriptures have something in them so far above anything the Jews could have imported to them, that they have passed from race to race, and from people to people, broken through all racial and national barriers, migrated without violence into new regions of the world, and found a home among savage tribes and various ancient and modern nationalities, which have been separated by every conceivable difference of climate, government, customs, culture, development, and religion. Everywhere its influence has been the same.

### **MULTIPLIES ITSELF**

The Bible has had, and has now, the power of multiplying itself and of impelling men to produce enormous masses of literature about it. Altogether astonishing is the ceaseless activity of men in translating, teaching, explaining, interpreting, propagating, and defending this Book. Every succeeding generation, each race, community, or nation that falls under the fascination of the Book, seems smitten with the same incurable contagion of doing for or against this Book what it would not dream of doing for or against any other book in the world.

It stirs men up and moves them to intense activity. It induces them to encounter every form of peril, and to make the most gigantic sacrifices just to get the mere chance of preaching it; it moves them to undergo the most enormous labors in order to translate it into difficult and barbarous languages. It impels them to submit to the most arduous drudgery in order to reduce spoken languages to written form so that the Book can be made to speak in these languages.

### **HAS STIMULATED OTHER WRITING**

This one Book, just the smallest part of what is known as the literature of the world, has attracted to it, and had concentrated upon it, vastly more thought, and has called forth more works, explanatory, illustrative, apologetic, upon its text, its meaning, its exegesis, its doctrines, its history, its geography, its ethnology, its chronology, its evidences, its inspiration, its origin, than all the rest of the literature of the world put together.

In addition to the great multitudes of books in favor of the Bible, there are great numbers against it, attempting to refute its teachings and overthrow its claims, denying its truth, denouncing its doctrines, directly or indirectly opposing its influence, and correcting its followers. If they could all be collected from the earliest times to the present day, they would make an immense library.

If they could all be collected into such a library, and then a little table could be moved in, and the Bible placed on it, no more astonishing exhibit could be made of the power of the Bible. Shelf after shelf, tier after tier, room after room, floor after floor, of books written to prove that small Book untrue, dead, mistaken, and of no particular use or value! And yet all that has been written is not yet considered enough, but other books of a similar nature are being produced today with feverish haste to destroy the influence of the Bible.

And all the while the Book itself has never answered back, never taken its own part, never made any explanation or rejoinder. It passed along the ages in majestic silence, saying not one thing except that which it has always said, speaking no word but what it has always spoken, taking no notice of the tumult it creates, taking no part in the controversies it arouses. But it survives both friends and foes, and continues to give its testimony through the passing centuries. Its enemies die, pass away, and are forgotten. It lives, and grows in power.

### **FILLED WITH DIVINE ENERGY**

Yes, the old Book is filled with divine energy and power. Its words live because it is the word of the living God. And it should always be remembered that it is not merely the living Word, but life-giving as well. The life of God himself is imparted to the one who believes and appropriates the living word.

## **Its Precision and Accuracy**

CHIEF among the evidences of the divine origin of the Bible is its infallible accuracy and precision, even when speaking of things to come. It is remarkable to be able to ten accurately the things of the past, but when predictions of the future are made, which deal not merely with broad, general outlines, but often with minute details, and the things predicted come to pass, this is clear evidence of the possession of divine foreknowledge.

### **FOREKNOWLEDGE BELONGS TO GOD ALONE**

It was in the purpose of God that the Bible should afford, by means of its accurate prophetic utterances, convincing proof that it is indeed the word of the Omniscient One, as the following passage shows: "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else. I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure. Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executed My counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it." Isaiah 46:9-11.

Foreknowledge of the events of the future is an attribute belonging to God alone. To all other gods He makes the challenge: "Produce your cause, said the Lord; bring forth your strong reasons, said the King of Jacob. Let them bring them forth, and show us what shall happen: let them show the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come. Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that you are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together." Isaiah 41:21-23.

This divine wisdom is displayed in a series of connected predictions contained in the Bible, the study of which is calculated to be most convincing with reference to the accuracy and divine precision of the Bible.

For the purposes of illustration we shall take four of the great nations and cities of antiquity, Babylon, Egypt, Tyre, and Judea. We shall notice what God has foretold of each.

### **BABYLON, THE GLORY OF NATIONS**

While Babylon ruled the world, and was the glory of nations, God foretold its fall: "Though Babylon should mount up to heaven, and though she should fortify the height of her strength, yet from Me shall spoilers come unto her, said the Lord." Jeremiah 51:53. "Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah." Isaiah 13:19.

The very nations who would destroy Babylon are named: "Make bright the arrows; gather the shields: the Lord hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes: for His device is against Babylon, to destroy it; because it is the vengeance of the Lord, the vengeance of His temple. Prepare against her the nations with the kings of the Medes, the captains thereof, and all the rulers thereof, and all the land of his dominion." Jeremiah 51:11,28. "Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver; and as for gold, they shall not delight in it. Their bows shall also dash the young men to pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye shall not spare children." Isaiah 13:17,18.

### **CYRUS NAMED BEFORE HIS BIRTH**

The name of the man who would conquer Babylon was foretold nearly two hundred years before his birth:

"Thus said the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held, to subdue nations before him. And I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-hinged gates. And the gates shall not be shut. I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight. I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou may know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob My servant's sake, and Israel Mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou has not known Me." Isaiah 45:1-4.

### **BABYLON'S CONQUERORS, NAMED**

Fulfilling these predictions, a confederacy was formed between the Medes and the Persians, Cyrus taking command of the Persians and bringing them under strict discipline. He then joined forces with his uncle, Cyaxares, known in history as Darius the Mede. They conquered the Armenians, the Hyreanians, the Iydians, the Cappadocians, and other allies of Babylon, and finally marched on Babylon. All this was foretold: "Lo I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon an assembly of great nations from the north country: and they shall set themselves in array against her; from thence she shall be taken: their arrows shall be as of a mighty expert man; none shall return in vain. Put yourselves in array against Babylon round about: all you that bend the bow, shoot at her, spare no arrows: for she hath sinned against the Lord. Behold, a people shall come from the north, and a great nation, and many kings shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. They shall hold the bow and the lance: they are cruel, and will not show mercy: their voice shall roar like the sea, and they shall ride upon, horses, every one put in array, like a man to the battle, against thee, O daughter of Babylon." Jeremiah 50: 9, 14, 41, 42.

At the head of his great multitude Cyrus encompassed Babylon, examined its defenses, concluded there must be a long siege, dug trenches entirely around the walls, erected towers, and made every preparation for a long siege.

The cowardice of the king of Babylon and its inhabitants was foretold: “The king of Babylon hath heard the report of them, and his hands waxed feeble: anguish took hold of him, and pain as of a woman in travail. The mighty men of Babylon have for born to fight, they have remained in their holds: their might hath failed; they became as women.” Jeremiah 50:43; 51:30.

### **SUDDENNESS OF BABYLON’S FALL**

The suddenness of Babylon’s fall, together with the method by which it was taken, the entry under the walls by way of the river bed, the running of the posts to tell the king, the surprise, all were predicted before they took place:

“A drought is upon her waters; and they shall be dried up: for it is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols.” Jeremiah 50: 38. “One post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to show the king of Babylon that his city is taken at one end. How is Sheshach taken! And how is the praise of the whole earth surprised! How is Babylon become an astonishment among the nations!” Jeremiah 51:31,41. “I have laid a snare for thee, and thou art also taken, O Babylon, and thou was not aware: thou art found, and also caught, because thou has striven against the Lord.” Jeremiah 50:24.

“Thou has, trusted in thy wickedness: thou has said, None sees me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it bath perverted thee; and thou has said in your heart, I am, and none else beside me. Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shall not know from whence it rises: and mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shall not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shall not know.” Isaiah 47:10,11.

It was foretold that the gates from the river to the city would be found open: “Thus said the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held, to subdue nations before him. And I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-hinged gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron.” Isaiah 45:1,2.

### **ATTACKED DURING A GREAT FEAST**

It was predicted that the attack would be made during the time of a great feast: “In their heat I will make their feasts, and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice, and sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, said the Lord. And I will make drunk her princes, and her wise men, her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men: and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, said the King, whose name is the Lord of hosts.” Jeremiah 51:39,57.

It was during a great feast that the attack took place and Babylon was overthrown: “Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old.” Daniel 5: 1, 30, 31.

Hearing the noise and the tumult, the king of Babylon sent to inquire its cause. When the doors of the palace were opened, the Persians rushed in, and the king was slain. This was all foretold: “The king of Babylon bath heard the report of them, and his hands waxed feeble: anguish took hold of him, and pangs as of a woman in travail.” Jeremiah 50:43.

The multitude of the soldiers of Cyrus, the noise and tumult in the streets, were all predicted: “The Lord of hosts hath sworn by Himself, saying, Surely I will fill thee with men, as with caterpillars; and they shall lift up a shout against thee.” Jeremiah 51:14. “Therefore shall her young men fall in the streets, and all her men of war shall be cut off in that day, said the Lord.” Jeremiah 50:30.

All the treasures of Babylon fell into the hands of Cyrus. God had declared that they would: “I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou may know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am God of Israel.” Isaiah 45:3.

### **BABYLON TO BECOME TRIBUTARY**

It was predicted that Babylon would fall from an imperial, sovereign city to a tributary city: “Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground. There is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shall no more be called tender and delicate. Take the millstones, and grind meal.” Isaiah 47:1,2.

Later the city rebelled against Darius, at which time its gates were destroyed and the walls reduced. This had all been foretold: “Yea, the wall of Babylon shall fall. Thus said the Lord of hosts; The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burned with fire; and the people shall labor in vain, and the folk in the fire, and they shall be weary.” Jeremiah 51: 44, 58.

Later, Xerxes, king of the Medes and Persians, after his defeating Greece, entered Babylon and rifled the treasures in the temple of Bel. This had not been overlooked by the prophet: “I will punish Bel in Babylon, and I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he bath swallowed up: and the nations shall not flow together any more unto him. Therefore, behold, the days come, that I will do judgment upon the graven images of Babylon: and her whole land shall be confounded, and all her slain shall fall in the midst of her.” Jeremiah 51: 44, 47.

It was foretold that the inhabitants of Babylon should be exiled: “Out of the north there comes up a nation against her, which shall make her land desolate, and none shall dwell therein: they shall remove, they shall depart, both man and beast. Because of the wrath of the Lord it shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate: every one that goes by Babylon, shall be astonished, and hiss at all her plagues.” Jeremiah 50: 3, 13.

### **TO REMAIN PERPETUALLY DESSOLATE**

Not satisfied with these particulars, God declared that Babylon should remain perpetually desolate: “They shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations; but thou shall be desolate forever, said the Lord.” Jeremiah 51: 26. Read also the impressive prophecy of Jeremiah 51:60-64.

Not only should its desolation be eternal, but also complete: “And will send unto Babylon fans, that shall fan her, and shall empty her land. And the land shall tremble and sorrow: for every purpose of the Lord shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant. Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness, a land wherein no man dwells, neither does any son of man pass thereby.” Jeremiah 51: 2, 29, 43.

### **WILD BEASTS OF THE DESERT**

The walls of Babylon were repaired in the fourth century after Christ, in order to make it an enclosure for wild beasts, it having been a hunting ground for the Persian kings. This had not escaped the observation of the ancient prophets, who foretold it: “Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.” Isaiah 13:19-22. “Therefore the wild beasts of the desert with the wild beasts of the islands shall dwell there, and the owls shall dwell therein: and it shall be no more inhabited forever; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation.” Jeremiah 50: 39, 40.

That it would finally decay and disintegrate and deteriorate into great heaps and mounds was also foretold: “Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling place for dragons, an astonishment, and a hissing, without an inhabitant.” Jeremiah 51: 37. An explorer, Mignan, passing among the great mounds which mark the site of ancient Babylon, thus describes them:

“Our path lay through the great mass of ruined heaps on the site of shrunken Babylon. And I am perfectly incapable of conveying an adequate idea of the dreary, lonely nakedness that appeared before us.” Another explorer, Porter, writes: “A silence, profound as the grave, reigns throughout the ruins. Babylon is now a silent scene, a sublime solitude.” Rauwolf writes: “The eye wanders over a barren desert in which the ruins are nearly the only indication that it ever was inhabited.” And Rich writes: “In most of the cavities are numerous owls and bats.” To which Mignan adds: “Venomous reptiles are very numerous throughout the ruins.”

### **TYRE TO BE OVERTHROWN**

Because of its pride, it was predicted that the city of Tyre should be overthrown: “Is this your joyous city, whose antiquity is of ancient days? Her own feet shall carry her afar off to sojourn. Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honorable of the earth?” Isaiah 23: 7, 8.

The name of the man and the name of the power which should overthrow Tyre were foretold: “I will bring upon Tyrus Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, a king of kings, from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people. He shall slay with the sword thy daughters in the field: and he shall make a fort against thee, and cast a mount against thee, and lift up the buckler against thee. And he shall set engines of war against thy walls, and with his axes he shall break down thy towers.” Ezekiel 26: 7-9.

It was predicted that the inhabitants of Tyre would flee to the islands off the mainland from the siege of Nebuchadnezzar. This they did: “Pass you over to Tarshish; howl, you inhabitants of the isle.” Isaiah 23: 6. “Now shall the isles, tremble in the day of thy fall; yea, the isles that are in the sea shall be troubled at thy departure.” Ezekiel 26: 18.

After seventy years Tyre was to be rebuilt and restored, according to the plain prediction of the Bible: “It shall come to pass in that day, that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king. And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that the Lord will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth.” Isaiah 23: 15-17.

Tyre was restored, not on the old site on the mainland, but on an island. This, too, had been foretold: “Be still, you inhabitants of the isle; thou whom the merchants of Zidon, that pass over the sea, have replenished.” Isaiah 23:2. “In their wailing they shall take up a lamentation for thee, and lament over thee, saying, What city is like Tyrus, like the destroyed in the midst of the sea.” Ezekiel 27: 32.

### **DESTROYED AGAIN BY FIRE**

The prediction was made that it would be destroyed again, this time by fire: “Tyrus did build herself a stronghold, and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets. Behold, the Lord will cast her out, and He will smite her power in the sea; and she shall be devoured with fire.” Zechariah 9: 3, 4.

In order to capture the city, now an island, Alexander took timbers and stones from the ruins of the old city and laid them in the water of the sea and made a causeway out to the new city on the island, by which his army took Tyre. And all this was foretold before it happened: “They shall make a spoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy merchandise: and they shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy pleasant houses: and they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water.” Ezekiel 26: 12.

### **PLACE FOR SPREADING NETS**

Though the city was built once again, the prediction was to the effect that it should be eternally destroyed, and become a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea:

“Thus said the Lord God; When I shall make thee a desolate city, like the cities that are not inhabited; when I shall bring up the deep upon thee, and great waters shall cover thee. When I shall bring thee down with them that descend into the pit, with the people of old time, and shall set thee in the low parts of the earth, in places desolate of old, with them that go down to the pit, that thou be not inhabited. And I shall set glory in the land of the living. I will make thee a terror, and thou shall be no more: though thou be sought for, yet shall thou never be found again, said the Lord God.” Ezekiel 26: 19-21.

“ And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea: for I have spoken it, said the Lord God: and it shall become a spoil to the nations. And I shall make thee like the top of a rock: thou shall be a place to spread nets upon; thou shall be built no more: for I the Lord have spoken it, said the Lord God.” Ezekiel 26: 4, 5, 14.

Every detail of these predictions has been exactly fulfilled. Not one of the predictions has failed. Tyre is a great island rock today, inhabited by a few fishermen, who spread their nets there in the midst of the sea, just as was foretold twenty-five hundred years ago by the ancient prophets of the Bible.

## **PROPHECIES OF EGYPT'S DOWNFALL**

Egypt was the most easily defended country in the world when the Hebrew prophets spoke for God. It had ruled the known world, and was the center of the arts, sciences, and idolatries of the world. It had extended its sway over many adjoining countries and maintained its independence for a thousand years.

God declared that it should be invaded, conquered, spoiled, become a prey evermore to strangers, never have a native prince, sink into barbarism, renounce idolatry, and become famous for its desolation.

All of these things, to the last detail, have taken place: “The sword shall come upon Egypt, and great pain shall be in Ethiopia, when the slain shall fall in Egypt, and they shall take away her multitude, and her foundations shall be broken down. I will make the rivers dry, and sell the land into the hand of the wicked: and I will make the land waste, and all that is therein, by the hand of strangers: I the Lord have spoken it. Thus said the Lord God: I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause their images to cease out of Noph; and there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt: and I will put a fear in the land of Egypt.” Ezekiel 30: 4, 12, 13. “It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations: for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations.” Ezekiel 29: 15.

Thus predictions of events which no human sagacity could possibly have foreseen are made in the Bible. And these predictions have been exactly fulfilled in the events of history.

## **THE JEW'S NATIONAL HISTORY FORETOLD**

Standing back at the very beginning of the national history of the Jewish people, Moses, inspired by God, foretold their national history even to this day. These remarkable prophecies are found mainly in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28, with here and there another prediction.

Of the land of Judea God predicted that it would be emptied of its people, and remain uncultivated, retaining all its former fertility, while the people were to be dispersed over all the earth, and yet never lose their distinct national characteristics, nor become amalgamated with their neighbors: “ I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation and I will bring the land into desolation: and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste.” Leviticus 26:31-34. “Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest.” Micah 3: 12.

The cruel and destructive overthrow of the Jews by the Chaldeans and the Romans is foretold in Deuteronomy 28:49. So. The destruction of the cities of the Jews is foretold in Deuteronomy 28:52. The desperate plight of the Jews in these sieges, even to the extent of their eating their own children, is predicted in Deuteronomy 28:53-57. The enormous slaughter of the Jews as a result of these sieges is covered in Deuteronomy 28:62. The removal of the Jews from their own land, and their dispersion and wandering among all nations from that time onward, is all foretold in Deuteronomy 28:63-65. That they would not be totally destroyed, or perish altogether from the earth, is promised in Leviticus 26:44. But that wherever they were they would be in an uneasy condition, restless, uncertain, “oppressed and crushed always,” is foretold in Deuteronomy 28:65,33. That they finally would “become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations,” is foretold in Deuteronomy 28:37.

## **CONVINCING, AMAZING, IMPRESSIVE PROPHECIES**

Has history borne out these ancient prophecies and thus convincingly demonstrated their divine origin? It has.

The Jews have been driven from their own land into eternal exile and wandering. Yet, after enduring more wars, battles, sieges, than any other people have ever had, going through more rebellions, massacres, pogroms, and persecutions; experiencing more years of captivity, slavery, and misery, they have nevertheless not been “destroyed utterly,” and though scattered to the ends of the world, yet still exist a distinct and separate people.

In all countries they have been hounded, fleeced, oppressed, sometimes even to desperation and madness. Everywhere they have come to be hated and despised, becoming literally “a proverb and a byword.” Catholics, Protestants, Mohammedans, and heathen



have alike vilified, abused, and persecuted them. Amazing beyond words is the exact fulfillment of these ancient prophecies regarding the Jews. Given as long as three thousand years ago they are still being fulfilled before our very eyes. They are convincing, amazing, impressive beyond all words.

## **Its Prophecies**

TURNING now to that wealth of predictive Scripture which found its fulfillment in the coming of the Messiah, we scarcely know where to begin, so abundant are these prophecies.

The very center of the testimony of the Holy Scriptures is with reference to the Son of God, the Savior of men. With longing eyes the ancient prophets looked for His coming to earth. The seers sang of Him, the prophets thrilled with the predictions of His coming, the psalmist heralded His advent with intense joy, the priests taught generation after generation the good news of His promised appearance. These prophecies of the coming Messiah are everywhere throughout the Old Testament. They constitute a most convincing array of evidence of the divine origin of the Bible.

This expectation of a whole people of the coming of a great Deliverer finds its source in the first great promise to Eve that her seed should bruise the serpent's head: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her Seed. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shall bruise His heel." Genesis 3: 15.

This conveys a striking picture of a human form planting his heel upon the head of a serpent to crush out its life, while the serpent wounds the heel that slays it.

This brings to our notice that the Deliverer is to be the seed of the woman. It is significant that nothing is said about His being the offspring of the man. The Seed of the woman is to give a deathblow to the tempter, Satan. But He is not to escape unhurt. He will suffer while delivering mankind. "Thou shall bruise His heel."

### **SHILOH, PRINCE OF PEACE**

Before his death in Egypt, Jacob called his sons together to forecast for them their history. Of Judah he said: "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." Genesis 49: 10.

For long ages this has been understood as a prophecy of the Messiah. The scepter has long since departed from Judah. Judah has no longer a lawgiver, a government, or a country. But these were not to pass until Shiloh should come. And they have passed. Then Shiloh, the Messiah, has come.

### **THE PROPHET LIKE UNTO MOSES**

To Moses God said: "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren; like unto you, and will put My words in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which He shall speak in My name, I will require it of him." Deuteronomy 18: 18, 19.

Here is the prediction of a great Prophet having a certain likeness to Moses, clothed with unusual authority as the spokesman for God. To reject His words would bring the hearer into judgment. And this, the apostle Peter declares, was fulfilled in Christ: "Moses truly said unto the fathers, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; Him shall you hear in all things whatsoever He shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Yes, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days." Acts 3: 22-24.

### **THE SUFFERING VICTIM**

To David, God gave a view of Christ on the cross, and David wrote it down in the "psalm of sobs" (Psalm 22). Here is shown a suffering victim (verse 14: "I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint"); His hands and feet pierced (verse 16: "They pierced My hands and My feet"). Stripped of His raiment and partially nude, with the people looking on (verses 17, 18 "They look and stare upon Me. They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture"). They that pass by mock and deride Him (verse 7: "All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head"). His agony is attended with great thirst (verse 15: "MY tongue cleaves to My jaws"); and even His cry on the cross was disclosed to David a thousand years before it was uttered (verse 1: "My God, My God, why has thou forsaken Me?"). The mysterious utterances of this Psalm were unsolved for a thousand years. But when Jesus died on the cross every detail of it was fulfilled.

### **THE VIRGIN BIRTH**

In these ancient predictions, His miraculous birth is plainly set forth. God said to Isaiah: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Emmanuel." Isaiah 7:14. When Jesus was born of Mary, it was not overlooked that His birth fulfilled this ancient prophecy given to Isaiah: "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." Matthew 1: 22, 23.

### **THE DIVINE-HUMAN KING**

To Isaiah was given another prophecy of the coming Messiah: "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." Isaiah 9:6,7.

Here the "Child" who is to be born is to be born to "us"; the "Son" who is to be given is to be given to "us." This suggests His humanity. But He is to be the "mighty God." This declares His divinity. The government is to be on "His shoulder." This states His Kingship.

### **HIS VICARIOUS SUFFERING**

Still another prophecy of Christ was given Isaiah. It includes the entire fifty-third chapter. There are only twelve verses, but in these verses are no less than ten references to the doctrine of vicarious suffering: "He hath borne our grief, carried our sorrows, was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, with His stripes we are healed, the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. Thou shall make His soul an offering for sin, by His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many, and He shall bear their iniquities."

The mystery of this prophecy was never solved until the Lord Jesus, who knew no sin, was made to be sin for us. Centuries later, when Philip the evangelist found the Ethiopian eunuch reading this passage, he told him it pointed to Christ, for he "began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." (Acts 8: 38.)

### **MYSTERY AND PARADOX**

Here, too, in this wonderful prophecy of Isaiah is such mystery and paradox as in itself to point directly to the suffering Messiah and the reigning Savior, Jesus Christ. A root out of dry ground is yet fruitful. Without form or beauty, yet chosen of God; despised by men, yet the appointed Redeemer; Himself suffering unto death, yet sorrowing for others; without offspring, but with a numerous seed; without sin, yet making His grave with the wicked. In life without a place to lay His head, yet buried in the sepulcher of the rich; suffering adversity, but enjoying prosperity; triumphed over, yet triumphing; despoiled, yet despoiling; cut off in the midst of His days, yet prolonging His days; condemned Himself, yet justifying the condemned. Such a bundle of apparent contradictions can point only to One who came down to die, but went up to reign.

### **TIME OF MESSIAH'S COMING**

The time of the first coming of Christ was clearly foretold in prophecy five centuries before His birth. To Daniel was given this definite message: "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks." Daniel 9:24,25.

The commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem is found preserved in the seventh chapter of Ezra. It went forth in 457 BC. From that time to "the Messiah the Prince" there were to be exactly sixty-nine weeks. There are 483 days in 69 weeks. Each of these days represents a year of actual time, according to the meaning of "day" in symbolic prophecy. (Ezekiel 4:6) Adding 483 years to 457 BC brings us to the year 27 AD, the precise time when Jesus was baptized by John in Jordan, when the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove, and the voice of God was heard, declaring: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:17) This was His anointing as the Messiah. Both words, "Messiah" and "Christ," mean "the Anointed One Messiah" being the Hebrew form and "Christ" the Greek. Hence the very time of His coming was definitely foretold.

### **PLACE OF HIS BIRTH**

The exact place of His birth was also foretold: "Thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel. Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting [from the days of eternity, margin]." Micah 5: 2.

Bethlehem was to be the birthplace of Him who was to be ruler in Israel, yet it ought not to be overlooked that while He was to be born in Bethlehem, His goings forth have been not merely from antiquity, but from eternity itself.

### **SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS**

The slaughter of the children, resulting from Herod's jealousy of Christ, is also foretold in the Old Testament: "A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel [Rachel] weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not." Jeremiah 31:18.

The fulfillment of this is set forth by Matthew: "Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not." Matthew 2: 16-18.

### **THE MESSIAH'S FORERUNNER**

The appearance of a forerunner of Christ to herald His coming was predicted: "The voice of him that cries in the wilderness, Prepare you the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." Isaiah 40:3.

This was fulfilled in the work of John the Baptist. "This is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias [Isaiah]." John 1: 19-23.

### **THE MESSIAH'S PREACHING**

The very preaching of Christ was foretold: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek. He hath sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." Isaiah 61:1.

The fulfillment of this is recorded by Luke: "He came to, Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto Him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of Sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised. And He began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." Luke 4: 16-18, 21.

### **HIS TREATMENT ON THE CROSS**

His treatment by cruel men while hanging on the cross was foretold: "They gave Me also gall for My meat; and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink." Psalm 69:21. Matthew records the fulfillment: "They gave Him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when He had tasted thereof, He would not drink." Matthew 27: 34.

### **THE STAMP OF VERITY**

Thus God puts the stamp of absolute verity and indisputable certainty upon the coming of His Son. He leaves nothing to chance. He chooses in advance even the family into which He is to be born. Of the three sons of Noah He chooses Shem. Of the two sons of Abraham He chooses Isaac. Of the two sons of Isaac He chooses Jacob. Of the twelve sons of Jacob He chooses Judah.

He names the very place of His birth. Europe, Asia, Africa, these three great continents, were known to the ancient world. God chooses Asia. In Asia were many countries. God chooses Palestine, or Syria. In Palestine were three provinces. God chooses Judea. In Judea were many villages and towns. God chooses "Bethlehem in the land of Judah," thus putting His finger on a scarcely known village on the map of the world. And there His Son was born long centuries after His birthplace had thus been predicted.

The very time of the Messiah's coming was foretold. There has been a procession of centuries, broken up into many, many years. But with exact precision and absolute certainty the identical year of His coming was foretold.

The value of these ancient prophecies and their marvelous fulfillment is sometimes overlooked. Today, even as they did nineteen centuries ago, men are striking Christ again with the rod, spitting upon Him, passing Him by, deriding Him. Even in the "house of His friends" is He being wounded. Before a dying world He is being crucified afresh. His deity, His virgin birth, His miracles, His expiatory death, His miraculous resurrection, His ascension to heaven, are all being denied by those who profess to speak in His name.

His people should therefore rejoice greatly to be able to vindicate His majesty and dignity by these wonderful Old Testament prophecies concerning Him, and by the circumstantial record of their fulfillment in the New Testament. To every candid mind they are conclusive and convincing.

Certainly the evidence is full and complete that Jesus fulfilled the Messianic prophecies. He was the long promised Messiah. His birth, His life, His miracles, His teachings, His character, His works, His death, burial, and resurrection, and all things pertaining to Him, were in exact accord with the predictions of the ancient prophets.

We have before us in these ancient predictions and their fulfillment multiplied evidences of the divine foreknowledge displayed in the Holy Scriptures. Consequently we have the fullest reasons for believing that "the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Peter 1:21)

### **GUIDED BY DIVINE REVELATION**

It is altogether clear that these ancient inspired men could actually predict the future, and do it accurately. These predictions can be explained on no other grounds than that these men were guided by divine revelation. They were indeed "men of God." They were not impostors or charlatans. They were not self-seekers. They boldly reproofed all who lived in opposition to their inspired instruction, whether kings, priests, or people. They did their work without fee or reward, and indeed, often exposed themselves to persecution and death. They labored neither for gold, or honor, or favor, or ease. They were temperate men, self-denying, patient, valiant for the truth, leaning upon God as their strength, looking to Him alone for their recompense.

These ancient prophets were not gloomy ascetics nor unlettered fanatics. They married and lived among their own people, discharging the ordinary duties of citizens, both in their homes and the society about them. They have left us a literature altogether unique in the history of men. Judge it by any human standard and it stands forth unsurpassed in sublimity, grandeur, and truth. In purity, morality, and loftiness of conception it is not equaled by the literature of any nation in any age.

## **IMPERISABLE AND UNIVERSAL TRUTH**

If we begin this prophetic order with Moses we are taken back eight hundred years before the founding of Rome. The succession of prophets continued over a period of sixteen hundred years and closed with John, when the Caesars ruled the world. Compared with the state of the world about them, the prophets constitute a phenomenon as amazing as the power of prediction which they possessed. The fairest days of Greece and Rome can furnish no heroes, patriots, or teachers of morality comparable for one moment with this long and wonderful succession of holy, disinterested, noble-minded, bold reprovers of vice and preachers of virtue, who lived solely for the glory of God, and the good of man.

Their writings are so imbued with imperishable and universal truth that even today, nearly twice a thousand years after the death of the last of this goodly line, they still influence the faith, touch the hearts, thoughts, and lives of the world's wisest, greatest, and most powerful.

Such men were not deceivers. Imposture could never have exercised a power so enduring. There is but one adequate and satisfactory explanation. It is that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Timothy 3: 16, 17)

Jehovah himself raised up the prophets, inspired them with their doctrines, revealed to them the future, and enabled them to utter predictions far beyond the power of human foresight, sagacity, or conjecture. The fulfillment of these predictions, both in former centuries and in the present times, constitutes a demonstration that they spoke as they were moved by Him who knows the end from the beginning.

## **PROPHECIES OF DANIEL AND JOHN**

Before closing this particular subject of prophecy as an evidence of the inspiration of the Bible, some reference should be made to other astonishing prophecies contained in the Bible, some regarding the nations of old, some regarding individuals, some regarding cities, and some regarding the nations that have existed since the Bible was completed, and even some regarding the nations of today.

The books of Daniel and the Revelation are filled with predictions covering the centuries from the time of Daniel and John to the present. No more helpful study can be urged upon the student of the Word of God than the comparison of these great lines of Bible prophecy with the history of the nations to which they refer.

In the second chapter of the book of Daniel is a prophecy given to Nebuchadnezzar in the form of a dream of a great metallic image, and interpreted by Daniel. The head of this image was of gold, its breast and arms of silver, its thighs of brass, its legs of iron, and its feet and toes part of iron and part of clay.

A careful study of this prophecy discloses the fact that the head of gold represented the first universal empire, Babylon; the breast and arms of silver, Medo-Persia; the thighs of brass, Greece; the legs of iron, Rome; the feet and toes of iron and clay, the modern nations of Europe today. All that was foretold in this amazing outline of the world's history has been most wonderfully fulfilled. The prophecy closes, as most of the great prophecies do, with the prediction of the coming of the eternal kingdom of Christ during the time of the present kingdoms of the world.

## **GREAT EMPIRES OF HISTORY**

In the seventh chapter of Daniel is another great prophecy of the great empires of the world between Daniel's time and the end of human history. Babylon is shown under the symbol of a lion with two wings; Medo-Persia as a bear; Greece as a leopard with four heads. Pagan Rome as a monstrous ten-horned beast; and papal Rome, the opponent of the people and truth and church of God, as the shrewd, cunning, powerful little horn, which would persecute, and slay, and destroy the people of God, and seek to change the law of God. Here, too, the prophecy closes with the triumph of God and the establishment of God's kingdom over all the earth, and the victory of the saints.

In the eighth chapter of the book of Daniel another great line of prophecy begins, this time with Medo-Persia, which is set forth under the symbol of a ram having two horns. Succeeded by Greece as a goat; followed by Rome in both its pagan and papal phases, again as a little horn, which became exceeding great. The opposition of Rome to God and His work and people, the substitution of a human system of ministry and mediation for the ministry and mediation of Christ, the deception of human souls to their eternal destruction, and the final triumph of Christ and the truth, all are clearly and graphically set forth in this prophecy. It continues through chapters nine, ten, eleven, and twelve.

## **PROPHECIES OF THE REVELATION**

In the book of Revelation there is contained prophecy after prophecy covering the Christian era. In chapters two and three there is the prophecy of the seven churches, which covers the history of the true church of Christ during the centuries of the Christian era, beginning with the church as established by the apostles and reaching to the church of today, the whole time between Christ's first and second advents being divided into seven periods.

In chapters five, six, seven, and eight is the prophecy of the seven seals, in which the religious history of the world from the first advent of Christ is foretold. Beginning with the time of the apostles, when the church was pure in faith and life, and "went forth conquering and to conquer," the student is carried through its departure and apostasy from Christ to its fall. There are foretold not only

the counterfeit system established in the papacy, but the Reformation, the remnant church, and finally the church triumphant in the kingdom of heaven.

In chapters eight, nine, and eleven is the prophecy of the seven trumpets, covering the chief political and warlike events of the Christian era, first in the breaking up of Western Rome, then the disintegration of Eastern Rome, and closing the scene with the ominous words. "The nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou should give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Thy name, small and great. And should destroy them which destroy the earth." Revelation 11:18. (See Psalm 2: 8, 9; Daniel 2: 44, 48.)

### **THE UNITED STATES IN PROPHECY**

In the tenth chapter is a prophecy of the closing movement of the gospel which will carry to all the earth the definite message of the Lord's return.

In the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth chapters is another prophecy covering the time of the Christian era, beginning with the Christian church under the symbol of a woman. Setting forth the persecution of Christ and His people by pagan Rome under the symbol of a great red dragon, by papal Rome under the symbol of a ten-horned beast. And dealing with the rise, progress, and destiny of the United States under the symbol of the two-horned lamb like beast, as well as the rise, progress, and glorious triumph of the final message of the gospel of Christ, the great threefold message of Revelation 14.

Chapters fifteen and sixteen contain the prophecy of the seven last plagues, which will bring an end to sinners and the works of man on this planet.

Chapters seventeen and eighteen contain additional prophecies of the closing events of human history, the final fall of Babylon, or apostate religion.

The closing chapters of the book reveal the events of the millennium, the descent of the holy city, the fiery cleansing of the earth, the destruction of sin and sinners, the glorified new earth, and the eternal reign of Christ with His people.

### **PROPHECY DIVINELY GIVEN**

The circumstantial particularity of these numerous predictions, their high improbability at the time they were given, their progressive fulfillment through a series of centuries, and the great variety of the events predicted make it altogether impossible to account for them on any other ground than that they were divinely given. They have proved true in every case and in every particular. Taken as a whole, they prove that only an omniscient God could have inspired the Bible. Only the One who knows the end from the beginning could thus have outlined human history in advance.

## **Its Canonicity**

THE sixty-six separate books of the Bible were not originally published in one volume, for they were produced in different ages over a period of sixteen hundred years. Their collection into one volume is merely a matter of convenience. Each one of the sixty-six separate parts must, therefore, be able to support its claim to a place in the volume which is received as the revealed Word of God. Each one must supply proofs of its authenticity as a part of the Bible.

Or, to approach the matter in another way, if it could be demonstrated that some particular book, now included as a part of the Bible, was not authentic, this would affect, not the whole volume, but only that book, unless, of course, the others specifically recognize it as of divine origin. The credit of the whole Bible would not be destroyed, even if several books were proved spurious. Consequently the enemies of the Bible who have set out to overthrow its claims have taken upon themselves much more of a task than they are likely to recognize. They must demonstrate, not only that the Book as a whole is a fraud, but that every one of its sixty-six parts is without evidence of divine inspiration.

### **WHAT CONSTITUTES THE BIBLE**

But the same principle holds good in the defense of the Scriptures. The believer in the Bible is equally bound to produce and defend the claims of every separate portion of the Scripture, or cast away as spurious that part which cannot demonstrate its authenticity.

It is by no means impossible that books not written by divine inspiration might, by some scheme or by some mistake, come to obtain a place in the sacred volume. Hence it is a matter of the highest degree of necessity for us to determine, not merely that the Bible as a whole is the word of God, and therefore, an authoritative rule of life, but also what constitutes the Bible.

As no one is at liberty to add to, or take away from, the Word of life, so no one should receive as divine what others may have added without authority to the sacred volume, or be deprived of what others may have removed.

It is important, therefore, for every believer in God, according to his own personal opportunity and capacity, to ascertain what books are really entitled to a place in the Bible, and which books should be excluded.

This brings us to a consideration of the canonicity of the books of the Bible, their right to be included as divinely inspired books in the sacred volume. The recognition of these separate writings as possessed of divine authority stamps them as canonical, and the method of their recognition has been called canonization. As the inspired books are the authoritative rule to regulate our faith and practice, they have, as a whole, become known as the Canon of Truth.

The word “canon” is merely the Greek word *kanon* anglicized. It means a rule, a measure. Its usage in the Bible will be seen from two passages where it occurs. “And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.” Galatians 6: 16. “Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.” Philippians 3: 16.

Canonicity, then, means that Holy Scripture consists of that which is measured, or defined, or recognized, or accepted in accordance with a certain definite standard, or rule, and that which, being thus measured and accepted, becomes thereby the standard, or rule, of the Church by which to measure other matters.

What, then, is this “rule,” or “canon,” by which a book is measured, or defined, or determined, as “canonical”? Why have certain books been received while others have been rejected?

Is the antiquity of the manuscripts the determining factor? Do we accept these writings merely because they are old? No. There are older writings which we reject. While the antiquity of this collection of writings entitles them to a high degree of respect, and its transmission to us through so many centuries impresses us with the need of caution before we cast doubt on what is venerable because of its antiquity, this furnishes but one argument in favor of the book, and that not a conclusive one. Mere age does not settle this matter.

### **DIVINE INSPIRATION DECIDES**

Do we accept this collection of books because it contains the truth? Is truth the determining factor which settles the canon? No. There are other books that contain truth, but are not placed on an equality with the Bible. Truth, while it is important, and altogether essential, furnishes only another presumptive argument in favor of the Bible. It is not the decisive thing. The Bible is old; the Bible is true. But that is not all.

Beneath its age, beneath its helpfulness, beneath its truthfulness, is something more, and this is bedrock. It is that this collection of writings, all of them together, and each of them separately, came from men who were supernaturally, divinely qualified both to receive and to convey God’s will to men. That is, the basis of the canon, and consequently the basis of our acceptance of the books of the Bible, is inspiration—because the books came from inspired authors, or through inspired sanction and acceptance.

### **GOD’S AUTHORITY DISPLAYED**

So the underlying, fundamental, indispensable reason for canonicity is the conviction that certain books came from men of God’s own choosing who were divinely inspired to receive and convey God’s will. Each book was clothed with this authority and found its place in the canon by reason of its inspired source. When the books of the Old Testament were collected into one volume, it comprised the writings which Israel accepted on proper evidence as the divinely inspired standard of faith and practice.

Do not permit yourself to be confused here. It was not the decision of the people which determined the canonicity. It was the canonicity which determined the acceptance by the people. The canonicity is not something conferred by the people upon the books. The canonicity is something in the books recognized by the people. The authority was not in the people. It was in God, and it was displayed in the inspiration. The recognition and acceptance by the people was the effect of the canonicity.

So also with the books of the New Testament. They were received as inspired writings. This was the primary standard of verification and acceptance. The ground of their canonicity was not age, or truthfulness, or helpfulness, or reasonableness. Beyond all these, and before them all, and beneath them all, was the divine inspiration displayed in them. All other factors were subsidiary and confirmatory, but not decisive. It is important, therefore, to differentiate between the ground of canonicity and the ground of the conviction of canonicity.

### **REVELATION AND CANONICITY**

It is equally important to understand that canonicity produced a book. It did not produce the revelation contained in that book. Canonicity implies and involves codification. The authority of each book is not conferred by canonicity. That authority is inherent in the book itself, and canonicity is merely the recognition and acceptance of it. The authority would have been there if it had never been recognized or accepted and the book placed in the canon.

Consequently the authority of the Bible is not that of a book, or collection of writings whose canonicity is accepted; it is the authority of a revelation. The revelation did not come into existence as a result of the canonicity; the canonicity came because of the revelation.

It cannot, therefore, be too strongly emphasized that the characteristic, or element, or quality, which determines canonicity is the possession by the book of divine inspiration. It follows, therefore, and should always be kept clearly in mind, that canonicity is not that which gives a book its position as part of the Scriptures, but only that which recognizes that it is a part of the Scriptures.

Canonicity, then, implies a decision based on evidence, and is merely the recognition of an existing fact. The authority of each book is in itself. It is not conferred by any decision outside itself.

### **THE DECISION OF CHRIST**

With these principles in mind we now address ourselves to the question of the canonicity of the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament, and the twenty-seven books of the New Testament.

It would take a volume in itself to discuss the evidence for the inspiration of the thirty-nine separate portions of the Old Testament. There is an easier, but equally as decisive and convincing a method. It is to discover the decision of Christ and His inspired

apostles on the matter of the authenticity and inspiration of the books contained in the Sacred Writings used and read in their time in the synagogue.

While Christ severely censured the scribes, Pharisees, and lawyers of His time for neglecting to obey the Scriptures, and for misrepresenting them and rendering them void by their tradition, He never hinted that they had corrupted them or changed them.

He declared these Scriptures, then in use, to be an infallible standard. (John 5:39; Matthew 22:29) He declared they “cannot be broken.” (John 10: 35) Repeatedly He asserted that certain things transpired “because the Scriptures must be fulfilled.” (Mark 14: 49)

Of the Scriptures known and used in his day Paul declares they “were given by inspiration of God.” (2 Timothy 3: 16.) He calls them “the Oracles of God,” and “the Word of God.” (Romans 3:2; Hebrews 5:12; Romans 9:6; Romans 10:17; 1 Corinthians 14: 36; 2 Corinthians 2:17; Ephesians 6:17; Colossians 1:25; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 2:9.)

Peter declares of them that they “came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1: 21); and James declares they are “able to save your souls” (James 1:21,22)

## **THE OLD TESTAMENT CANON**

Can we ascertain what books were actually included at that time under the name of Scriptures, and thus what were recognized by the Son of God as being inspired? If this can be determined it will settle the matter of the canon of the Old Testament.

On one occasion Jesus refers to the Scriptures under the name, “Moses and the prophets.” (Luke 16:29,31.) In another place He speaks of “the Law of Moses the Prophets,” and “the Psalms.” (Luke 24:44) This exactly agrees with the ancient division of the Jews, into the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa. Such a division is mentioned by Josephus, the priestly Jewish historian. Several of the prophets are mentioned by Christ by name, and quotations are made from others. However, several books of the Old Testament are not named or quoted. So we seek other evidence.

We turn now to the copies of the Old Testament in the hands of the Jews. Are our Old Testament Scriptures the same as theirs? They would not have altered them to please Christians. The result of this comparison is an exact agreement between the Jewish Scriptures and the Protestant Bible. There is no discrepancy between them.

The thirty-nine books which we now know as belonging to the Old Testament were all in the canon in the time of Christ. Turning to the testimony of Josephus, a contemporary of Paul’s, we find him writing this: “We have only two and twenty books which are to be believed as of divine authority. Of which, five are the books of Moses. From the death of Moses to the reign of Artaxerxes, the son of Xerxes, king of Persia, the prophets, who were the successors of Moses, have written in thirteen books. The remaining four books contain hymns to God, and instructions of life for the use of men.”

The discrepancy between the twenty-two of Josephus and the thirty-nine of the Old Testament today will be explained if we take into consideration the fact that the Jews, while they had then, and have now, exactly the same writings as ours, arranged them differently. Some of these differences will be explained if it is stated that they always reckoned the twelve minor prophets as one book; they considered the book of Ruth an appendage to Judges; and the Lamentations an appendage to Jeremiah.

## **THE JEWISH CANON**

In the second century after Christ, Melito, the bishop of Sardis, made a careful and exhaustive inquiry into this matter, traveling into Judea for this express purpose. Rusebius has transmitted Melito’s catalogue of the books of the Old Testament, and from this it appears that the sacred canon of that time contained exactly the same books as it does now.

If additional evidence is called for, it may be found in the Samaritan Pentateuch so far as the law is concerned. And in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, a translation from Hebrew to Greek made in the third century before Christ which was in general and familiar use in the time of Christ, and both of which we have to this day. They contain all of the books which are now in our Old Testament.

Additional proof of the similarity of the canon of the Old Testament in Christ’s time and ours may be found in the early versions made soon after the beginning of the Christian era, particularly the Syriac and the Latin Vulgate. In the Targums, which contain a paraphrase of all the books of the Old Testament in Chaldee; and in the Talmud, which contains the oral law of the Jews.

Jewish scholars and rabbis view this matter in the same light. Not one has ever complained, or even hinted, that the sacred volume has been changed or corrupted. Their canon is the same as ours, and the same as it has always been.

## **THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON**

The canonicity of the New Testament books rests on similar grounds as does that of the Old. Often the question is asked, When and by what authority was the canon of the New Testament established? Many of those who make this inquiry appear to assume that no New Testament book could be of authority until it was sanctioned by some council or other church body.

It cannot be too often stated or too strongly emphasized that these books obtain no authority from church or council. They were of authority from the day of their writing. Their right to a place in the canon does not depend on the vote of any council, or the decision of any church officer, but upon the fact that they were given by inspiration of God, and this is known by internal evidence and by the character of the men who wrote them.

In our search for evidence, therefore, we go beyond the judgment or decision of the church to the more important question, Are these books indeed the productions of the men to whom God gave plenary inspiration to write them? The church confers no authority upon these books. She merely bears witness that they were written by the persons to whom they have been attributed.

## **GUARDING AGAINST IMPOSTURE**

The men who wrote the books of the New Testament sent them to the various churches of that day. The church or individual to whom any book was addressed, or for whom it was written, would naturally have the privilege of first possession. But these books were never locked up. They were freely communicated to other churches. Copies were quickly prepared and sent freely through the whole church.

Every church would be eager to obtain, as quickly as possible, an authentic copy of every writing known to be the production of an inspired man, an apostle of Christ. If, for instance, any of these churches had ever heard Paul preach, their eagerness for his epistles would have been fervent. And it would be scarcely less ardent if they had never seen this “chief of the apostles,” but had only heard of his marvelous ministry.

To guard against imposture in this matter, so that no church would be deceived into believing a spurious writing was a genuine epistle, Paul was accustomed to choose responsible men as his messengers to carry his epistles to the churches, whose names he ordinarily mentions in the writing itself. And then, even though he employed an amanuensis for the body of the epistle, he wrote the concluding salutation with his own hand.

This signature of Paul’s must have come to be well known among the churches. Closing his first letter to the Corinthians he wrote, “The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand.” 1 Corinthians 16:21. To the Galatians he wrote: “You see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.” Galatians 6:11. To the Colossians: “The salutation by the hand of me Paul.” Colossians 4:18. To the Thessalonians: “The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token [or credential] in every epistle: so I write.” 2 Thessalonians 3: 17.

This is more than a form of pleasant salutation. It is a method of giving authenticity to the Pauline epistles, together with a method of safeguarding them from being successfully counterfeited.

## **ORIGINALS NOT PRESERVED**

These original, autographed copies of the books of the New Testament have naturally disappeared. Only a miracle would have preserved them to this time, and nothing required such an interposition. The early Christians, appreciating keenly though they did the truths these writings contained, holding these truths above all price, nevertheless had no great veneration or solicitude about the mere ink and paper. A correct copy was as good as the original to them.

And perhaps it is as well that the originals have not been preserved. Mankind has a tendency to superstition, as may be seen in certain quarters by the practice of venerating and even worshiping every pretended relic of the apostles. It may well have been a wise provision of Providence that these original manuscripts should perish.

## **THE CANON NOT DISPUTED**

There is no dispute among Christians of any branch of the universal church regarding the books which belong in the canon of the New Testament. All are in agreement.

These manuscripts were read as Scripture from the beginning in the Christian churches. This practice began in the very days of the apostles, and by their authority. Paul wrote to the Colossians: “And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.” Colossians 4:16. And it is obvious that nothing could excel this practice better calculated to prevent deception. By this simple practice the people would know what books were of authority and came from the apostles.

Apocryphal books did put in an appearance. Some of them were from companions of the apostles, some from other accepted leaders, such as the epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, and the “Shepherd” of Hermas. But even in the days when these appeared, the churches were careful to distinguish between these and the inspired books, calling the apostolic books canonical and these others ecclesiastical.

## **SETTLED BY INTERNAL TESTIMONY**

The establishment of the canon of the New Testament did not require the judgment or endorsement of the church. The church merely passed on such evidence as it had that these books were written by men who were known to have been inspired. Each book written by an inspired man had a right to a place in the canon as soon as it was written. An of these books were, therefore, canonical before they were collected into a book. Each one had as much authority when it was written as it ever had after being accepted by the church. And this authority was due to the source and origin of the book, was in the book itself, and not conferred by any power outside the book.

The canonicity of the books of the Bible, then, is settled by the internal testimony and intrinsic value of the writings themselves. It is not left to the decision of any man or body of men, of church or council.

As for the Apocryphal writings, they themselves never claim to be on a level with the Scriptures. On the contrary, they speak of the Scriptures with the utmost reverence as a great treasure God had given Israel. Of themselves they speak with great moderation. They contain stories which are purely legendary, the character of which is entirely different from the marvelous records we have in the Scriptures.

The Apocrypha has little value as a link between the Old and New Testaments, either historically or theologically. The New Testament begins where the Old Testament ends, there and nowhere else. The Old Testament ends with Malachi writing for God, “I



will send My messenger, and He shall prepare the way before Me.” And the New Testament virtually begins, There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.“

Nor was there any difference in doctrine and in prophecy during the interval between the Old and New Testaments. The books of the Apocrypha are interesting. They are not important. They are not at all a part of the Scriptures. Indeed they contain things contrary to Scripture. They are entirely human. Consequently; the Jews never for a single moment acknowledged them as belonging to the Sacred Canon.

One church council, that of Trent (1545-1563), attempted by vote to make the fourteen uninspired books of the Apocrypha part of the Scripture. But uninspired books cannot be changed into inspired books by the caprice of a council. The true character of such books remained what it was before the vote was taken. They had been uninspired for 2,000 years before the Council of Trent. They are equally uninspired now. No change in them was effected by the vote of the council. Luther truly said: “The Church cannot give more force or authority to a book than it has in itself. A council cannot make that to be Scripture which in its own nature is not Scripture.”

Just as the character of a tree, though it be discussed and questioned and denied during the dead months of winter, has a way of establishing itself beyond all doubt, not on the decision of some expert gardener or council of gardeners, but by its own unanswerable evidence in the flower and fruit it brings forth, so the books of the Bible which comprise the sacred canon have demonstrated their own authority and right to a place in the canon in the evidence they bear of their own inspiration and the fruit they bring forth in their “living and powerful” witnessing.

### **INHERENT AUTHORITY**

Let it be stated again, then, that each book of the Bible supplies its own evidence for canonicity. It not only claims, but demonstrates, that the very words in which its revelation is embodied are words “which the Holy Ghost teaches” (1 Corinthians 2:13), that the commands of its writers were consequently of divine authority (1 Thessalonians 4:2), and their writings were the depository of these commands (2 Thessalonians 2:15).

Paul presses this point to such a degree that he writes: “If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him.” 2 Thessalonians 3:14. So important was this matter of the inherent authority of these God breathed writings that Paul makes their recognition and acknowledgment a test of the Spirit-filled man. “If any man think himself to be spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.” 1 Corinthians 14: 37.

Truly, then, on this matter of canonicity we can say what has often been said, The Bible is not an authorized collection of books, but a collection of authorized books.

## **Its Divine Revelation**

THE Bible is an inspired revelation of God’s will to men. Revelation and inspiration are not the same. By revelation God makes known to man that which man could never know or discover for himself. By inspiration God so guides and controls the men He chooses to convey His revelation to others that their writing, even of things not revealed, is precise and accurate and without error. Inspiration enables a man to record accurately either a revelation previously received, or even a fact or saying into which revelation did not enter at all.

The source of revelation is Jesus Christ. This will be seen from the following passages: “I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” Galatians 1:11,12. “I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you.” 1 Corinthians 11:23. “The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John.” Revelation 1:1.

### **A REVELATION NECESSARY**

The source of inspiration is the Holy Spirit of God. “The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” 2 Peter 1: 21.

It has been God’s purpose from the beginning to save sinners. In order to carry out that purpose, it was necessary for Him to make a revelation of Himself, as well as of His purpose and plan, to man. This revelation He has made in three forms: in nature, in the written word, and in the Word made flesh. The revelation of God in nature is only partial and incomplete, not full and perfect. This is due to the fact that nature is marred by sin. The revelation of God in the written Word is full, complete, and perfect. The revelation of God in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, was complete, full, and perfect. But Christ is not now visibly present in the world. A perfect revelation from God to man is required, if mankind is to be without excuse in the judgment.

### **THE METHOD OF REVELATION**

The method by which God conveys to the mind and intellect of His servants the revelation He desires imparted to His people is clearly described in the Bible. It is a method which God not only chooses to use for this purpose, but that, in using, He fully controls, so that there is no divided attention on the part of the recipient of the revelation, and therefore no corruption of the content of the revelation.

God himself described this method: "Hear now My words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make Myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream." Numbers 12:6.

It would seem clear that revelations rise in rank in proportion to the degree of completeness of the engagement of the attention, or mental activity, of the recipient in their reception. In a vision or divinely given dream, images or ideas, either filling the mind or passing in procession before the consciousness, completely engage the attention of the person without admixture of other thoughts. The mind is thus entirely in the control of the agency making the revelation. And it should be pointed out in this connection that such revelations, together with their contents, are determined by a power outside the recipient's own will. The intellectual or spiritual quality of a revelation thus received is not derived from the recipient but from its divine Giver.

In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls upon men, in slumbering upon the bed; then He opened the ears of men, and sealed their instruction." Job 33:15,16. When the mind is unoccupied by the cares of waking consciousness, when it is quietly at rest, untroubled by the thoughts that fill it at other times, then the Spirit of God takes full and complete possession, and causes to pass before it the ideas, or the images of thought that constitute the divine revelation to be made.

### **THE VISION-FORM OF REVELATION**

It is, therefore, the characteristic of the gift of prophecy that God makes Himself known to those who have it "in a vision," and "in a dream." This has been the method employed by God in revealing His will, especially to those who received His revelations, and recorded them in the Sacred Word. The terminology of the Bible throughout presupposes the vision form in the revelations that were made to its writers. The whole body of revelation in the Scripture is presented as a thing seen. Mark the nomenclature of the prophets: "The vision of Isaiah the son of Amos, which he saw." Isaiah 1:1. "The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amos did see." Isaiah 13:1. "The word that Isaiah the son of Amos saw." Isaiah 2:1. "The words of Amos which he saw." Amos 1:1. "The word of the Lord that came to Micah, which he saw." Micah 1:1. "The burden which Habakkuk the prophet did see." Habakkuk 1:1. "The word that the Lord hath showed me." Jeremiah 38:21. "Thy prophets have seen." Lamentations 2:14. "The word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel, and I looked, and, behold." Ezekiel 1:3,4. "Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing!" Ezekiel 13:3. "I will watch to see what He will say unto me. And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision." Habakkuk 2: 1, 2.

### **THE SPIRIT OF JEHOVAH**

It is plain from this language not only that visions and dreams constituted the method of God's revelation to the ancient prophets, but also that the revelations given in this way are not their own but wholly God's.

In the employment of this method, the movements of the mind are determined by something outside the subject's will. A power not of himself takes possession of his Consciousness and all his mental processes and controls them with its own will.

That power is fully recognized and emphatically asserted to be the Spirit of Jehovah. "And the Spirit of God came Upon him, and he prophesied among them." 1 Samuel 10:10. "Testified against them by Thy Spirit in Thy prophets." Nehemiah 9:30. "The words which the Lord of hosts hath sent in His Spirit by the former prophets." Zechariah 7:12. "I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions." Joel 2: 28.

Indeed, the very thing that constituted them prophets was that the Spirit was poured out upon them (Joel 2:28,29), and they were as a result were filled with the Spirit (Micah 3:8). In equivalent language, "the hand of the Lord," or "the power of the hand" of the Lord, was upon them (2 Kings 3: 15; Ezekiel 1:3; 3:14; 22; 33:22; 37:1; 40:1), which means they were under divine control.

### **ABOVE HUMAN WILL**

This control is always complete and compelling. Under it, the prophet becomes the one moved, not the mover, in the formation of his message. This is what Peter means in his well known declaration: "For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spoke from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." 2 Peter 1:21, A. R. V.

As these messages given through this method are produced by the operation, and determined by the control, of the Spirit of God, the result is raised above anything that could by any possibility be achieved by mere human powers or human wisdom. Its origin, and the Spirit-controlled method of its transmission, constitute it an entirely supernatural product. Human traits are indeed noticeable throughout but fundamentally it is a divine gift. The most proper mode of speech that can be applied to it is that used by Paul: "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches." 1 Corinthians 2:13. "The things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." 1 Corinthians 14:37.

### **SUPERNATURAL REVELATION**

It is of the utmost importance in studying this matter of revelation and its process to observe the never-changing emphasis which the Scripture writers place on the absolute supernatural basis of the revelation given them. They make it plain that it originated outside of themselves.

Jehovah himself, so important is it for this point to be fully understood, took occasion to make it plain. He declares precisely how He would communicate His messages to the prophets, and through them to the world. "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My words in his mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him." Deuteronomy 18:19.

The process of revelation, then, was by Jehovah putting His words in the mouths of the prophets. The prophet's wrote precisely those words and no others. For, while the particular passage just cited is a prophecy of Israel's great Prophet, Jesus Christ, the process of revelation is similar with all prophets. This is clearly asserted by the prophets again and again. "Then the Lord put forth His hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put My words in thy mouth." Jeremiah 1:9.

It is plain from such passages, which occur throughout the Scriptures, that the words which the prophets spoke were not their own words but the Lord's. "Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with My words unto them." Ezekiel 3:4.

## **GOD'S SPOKESMAN**

The passage which brings this fact of a precise, divine revelation and its process before us in the most striking manner is Exodus 4:10-16: "And Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou has spoken unto thy servant. But I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. And the Lord said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? Or who makes the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shall say. And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom Thou wilt send. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses, and He said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he comes forth to meet thee: and when he sees thee, he will be glad in his heart. And thou shall speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what you shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shall be to him instead of God."

Here God, in the most specific words, declares that He who made man's mouth can be with it to choose what it shall speak. He points out the precise function of a prophet to be that he is "a mouth" of God, speaking not his own, but God's words. Consequently the Hebrew name for prophet (Nabhi') means just "spokesman," God's "spokesman."

The characteristic form with which a prophet began his divinely given message was, "The word of the Lord came me," or the more concise, "Thus said the Lord." Not in any, instance does a prophet put his words forth as his own words. As the Lord opens and shuts his mouth (Ezekiel 3: 26, 27) and creates for him "the fruit of the lips" (Isaiah 57:19, 50:4), so he speaks, proclaiming only the pure word of the Lord.

The process of revelation, then, is altogether divine, fully in God's control, and results in conveying to man the will, message, the truth, of the living God. The process by which that revelation is passed on to other men, for whom its benefits were intended, a process which is called inspiration, we will to be equally divine, and controlled to the fullest degree by God.

## **Its Inspiration**

MANY theories confront us when we come to consider the inspiration of the Bible. Even among those who accept the Bible as truly the Word of God there is a wide range of opinion. It is not my purpose here to discuss these theories and opinions. I have my own theory of inspiration. It is completely satisfying to me. But as a theory it is of no more importance than any or all others.

It is not the theory of inspiration that is important, but rather the fact of inspiration. It is that supremely important fact that will now considered.

Nor is it the method of inspiration with which I propose to concern myself. There are mysteries here which perhaps no man will ever penetrate. Nor is it necessary or important that we do so. The exact method of inspiration-who can know it? But the fact of inspiration that makes the Bible the Word of the living God, this is easily discernible and should be believed by every child of God. It is this, and the extent to which it reaches, that is here discussed.

The Bible is not the word of men. Men labored on it. Men were used to put it into human speech. We acknowledge men's part in it all. But just as humanity united with divinity in bringing to us the Divine Son, who is the Incarnate Word, so humanity has united with divinity in bringing to us the Bible, the inspired and written Word of God. By inspiration the writings of men are made to be truly the Word of God.

So in discussing the matter of inspiration we are not discussing questions of theory or method. We are discussing matters of fact, the fact that the Bible is different from all other books, a God-breathed Book.

Let us be clear on what we mean by inspiration. We mean this: That the Holy Spirit of God used the men who wrote the words of the Bible, prepared them for this work, ordered all their heredity, their education, their outlook, and when the time came for them to write, took such control of them that, while they were not deprived of their faculties or natural powers, their entire personalities are made use of to produce for man the living Word of the living God, a divine revelation in human speech.

Revelation is of little value to us unless it is infallibly communicated. It is not reliably communicated unless it is infallibly recorded. Revelation, to be of benefit to man, must be fully inspired in its communication and recording, and altogether safeguarded from error by divine intervention. Revelation demands inspiration in that which is to afford the groundwork of human salvation.

Many persons have received divine revelations who made no claim to inspiration. The whole nation of Israel stood at Mount Sinai and saw a manifestation of God's presence and heard His voice as it uttered the words of the Ten Commandments. No one would claim they were all inspired.

And inspiration does not always, or necessarily, deal with revelation. The facts and circumstances to be recorded may be well known to the writer from his own observation, so that no revelation is needed. But no man can avoid inaccuracies in making a narrative of facts, no matter how deeply impressed on his own memory they may be; and if it is important that his record of these things should be absolutely free from error, the writer must be inspired. Revelation means the informing process, and inspiration the imparting process.

## **INSPIRATION ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY**

Consequently, whether dealing either with revelation or with facts within his own knowledge, the Bible writer required inspiration to produce a record preserved from all error and mistake. His record in either case could not be considered the word of God without inspiration. As the chief object of inspiration is to communicate divine truths not formerly known to men, revelation would be required, and inspiration to convey the revelation infallibly to men would be equally required. And where the record of God's dealings with men did not require revelation to the writer, still for the purpose of inerrancy inspiration is still required, even in writing things well known.

Putting it another way, it may be said that the purpose of revelation is to convey to men a definite knowledge of truth in order that they may be saved, and their faith and practice guided aright. But if the Book which contains this revelation, given for such a purpose, is composed merely by erring, fallible men, no one can ever be sure, in any particular case, that he is in possession of the truth revealed. These men may be allowed to be honest and faithful. Even honest and faithful men, however, are liable to errors and mistakes. In addition to this, all men are more or less influenced by prejudices and prepossessions. It can be clearly seen that the very purpose of giving a revelation would be in a great measure defeated, unless the record by which it is made known to men is safeguarded by inspiration.

There are many things in the Bible which the writers certainly knew by ordinary means. Concerning these, no supernatural revelation was needed to enlighten them. But they did need in recording them to be infallibly preserved from error. There are many other things in the Bible which the writers certainly could never have known of themselves. They must have been directly revealed. In these cases both revelation and inspiration are needed.

With these considerations before us, and applying them to the Scriptures, we can say with confidence: The Bible is from God. But we need to say more than that, and we have no hesitancy in saying it this way: The Bible is throughout from God. Still something is lacking, and we are not satisfied until we say emphatically: The Bible throughout is entirely from

## **NOT MECHANICAL DICTATION**

As to the method of divine inspiration, that is, the precise manner by which God moved and superintended the writers of the Bible in imparting His truth through them to others, this, we have already said, is difficult to ascertain, and not at all important for us to understand.

It should be said at once, however, that inspiration does not partake of the nature of mechanical dictation. No believer should look upon it in that light. Mechanical dictation is altogether impossible to accept. The writers of the Bible not only maintained, but strikingly disclosed in what they wrote, their own individual characteristics, styles, and mentality. These men were not turned into mere machines.

So inspiration is not mechanical dictation. Do not confuse the two. A man may dictate a letter to his stenographer, but he does not inspire her. That is dictation, mechanical dictation. He expects her to reproduce in written words exactly what he gave her in spoken words. But in the Bible we have nothing of the kind. There is no mechanical dictation, but inspiration. We may call it plenary. In calling it such we do not intend to explain how God did it, but how far it has gone. We mean by it that God's inspiration includes the form as well as the substance, that it extends to the words as well as the thoughts. We cannot know God's thoughts unless we know His words. If the very words are not included in inspiration there would be no point in all the care which has been taken through the centuries to translate the Scriptures exactly.

## **WORDS AND THOUGHTS INSPIRED**

Inspiration, then, means more than an uninspired account of inspired thoughts. The thoughts were inspired, we have no doubt. But the account of them must be inspired, too, if we are to place any reliance in it.

When the New Testament appeals to the Old, the precise form is not, "It is thought," or, "It is suggested"; but, "It Is Written." God did not say to Moses, "I will be with thy mind and teach thee what thou shall think"; but, "I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shall say." Exodus 4:10-12. It is not of very great importance what Moses thought. It is of supreme importance what Moses said, for what he said is from God.

## **DIFFERENT FROM GENIUS OR PIETY**

The inspiration of the Bible is altogether different from either genius or piety. It is not at all the same as the inspiration of the poet, the painter, the sculptor, the musician, or the writer.

Inspiration is the means by which God, in carrying out His saving purpose, not only makes facts or truths known to men, but also confers the ability to convey these facts accurately to others. It not only imparts to man capacity to receive the revelation from God, but also the power to communicate divine truth to other human beings.

An inspired man is one who has received by direct action of God a message to others. This involves an obligation on his part under God's guidance, sometimes to speak, sometimes to write, a fact, a conversation, or a discourse; sometimes, under like conditions, to narrate a history; sometimes to compile and edit existing documents; sometimes, by direct inspiration, to write letters; and sometimes to predict future events.

## **THEIR OWN REVELATIONS NOT UNDERSTOOD**

The person who is so commissioned and so inspired may thoroughly comprehend his own words, or it may be their meaning is concealed from him. He may, as did Luke, write only because, many having "taken in hand to set forth in order it declaration of

those things which are most surely believed," it "seemed good" to him to write also. Or, like Daniel, he may write words respecting which he is obliged to say, "I heard, but I understood not." He may, like Paul on one occasion, feel that he speaks "by permission," and not "of commandment". Or like the same apostle at another time, he may claim to express himself, "not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches."

He may speak with authority, and demand audience as a messenger of God; or he may beseech and entreat, as a fellow sufferer, that his words may be received with a loving heart, since love alone moves him to utter them. He may be altogether unconscious that he is writing for all time to come, foreseeing the wants of all generations, and supplying the church with spiritual nourishment for thousands of years, or he may have a dim understanding that this is the case.

## **FACT AND METHOD OF INSPIRATION**

The method by which this is accomplished, or whether one method is used at one time and another method at another time, we say again, is not a matter of chief concern. Neither is it important or required that we understand the process and the method. It is not the exact operation of the Spirit of God in giving the communication, or the precise method of safeguarding it from error, when it is imparted to others, that we desire to ascertain, but whether that which they say is their own or God's, whether it is merely human judgment, or a divine and therefore authoritative message. Is it the word of men, or the word of God?

Once the authority of the Bible is accepted, the theory of inspiration becomes of little account. Not how these writings were inspired, but that they are inspired, is the important thing. In dealing with inspiration we are not dealing with theories, but facts. Inspiration is something we accept. We may not be able to explain it. Nevertheless we accept it.

The Bible declares that God did inspire its writers and writings. It does not tell us how He did this. Therefore we have nothing to do with the method of inspiration; we have every- "I thing to do with the fact of inspiration, for we must either accept, it or reject it.

## **VARIETIES OF INSPIRATION**

Inspiration is not always the same. There are times when it means a direct communication from God. In such cases these writers disclose this by such expressions as "I have received from the Lord," or "The Lord spoke to me," etc. Here the writer is communicating the fact that he has had a direct revelation from God of some truth above and beyond knowledge, for the knowing of which a revelation is necessary, for otherwise man could not have discovered it.

At other times inspiration guides in the matter of selecting material. An example of this will be found in the historical books of the Old Testament, for obviously these give but mere fragments chosen from among the multitudinous events which happened to the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. The fact that these were chosen and others left shows that a selection was made, and inspiration guided in this selection. Similarly John must have been guided in selecting certain materials out of the happenings of Christ's earthly life from which to form his Gospel. (John 20:30,31.) Luke's preliminary sentences indicate the same thing. In such cases inspiration deals with the choice of material.

There are times when inspiration indicates only the guarantee of accuracy in the record made. The words of the devil are found in the Bible as well as the words of God. These words are not true even though they are recorded in the Bible. Many of the words of Job's friends are not true. but they are in the Scriptures. The record of what God's enemies have said is in the Bible. These, too, are not true. What they say is wrong, but the record of what they say is true. That is what inspiration means here, an accurate record. Not every verse a man may drop his eye on in the Scripture is true. He might, for instance, happen on the saying, "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life." That is not true. It is a lie. It is the word of Satan. Although it is in the Holy Bible, it is not true, in itself; but the record of it is true. The untruth is in the sentiment expressed; it is not in the account of it.

At this point again attention is directed to the difference between revelation and inspiration. The substance of the truth of God, the what, is what is covered by revelation. The account of that truth, the how, is what is covered by inspiration. Paul sets it forth in one passage, when in 1 Corinthians 2:10 he writes, God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit," and in verse 13, he adds, "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches," making it plain that God's control through the Spirit began with the revelation but extended all the way through to the words themselves. We may say, then, that not everything in the Bible is revealed, but everything in the Bible is inspired. The record absolutely accurate and reliable in from beginning to end is every detail.

## **BIBLES DIFFICULTIES**

There are, it is pointed out, difficulties in the Bible. Certainly there are. We ought to expect them. A revelation of an infinite God coming to finite man is bound to have some difficulties for man. Once we have been convinced, however, on the abundant evidence that has been set forth, that the Bible is the Word of God, the discovery of difficulties after that will not disturb us. Every difficulty will then be judged by the antecedent fact that the Bible is the Word of God. Tregelles, the great textual critic, has wisely said: "No difficulty in connection with a proved fact can invalidate the fact itself."

There are difficulties everywhere, in nature, in science, in, life. We are not called upon to solve them all. There will always be things we do not understand. Often the difficulties pointed out in the Bible are created by the reader himself, and are due to his misunderstanding of the text, or his failure to interpret it rightly. Fuller knowledge often solves the difficulty. And it should be pointed out that many difficulties in the Bible have disappeared as men have grown wiser. As the horizons of their knowledge widen they often discover that what they looked on as a difficulty has turned into a confirmation of the divine origin of the Bible. Historical difficulties

have a way of disappearing one by one as they are tested. Those who know the most about the Bible have not hesitated to express their conviction that no Biblical statement dealing with historical fact has ever yet been found to be unhistorical.

It must be pointed out, too, that not one of the difficulties which skeptics take delight in pointing to in the Bible touches or affects any essential Christian doctrine. It is a striking and significant thing that, in spite of all the attacks against the Bible, not one demonstrable error has ever yet been discovered in it.

Dwight L. Moody, in his incisive way, disposed of this matter of Bible difficulties in a way that is extremely sensible. A man inclined toward infidelity came to him and said, "Mr. Moody, I cannot accept your Bible, because there are so many difficulties in it." Moody replied, "Do you like fish?" Yes." Do you ever find any bones in them? Yes."

"Do you eat them?"

"No, I put them on the side of the plate."

"That is what I do with the difficulties in the Bible, and I find quite enough fish without bones."

## **AUTHENTICATED AS COMING FROM GOD**

In offering redemption to man and salvation from sin and its consequences, there certainly is need of a clear, accurate, and authoritative revelation of truth and duty. That revelation should be authenticated as coming from God, and as being His message of love and light. On whatever subjects it touches, it would be necessary to accompany it with clear evidences of its divine origin.

If this revelation were committed to vessels of tainted or corrupt material, so that the infusion corrupted or injured or distorted the truth. Or if the revelation were communicated by men who stated simply the result of their own observation, or used the utmost of their native ability, reasoning out as best they could, unaided, what might be useful to man. In either case it would scarcely be what might reasonably be expected from God. Both in its reception and in its impartation it must be the word of the living God.

This is seen to be all the more true when it is considered that the revelation was designed, not for one age, but for all ages. While it was given to one race and nation, it was designed for all races and all nations in all periods of time. Even those things which were obviously local and apparently temporary were as truly as other parts "written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." (1 Corinthians 10:11)

## **REVELATION TRANSLATED INTO HUMAN SPEECH**

It seems clear that both revelation and inspiration are altogether supernatural. The communication of the truth by God to a man is wholly supernatural, and altogether controlled by God. This is revelation. The record of the utterance of that revelation by the man to whom it was revealed is equally under God's exclusive control. This is inspiration.

If it was necessary for God to work a miracle in giving the revelation, it surely cannot be considered improbable, but likely, that He would also exercise such control and give such supernatural aid and superintendence as might be necessary to obtain the accurate transference of the revelation into human speech, so as to make it just what He meant it should be. In His divine and supernatural control why should He stop short of its final form, the written word?

It was God's plan to give to the human race a revelation of Himself. It is reasonable, therefore, to believe that He would not only superintend the process of giving this revelation to chosen instruments, but also superintend the process by which they imparted the sacred truth of that revelation to others. If the divine control stopped with communicating the revelation, then we have no revelation at all, but merely a human account of a divine revelation. That is, there was a revelation, but it perished as such with the men to whom it was imparted, and all that the world now has is the fallible impression it made on their minds, and their fallible account of that impression.

It seems necessary to conclude, therefore, that the fact of a miraculous revelation in itself creates the probability that all the following steps would be taken which were, necessary to secure the end in view when such a revelation was given.

## **THE BIBLE CLAIMS INSPIRATION**

The writers of the Bible claim that their authority and their messages came from God, as the following phrases show: "The Lord God called unto Adam, and said"; "God said unto Noah," and Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob; "God spoke unto Israel"; "Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments. And all the people answered with one voice, and said, ALL THE WORDS WHICH THE LORD HATH SAID will we do. And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord."

Of the Decalogue it is said: "The writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables"; "These are the words which the Lord hath commanded"; "The Lord called unto Moses"; "Gather Me the people together, and I will make them hear My words." "The voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire"; "Out of heaven He made thee to hear His voice"; "Thou heard His words." "The Lord talked with you face to face."

Expressions such as "God said." "The Lord spoke, saying," "The Lord commanded," and "the word of the Lord," occur in the Pentateuch alone nearly 700 times. Certainly this part of the Bible claims to be the Word of God.

## **"THE WORD OF THE LORD"**

In the historical books of the Bible, from Joshua to Esther, such expressions as these occur more than 400 times: "After the death of Moses the Lord spoke unto Joshua, saying." "The word of the Lord was precious in those days"; "The Lord revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord"; "The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spoke to me"; "The word of the Lord came to Solomon, saying"; "The Lord testified against Israel, and

against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying.” “Micah said, As the Lord lives, even what my God said, that will I speak”; “They mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words.”

The poetical books, Job and the Psalms, contain the same testimony that they constitute the Word of the Lord. Very frequently occur such expressions as; “The Lord said unto Satan”; “Then the Lord answered Job but of the whirlwind, and said.” In Psalm 19, the law, the testimony, the statutes, the commandment, and the judgments of the Lord are spoken of; the whole of Psalm 119 is a song in praise of the Word of God, that Word being mentioned almost as many times as there are verses in the Psalm.

From the prophetic books it is scarcely necessary to quote, as prophecy by its very nature is recognized as supernatural. However, it may be well to say that such expressions as the following occur in the prophets more than 1300 times, and double that number of times in the entire Old Testament:

“Hear the word of the Lord”; “I heard the voice of the Lord, saying”; “The Lord hath spoken.” “It was revealed in mine ears by the Lord of hosts”; “The word of our God”; “My word that goes forth out of My mouth”; “The word of the Lord came unto me”; “Whatsoever I command thee thou shall speak.” “I have put My words in thy mouth”; “The word of the Lord came unto me, saying He said unto me He spoke unto me Thou shall speak My words unto them”; “My words that I speak unto thee.” “When I speak with thee”; “When I heard the voice of His words”; “The Lord hath spoken it”; “Thus said the Lord!”

Certainly the testimony of the Bible seems clear that the Scriptures are indeed “the word of God, which lives and abides forever.”

### **MESSAGE AND MESSENGER BOTH INSPIRED**

Paul says: “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teaches, but the Holy Ghost teaches; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” 1 Corinthians 2:12,13. This is a definite claim by Paul to an inspiration which extends to the very words with which he communicated divine truth.

Again Paul says: “If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.” 1 Corinthians 14:37.

Proof that one is a “prophet, or spiritual,” is here said to be contained in an acknowledgment that the authority of Christ is continued in the apostle. Surely this is a strong claim. Professor Findlay remarks on it: “The professor of divine knowledge who does not discern Paul’s inspiration proves his ignorance; his character as a prophet, or ‘spiritual,’ is not recognized, since he does not recognize the apostle’s character.”

It is altogether probable that much which passes for Bible scholarship today stands condemned before such a test as that.

Once more Paul declares: “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when you received the word of God which you heard of us, you received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectively works also in you that believe.” 1 Thessalonians 2:13. This is a claim that when Paul made known the doctrines contained in his writings, both he himself and his message were directly under the control of the Spirit of God.

### **“BE MINDFUL OF THE WORDS”**

What Paul claimed, the other apostles claimed as well. Peter said: “That you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Savior.” 2 Peter 3:2. Here Peter places the apostolic writings on a level with the Old Testament prophetic writings, of which he had already said: “Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” 2 Peter 1:21.

John said: “We are of God: he that knows God hears us; he that is not of God hears not us. Hereby know we the Spirit of truth, and-the spirit of error.” 1 John 4: 6. Let any man outside the apostles make such a claim as is contained in this passage, and he would lose at once all claim on our attention and respect.

The reader will find additional light thrown upon the claim, of the apostles that their writings were given them of God by studying the following passages: Acts 18:1-6, 28; Romans 16: 25-27; 1 Corinthians 2; 14:37, 2 Corinthians 13:2,3; Galatians 1: 8-12. Ephesians 2:20; 3:1-7; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 4:2,8,15; 2 Thessalonians 2:13,18. 1 Peter 1:12-12; 2 Peter 3: 1, 2; Revelation 1: 1-3, 10, 11, 19; 22: 6,7,18,19.

### **KEYS TO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN**

Jesus said to Peter, representing the Christian Church: keys of the kingdom of heaven: and will give unto thee the, whatsoever thou shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” Matthew 16:19. I do not recall ever having seen any more illuminating comment or explanation of this than the following: “The keys of the kingdom of heaven are the words of Christ. All the words of Holy Scripture are His, and are here included. These words have power to open and to shut heaven. They declare the conditions upon which men are received or rejected. Thus the work of those who preach God’s Word is a savor of life unto life or of death unto death. Theirs is a mission weighted with eternal results.” – “The Desire of Ages,” Page 414.

The words of the Bible were not dictated to the inspired writers as a man would dictate to his secretary. When God moved upon men to write, the personality of the writer was not effaced; his style was not set aside. The Spirit of God infallibly guided in the communication of divine truth from the writer’s own vocabulary, and in his own particular style.

Inspiration, then, means that the Spirit of God, by a mysterious control beyond our comprehension, but in which we may and should believe, acted in such a way upon chosen men while they were writing the books of the Bible, that they were supernaturally directed in communicating the will of God. A divine influence acted in such a way on their minds as to render them exempt from error both in regard to their thoughts and their words. Their individual human personalities, their peculiar mental traits, and even their forms and styles of literary expressions were given full sway and liberty, and were used by the Spirit, and yet the product was so controlled that it became "the word of God, which lives and abides forever." (1 Peter 1:23)

It scarcely seems necessary to add that inspiration applies only to the original documents, now no longer in existence. No one believes, or ought to believe, that translations of the Bible are inspired. Copyists have made mistakes, officious scribes have made interpolations, translators are altogether fallible. But if the original words were not God's words there would be no point in all the vast amount of reverent research which by careful comparison of all existing documents has sought diligently to detect all errors and to restore as far as possible the Word of God in its original purity.

### **Its Scientific Accuracy**

THE facts of science and the teachings of the Bible are in complete agreement. The theories of scientists and the teachings of the Bible sometimes are sharply at variance. But as the theories of scientists are not science, we need not be disturbed about their failure to agree with the Bible.

The theories of scientists are not only sometimes opposed to the Bible but they are also, in these instances, opposed to the facts of science. That is, sometimes scientists misunderstand and misinterpret the facts of science. And when this happens, the result is that the scientists disagree with the Bible. Science and the Bible never disagree.

Difficulty arises between scientists and the Bible when the scientists get out of their place. So long as they confine themselves to the field of fact-finding they are doing their legitimate work. When they leave this realm and begin to tell the world what these facts mean, and to build a theory on them, they have entered another field, the field of philosophy and logic, in which most scientists have clearly proved that they are pitiful novices.

### **FACTS VERSUS THEORIES**

Many an excellent scientist who has demonstrated he is reliable and thorough in the realm of investigation and discovery, and altogether trustworthy, so long as he has kept himself to the plain results of observation and experiment, makes himself immediately unsafe, untrustworthy, and altogether wrong when he leaves this legitimate field and ventures into the realm of philosophy and logic and theory. He is then out of his natural element, in foreign territory, and it would become him to walk more softly than he does.

Which is just another way of saying that investigation, examination, and observation belong in an altogether different department from induction. It is not necessary, therefore indeed it is positively dangerous and unsafe to accept the inferences and assumptions and hypotheses of scientific men simply because they may be expert and accurate investigators. We are glad to accept the facts they discover. The theories they form regarding these facts we are not interested in. We are able to form our own theories.

With these distinctions clearly in mind, it is plain that we do not need to be overly concerned about an apparent discrepancy between science and the Bible. Let us first determine whether the "science" which purports to be in disagreement with the Bible is really science or some theory regarding science.

Do not be frightened at the term science. It means simply knowledge, knowledge of facts, knowledge of principles. When someone attempts to settle everything out of hand by asserting that certain statements in the Bible cannot be true because "science has proved so-and-so," be quite calm. There is no need for uneasiness.

Bring to mind two things. First, remember that "we know in part only." (1 Corinthians 13:9) Scientific discovery is not complete. There are many things men have yet to learn. There are many things they only think they know, and their thinking will be changed by discoveries yet to be made. Second, consider that what is often called science is many times nothing more nor less than a theory or conclusion or induction or hypothesis based upon man's limited, imperfect, partial knowledge of facts.

If we will all learn to distinguish between facts and the theories men form regarding those facts, we will have very little difficulty in this matter of science and the Bible.

### **SCRIPTURES IN ADVANCE OF SCIENCE**

Coming now to the question, "Do the Bible and science agree?" it must be pointed out that the answer depends altogether upon what is understood by "science." If by this word is meant man's conclusions and theories based on incomplete knowledge, then the answer is, No. To say yes would only condemn God's Book as inaccurate and imperfect by attempting to put it into agreement with the vagaries and theories of scientists.

But if by "science" is meant absolutely demonstrated facts, full and perfect knowledge, then the answer is, emphatically and positively, Yes. No discovery of science through all the years in the slightest particular stands opposed to the teachings of the Bible. They are in complete agreement.

Indeed, the farther scientific investigation goes, the fuller knowledge scientists obtain, the deeper men dig into facts, the more witnesses we have to the truth and accuracy of this wonderful Book. Instead of becoming outmoded, and relegated to the rear as a back number, the Bible is demonstrating constantly not only that it is abreast of science but that it is actually in advance of scientific



discovery. Men of research and investigation, in every new discovery, are only catching up with the Bible. Its sacred pages have contained for centuries disclosures that we only now are coming to understand.

So when some so-called savant with an overhanging brow and a great name, with a lofty and patronizing air of profound learning and papal infallibility, rises to announce that “every step that science takes leads mankind farther away from the idle hopes and fears of Christianity toward the calm of eternal truth,” no one need feel any sense of dismay.

This old Book through the centuries has heard much presumptuous chatter of that kind-and survived. It has a quiet way of overturning and confounding its enemies, and calmly waiting until men grow wiser for its certain vindication. It does not trouble itself about such idle claims. We do well not to trouble ourselves.

Such assertions are only the vapors of unwise and prejudiced men who have confused in their thinking their own undigested theories with ascertained scientific knowledge. The Bible need make no defense against such feeble attacks. Science itself has a way of advancing and exposing such ignorance. The scientific theories of one generation become the sport and ridicule of the next.

It is not scientific experts, as a rule, who make these attacks against the Bible. Genuine scientists are usually modest, unassuming men. They realize their limitations, and the limitations of human knowledge. The claim that the Bible is contradicted by science is a claim made by others, usually by religious skeptics who grow certain of things which the boldest of scientists would hesitate even to express an opinion on.

## **INFIDEL GUESSES**

So, when a Darwin thinks it probable that man may have descended from the apes, and a Haeckel seizes this and opines that it must be so because miracles are impossible, some agnostic is quite willing to believe this may be true, and a weak-kneed modernist preacher is not sure but the missing link may yet be found, then some scoffer of the schools becomes absolutely certain of the scientific truth of the theory, and loudly and belligerently advances it as demonstrated science at just about the time its original sponsors are discarding it as quite unscientific.

That is the kind of “science” which contradicts the Bible, the kind that is seized on by incredulous skeptics who take any theory advanced that is likely to undermine confidence in the teachings of the Bible, swallow it whole because they have developed a pronounced taste for that sort of thing, and then talk and argue it as if it were settled on firm and immutable foundations instead of being a mere hypothesis, or conjecture, which has been advanced as a possible explanation.

## **CREDULITY OF THE INCREDULOUS**

One of the most amazing things in connection with such attacks against the Bible is the credulity of the incredulous. There are men who have no difficulty in believing anything but the Bible. While they are “slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken,” they are quite ready to swallow every pseudo-scientific conjecture, especially if it is contrary to the Bible. They do not realize that there are thousands of things the most learned scientist is as ignorant of as is a child. The things he does not know would fill a much larger book than the things he does know.

Modern skepticism, with a supercilious air of profound learning and philosophic doubt, has seized upon the fable of the evolutionary hypothesis as a sure means of discrediting the Holy Scriptures. It has advanced the evolution theory as if it were a demonstrated scientific fact, which it is very far from being.

## **EVOLUTION IS ENTIRELY FALSE**

Some Christians have worked themselves up to the place where they think the theory of evolution can be harmonized with the Bible. But their attempts to do this have only made them ridiculous and ended in failure. The account of the origin of the world as given in the first chapter of Genesis and that put forth by the advocates of evolution are diametrically opposed and can never be harmonized. One is true; the other is false. The Bible account was meant to be, and should be, taken literally. It contains the exact, and the scientific, truth. Evolution is false from start to finish.

There should be no attempt made to compromise the differences between evolution and the Bible. They are antagonistic. There can be no peace between them. They cannot both be accepted. They are mutually exclusive. To believe one is to reject the other. One destroys the other. Evolution should be squarely and vigorously opposed by the truth of a literal creation. It should not be allowed a place in the Church of Christ. It destroys all that is vital to Christianity.

## **THE FINAL AUTHORITY**

There is a final authority upon which we take our stand and base our faith. That authority is the plain teaching of the “Oracles of God,” the Bible, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. We do not propose to sit silent and listen without protest to the borrowed crudities, the rehashes of infidelity, rationalism, materialism, Platonic philosophy, and pure paganism, together with blundering interpretation, which today are palmed off as the very latest discoveries of science.

No child of God need fear that such a position will bring him into conflict with true science. It will not. There is no fact of nature that the Bible denies. And there is no truth of the Bible that true science denies. The teachings of nature and of nature’s God do not conflict. When they appear to do so, it is usually because some of our would-be scientists have a calm and quiet way of assuming as facts things which they do not undertake to demonstrate, and taking for granted what they cannot prove.

Altogether too many friends of the Bible have allowed themselves to be carried away by a pretended natural science without being aware of its tendency or its origin. Altogether too many people, because evolution has become the fashion, because its general

theories, exhibited as demonstrated propositions, have been circulated through all classes of society, are fearful of incurring the charge of ignorance if they do not side with those who have accepted the guesswork of evolution as a fact and the story of the Bible as a fiction.

Let the pretense be stripped away at once. In dealing with evolution we are not dealing with the facts of science, with the facts of geology, with the facts of paleontology. True science deals with facts. Evolution is not a fact. It is a theory, a conjecture, which attempts to explain certain facts and give causes for them. It is based on a premise, or a hypothesis (which is another name for a guess), which lies outside the realm of science altogether. It is not, therefore, the great facts of science which are in question here. It is not even a logical and direct deduction from these facts. It is only a deduction from an assumption respecting the causes to which these facts owe their origin.

### **GEOLOGICAL FACTS VERSUS GEOLOGICAL THEORIES**

Hence it is clear that there is a vast difference between the theories of evolutionists and the facts of geology. We accept the facts of geology. We have no dispute with them. We find them to be in all respects in harmony with the Bible. We reject, the theories of evolutionists respecting these facts of geology, for most of these theories conflict both with the facts of geology and the truth of the Bible. There is no such conflict between the truth of the Bible and the facts of geology.

The facts of geology are these: The crust of the earth consists of a series of different rocky and earthy beds, or layers, in many places very numerous, in other places not so numerous, of great depth, many times interspersed with relics of other rocks, and of plants, shells, bones, fish, skeletons of land animals, a large part of which are of species and genera no longer living.

Theories of evolutionists are these: They form a premise first. This premise is based on the assumption that this arrangement of the crust of the earth is the product of forces just like those now producing somewhat similar effects; such as, for instance, volcanic mountains, the mouths of rivers, and the shores of seas. And from this assumption and premise they infer that the arrangement of the crust of the earth must have taken a period of time immensely longer than the six thousand years of the Bible record.

It seems clear to them, from this premise and assumption, that if the effects they see are the result of chemical and mechanical force now in activity and operating with similar intensity as now, then they must have required periods of almost inconceivable duration, progressing through an incalculable round of ages.

### **GUESSWORK BASED ON ASSUMED PREMISE**

Then mistaking this conclusion from a mere guess (which is based altogether upon a premise which is in turn built upon an assumption) for a scientific induction from the facts of geology, and proceeding to elevate it to the rank and dignity of a demonstrated truth, they loudly announce that the teachings of science contradict the Biblical history of creation. They conclude, there fore, that the Bible cannot be true, and cannot therefore have come from God, if, indeed, there be a God.

We admit that such a conclusion is the result of a consistent following of their theory, and a logical deduction therefrom. It is not a logical deduction from the facts of geology. In fact, it has nothing whatever to do with those facts. It is merely theory piled upon theory, assumption upon assumption, premise upon premise, assertion upon assertion, and it is far removed from truth and accuracy and science.

### **BIBLE NOT A SCIENTIFIC TEXTBOOK**

The Bible was not written to announce scientific truth. That is not its purpose. It was written to reveal the divine remedy for human sin. It is not, therefore, a scientific textbook.

Nevertheless, it is bound to touch upon matters which are in the realm of science. It does this incidentally, but it does it. And in each case, without in any way predicting or anticipating the discoveries of science, its language is, invariably, in harmony with all that is later discovered. This, in itself, puts it in a class apart from all other ancient writings, and makes it a scientific marvel. There is no greater phenomenon of science than the Bible.

Belonging, as it does, to the oldest class of literature in the world, it nevertheless makes none of the crude blunders of all other ancient literature, and is today the newest and youngest in adaptation to the continual discoveries of science. Its language and its teachings do not conflict with any fact of science. It is abreast of the times. Tested by the proved facts of any branch of science today, whether astronomy, cosmogony, geology, paleontology, anthropology, zoology, physiology, comparative anatomy, natural philosophy, or even by sanitary science, it displays altogether superhuman wisdom, understanding, and knowledge.

### **“BLUNDERS,” BUT NOT THE BIBLE’S**

As it was no part of the purpose of its writers to announce scientific truth, and this is done only incidentally to their real design, they, of course, often use the language of appearance. But we do that yet in this age of the world. While we know the sun to be the center of the solar system and that the earth moves about the sun in its orbit, we, nevertheless, speak of the sun as rising in the east and setting in the west and revolving about the earth. We speak of the dew coming down from heaven as though it came from a long distance, though we know the atmosphere is impregnated with the vapor which it gives up at the touch of a colder surface. We must allow this same liberty to the sacred writers. And when they use forms of speech to fit appearances rather than realities, and employ expressions to describe what they write about in accordance with popular impressions rather than with scientific discoveries, we must not look upon this as involving any scientific discrepancy or contradiction.

An impression has been created and become widespread that scientific “blunders” have been discovered by scores in the Bible. What many people do not know is that these so-called “blunders” have been “blunders” of the readers of Scripture either in properly understanding the meaning of its language or in not rightly understanding the facts of science, and all of them have been cleared up later by a better understanding on the part of the critic. But this clarification has not been so widely broadcast as was the original misunderstanding that led men to believe scientific blunders exist in the Bible.

The Bible uses the term “firmament” in Genesis 1:6-8. Years ago this was understood as teaching that a solid sphere was above the earth in which starry lamps were set and this revolved about the earth. It was attempted to make it appear that this supported the old notion of ignorance before man discovered there is nothing but vast space filled with ether above us and that the stars are suns infinitely distant from the earth, and that their apparent revolving about us is due to the earth turning on its axis.

### **BIBLE ANTICIPATES SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY**

This supposed “blunder” of the Bible is not now made much of even by avowed enemies of the Book. Scholarship has shown that *raqia*, the Hebrew word for “firmament,” means “that which is spread out, or overspreads, an expanse.” And if this is read into the text of Scripture wherever the word firmament occurs, it will at once be seen that instead of any contradiction of astronomical discovery, there is complete harmony. In other words, the Bible really anticipated scientific discovery.

Another outcry against the Bible was raised when Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo discovered that instead of the heavenly bodies revolving about the earth, as men had supposed, the earth was in reality round and revolved on its axis. There was a vague notion that the old theory was somehow supported by the Bible.

But the Bible is now known to be in entire harmony with these findings of science, and indeed, to have anticipated them.

All through the centuries the Bible had declared, “He hangs the earth on nothing” (Job 26:7), and “it is turned as clay to the seal” (Job 38:14), and “He set a compass [or circle] upon the face of the deep” (Proverbs 8: 2 7), and “He that sits upon the circle of the earth” (Isaiah 40:22), and, “Who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb? When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling band for it, and brake up for it. My decreed place [margin, established My decree upon it], and set bars and doors, and said, Hitherto shall thou come, but no further” Job 38:8- 11), and, “Has thou commanded the morning since thy days. And caused the dayspring to know his place?” (Job 38:12).

In these statements men have had before them a revelation of what they have now discovered by laborious research—that a definite relation is maintained between sea and land by which the waters are prevented from overwhelming the earth; that this globe is not, as the ancients supposed, supported on any other solid substance, but hangs in space and is governed by the invisible forces of gravitation; that the earth is round, not flat, for the word “circle” in the above passages does not mean a circle drawn upon a plane surface, but an arch or sphere, and thus teaches the true form of the earth; that the earth revolves on its axis, or as a clay cylinder to the seal which molds it; and that this revolution is so invariably regular that the dayspring never fails or lingers in the sky.

### **ASTRONOMY NOW CATCHING UP**

A modern astronomical discovery is that the stars are infinite in number and cannot be counted. The ancients did not know this. About 150 BC Hipparchus announced their number as being 1022. Two hundred and sixty years later Ptolemy had been able to find but four more, and placed the number at 1026. Even now, on a clear night, without artificial aid, only 1160 stars can be counted.

But with lenses that enlarge man’s capacity to see, the number of the stars begins to mount. As telescopes have enlarged in size and power the number of stars made visible has grown from fifty thousand to one hundred thousand and on and on and on until today it is approaching the one billion mark. And men know that infinitely beyond all that can be, seen are millions and millions more which will be brought to light by more powerful glasses. That is, scientists are beginning to catch up with those old, old statements of the Bible that “the host of heaven cannot be numbered” (Jeremiah 33:22), and as the stars of the sky innumerable” (Hebrews 11:12), and the challenge to Abraham to “tell the stars, if thou be able to number them” (Genesis 15:5).

This fact of, modern science was anticipated in the Scriptures. That is, nineteen hundred years before Christ, and thirty-four hundred years before Galileo, the impossibility of accurately numbering the stars was set before Abraham, and the record is in this ancient Book, which is proving itself more modern than the most recent discoveries.

### **MYTHS AND SUPERSTITIONS AVOIDED**

It is an interesting, enlightening, and convincing test to make a comparison between the Bible and all other ancient books which contain the teachings of men and notice the striking difference. In the Bible not one scientific blunder, error, or absurdity has ever been found. If we go to the Koran, the Zendavesta, the Shastras, or the teachings of Zoroaster, Confucius, Seneca, Plato, Socrates, Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, or Aristotle, we find them filled with absurdities and exploded myths and superstitions.

The Bible would be discredited at once if it contained anything similar to Plato’s idea that the earth is an intelligent being, or the old view that it is a living animal, or any of the ancient notions found in these old writings that brutes are human beings in transformed shapes, that there are fish in the sea with horses’ heads, that there are mermaids and satyrs, that the phoenix was a real bird, that thunderbolts came from Jupiter, that the earth was held on the back of an enormous elephant or turtle. Who was it that kept out of this wonderful Book the myths and superstitions held by the nations surrounding Israel when these writings were being produced? Who was it who guided the writer of Psalm 104 in his composition so that he covered a description of the wonders of the created world without introducing into his account one of the scientific errors universally held in those days?

Who was it who told Job that the earth “is turned as clay to the seal” (Job 38:13,14), and thus anticipated the discovery of science regarding the rotation of the earth on its axis by thousands of years? Who was it who revealed that the dayspring “takes hold of the ends of the earth” (Job 38:13,14), thus anticipating by thousands of years the discovery of the refraction of light and putting it in suggestive language that a Tennyson or a Longfellow might envy, vividly conveying the idea of the rays of light bending like the fingers of a hand to take hold of the ends of the earth? Who was it, long before Bacon and Aristotle, men who knew nothing of such a thing as the air’s having weight, who, three thousand years before Galileo finally discovered it, disclosed to the ancient patriarch Job that the atmosphere had weight, in the words “to make the weight for the winds”? (Job 28: 25)

Who was it who taught Solomon to use language altogether in harmony with modern discoveries regarding evaporation and storm circuits? (Ecclesiastes 1: 6, 7)

Who was it who guided Solomon’s pen when he wrote his poetic description of death, and caused him to describe the spinal marrow as a “silver cord,” the basin that holds the brain as “the golden bowl,” the lungs as a “pitcher,” and the heart as a “wheel,” thus anticipating by two thousand six hundred years the announcement by Harvey of the circulation of the blood, by language which exactly fits the facts,-a wheel pumping up through one pipe to discharge the flow through another? (Ecclesiastes 12:6)

Who was it who enabled Job to anticipate the discovery of the nature, properties, and uses of lightning, or electricity, by talking about its going on man’s errands, flashing his intelligence to the ends of the earth, controlling the agencies of heaven as man’s servants on earth, and this at a time when men thought of lightning only as the anger of the gods? (Job 38: 35)

Who was it who long ago revealed what men have only recently discovered, the correlation and conservation of force, by using the expression, “He hangs the earth upon nothing?” (Job 26:7) Thus the Bible suggested, while yet men were groping in darkness in their efforts to imagine gigantic pillars or living animals of stupendous size on which the earth was fixed, what has now been discovered to be true, the delicate balancing of the great correlative forces of the universe, centrifugal as well as centripetal, which hold the earth, without pillars or foundations, on nothing, the invisible and silent working forces of the universe, keeping all matter in a state of equipoise.

There can be but one answer to these questions. Only God, the Maker of the created world, could have disclosed these facts at a time when they were unknown to men. He inspired His servants to such a degree that in that time of ignorance of the secrets of nature they were kept from making any scientific error in the language they employed to express the truths He had revealed.

Nature and nature’s God are in exact accord. There is no conflict between the facts of science and the God of science. No discovery of man has been overthrown, no discovery of man can overthrow, any truth set forth in the Book of God.

## **Its Archeological Corroboration**

UNFRIENDLY critics of the Bible have long been accustomed to claim, with an air of profound learning and the most supreme assurance, that the records of the Scripture abound with historical errors and chronological inaccuracies.

They lift their eyebrows in pretended amazement that any one can now be found so credulous as to accept as facts the statements of the Old Testament. They would have us believe that the world of scholarship and science and discovery has demonstrated beyond all question the unreliability of these old writings.

Recently, however, not so much noise of this kind has been heard. The clamor of the critics has measurably softened its tone. The wild claims of former years have died away and are no more heard. Men who would have us look on them as authorities are treading more softly in the presence of the Bible.

They have come to learn that the statements of this old Book, which formerly it seemed safe to challenge and toss lightly aside, have a surprising way of demonstrating their accuracy at most unexpected times, from the most unlooked for sources, and with the most convincing positiveness.

### **THE ARCHEOLOGIST’S SPADE**

This change in the supercilious cock sureness of the critics has been brought about by the unceasing activity of the spade of the archeologist, which has been digging down into the civilizations of the past. And the thing which so greatly disconcerts the critics, and is silencing their former loud denials of Bible accuracy and history, is that all that the spade turns up which has a bearing on the Bible invariably tends to confirm, prove, and corroborate the Scriptural records.

In no known instance of properly understood evidence which has been uncovered from the dust of the centuries has the Biblical record been proved untrue. In scores and hundreds of cases has it been proved true. So pronouncedly and invariably has this been the result that it is not going beyond the truth to say that nearly all those who are engaged in are theological research are, or become, convinced of the substantial truth and accuracy of Bible history.

Mounds and heaps which have lain untouched for centuries in Bible lands are now being dug up and thoroughly investigated. Cities, palaces, libraries, temples, and other great buildings which have been unmolested for millenniums are now being excavated, and their treasures examined with the utmost care. Papyri, inscribed bricks and tablets, vases, mural inscriptions, and monuments have been brought forth by the thousands, and scrutinized with the most scrupulous and minute examination.

### **INFORMATION REGARDING ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS**

As a result of these extensive excavations and discoveries, we have obtained information regarding ancient civilizations far more complete than we had before. Much of this information bears directly on matters contained in the Bible. The outstanding result

has been that whereas, formerly, the Bible was the only source giving information on certain matters, and was, consequently, discredited because it stood alone in its witnessing, today independent witnesses telling of the same events have sprung up by the thousands, and these, while entirely apart from, and independent of, the Bible, convincingly confirm the Bible story.

### **STORY OF THE FLOOD CORROBORATED**

Thus the Biblical account of the Flood, long ridiculed and scouted by the Bible critics, has been completely confirmed and corroborated by “the records of that cataclysm that befell the antediluvian world which are still to be seen written upon the mountains and valleys of Europe and of central and western Asia.” – “The Deciding Voice of the Monuments in Biblical Criticism,” by Melvin Grove Kyle, page 64.

The astonishment of an incredulous archeologist regarding archeological corroboration of the Bible account of the Flood is thus expressed in his own words: “A year ago who would have believed that the story of the Flood in Genesis might prove to contain actual history? I confess that this is one of the passages of which I had never dared to hope for any elucidation, much less confirmation, from the results of excavation. Yet the recent discoveries in Babylonia, in the neighborhood of Ur and Kish, leave no doubt whatever that, at the very period into which the story of Noah and his ark must be fitted, the whole country was buried under an inundation which appears to have remained many years, bringing civilization to a dead stop, causing cessation of all life and activity in that region. The story of Noah, therefore, assumes a new aspect.” – “The Accuracy of the Old Testament,” by J. Garrow Duncan, Director of Excavations in Babylonia, Egypt, and Palestine, p. vii.

In seeking for oil, men have discovered vast areas of buried fish, their geological formations, in which every scale was in place and every fin extended as in life, disclosing that they were killed simultaneously in enormous masses and suddenly buried by some stupendous upheaval.

In Siberia prehistoric mammoths have been found buried deep under the frozen earth, buried in herds with unchewed grass in their mouths and undigested food in their stomachs, standing just as they were caught in a gigantic cataclysm, and preserved for our discovery all these centuries in that natural, all-year refrigerator, plain, convincing witnesses to anyone of even ordinary intelligence and discernment of the occurrence of just such a world upheaval as the Bible records.

It is altogether clear to the scientist when such facts as these are brought to light that the forces of nature must at some time have departed from their normal course and suddenly acted with such terrific effect as to have produced a world upheaval. The Bible accounts for this by the plain, simple account of the Flood, “the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.” (2 Peter 3:6.) Today archeological discoveries have completely confirmed the Bible story.

### **TOWER OF BABEL**

The Bible story of the Tower of Babel and the confusion of tongues has been looked upon as a myth, but today men can excavate in the very ruins where the tower was built.

The warfare of the kings (Genesis 14), and the very kings there named, have all fallen under the severe criticism of Biblical skeptics. “There were no such kings,” was the verdict of these wise ones. They were unable to find these names in history. They consequently pronounced this account unhistorical, and the Bible which contains it unreliable.

But the Old Book has a way of vindicating itself when men are so daring as to challenge it. It has never been a safe Book to flout or trifle with or contradict. And now the recently discovered Spartoli tablets dug up in the excavations of ancient Babylonia confirm this old Biblical bit of history and recover for us the very names of these kings.

### **BIBLICAL HISTORY ALL CORROBORATED**

The migration of Abraham from Mesopotamia to Canaan; the existence of the very nations which the Bible speaks of as existing then, including the Hittites; the going of Joseph into Egypt, his elevation to supreme power, and the very storehouses for grain which he had built. The migration of the Israelites into Egypt and their establishment in Goshen; the hardships they endured after Joseph’s death, the great buildings their slavery produced, and the final exodus from Egypt, through the wilderness, to Canaan. The overthrow of Jericho, their wars with the nations of Canaan, and the various cities they conquered or built, including the structure, character, and lay-out of Jerusalem, and the buildings of David and Solomon. The division of the tribes into two kingdoms, and their succeeding fortunes and contacts with other nations. The fall of Nineveh. The fall of Tyre. The ascendancy of Babylon; the conquest of Samaria and Judah. The destruction of Jerusalem. The captivity to Babylon. The rise of Daniel to primacy in Babylon. The rule of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar. The overthrow of Babylon; the rise of Medo-Persia. The return from captivity, the rebuilding of Jerusalem; the coming of the Messiah, His ministry, His miracles, His death, the establishment of His church; the penetration of the gospel into all lands. The destruction of Jerusalem by Titus; and the enlargement of the gospel until it filled the world, can all now be corroborated by archeological and scientific evidence.

Indeed, every point of criticism which has been leveled against any Bible fact, has been, wherever the findings have had any bearing on the fact, refuted by archeological discovery. The very foundations upon which their critical theories were based have been demolished by the spade of the explorer in this realm. Wherever any point of criticism has had light thrown on it by the excavations, it immediately crumbles to nothing.

The Bible account of the overthrow of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah has long been subjected to the ridicule of the critics, who have put it down as one of the myths of primitive tribes. The ridicule has suddenly stopped. In 1931 the Pontifical

Archeological Expedition, after extensive and careful excavations, announced the finding of the site of ancient Sodom near the Dead Sea.

Evidences were clearly discernible that the city had been destroyed by a terrific holocaust of fire which had burned into the very foundations. All about were evidences that in addition to the fire, a severe earth disturbance had accompanied the rain of fire and brimstone. Signs of very intense heat were disclosed, together with explosions caused by pent-up gases. Another corroboratory discovery was a large stratum of rock salt capped by sulfur deposits, together with asphalt and bitumen deposits. How this verifies Genesis 14: 10, "The vale of Sodom was full of slime pits"!

The Expedition uncovered large areas of the ancient city. Houses were found almost intact in some places, containing extensive assortments of household implements. In some were found considerable quantities of jewelry. Because Isaiah mentions, in Isaiah 20:1, the name of an ancient king of Assyria, Sargon, whose name was not known to secular history, the critics seized upon this to discredit the Bible's accuracy. They loudly declared no such king ever existed and that, consequently, the Bible was not trustworthy. Here, again, the spade of the archeologist has discomfited the critics.

The French archeologist, Botta, excavating in the ruins of Nineveh, uncovered the very Assyrian palace built by King Sargon, covering twenty-five acres of gardens, lakes and parks, surrounded by a high wall pierced by two gates on each side.

Records of several kings named Sargon have been found. Indeed, the names of virtually every king of Assyria and Babylon mentioned in the Old Testament have now been discovered by archeologists. Researches in the ancient ruins and mounds have substantiated the names and locations of every city in Assyria mentioned in the Old Testament.

For many years the critics scouted the story of Nineveh and the Bible account of its history. No such city had ever existed, they declared. If "that great city of three day's journey" had ever been, why could it not be found, they inquired? We hear nothing of this criticism now. For not only has Nineveh been found, but Botta and Layard have actually traced sixty miles of its encircling walls.

One Bible account that has created great mirth on the part of the critics is that of the destruction of an entire Assyrian army of 185,000 men, together with their officers, by an angel of God when it had invested Jerusalem and blasphemed Jehovah, the God of Israel. That, we were told, was an example of the legendary character of much that is contained in the Old Testament. Suddenly the ridicule was brought to an end. The accuracy of this period of Biblical history was demonstrated by the finding of a six-sided prism which has been brought to Chicago by Professor Breasted of the University of Chicago, upon which is inscribed the royal annals of Sennacherib, king of Assyria. Here is related the account of his chief campaigns, and included is his campaign into Palestine where, it is declared, his army was miraculously destroyed before Jerusalem.

The book of Daniel has been discredited by the critics because it gave the name of Belshazzar as Babylon's last king. Belshazzar's name is not mentioned in secular history, nor is he listed as being among the kings of Babylon. History names Nabonidus as the last king of Babylon. This produced the charge by critics, unanswered for years, that Daniel's whole account was unreliable.

But, as in every other case, archeological discovery has settled the dispute in favor of the Biblical record. It was Sir Henry Rawlinson who discovered important inscriptions written by Nabonidus himself. In this Nabonidus declares that for many years he lived in retirement at Tema and "came not to Babel," and that his son, with the nobles and the army, was in Babylon. Then he inscribes the following prayer to his god in which he names his son, reigning as regent in Babylon: "And as to Belshazzar the exalted son, the offspring of my body, do thou place the adoration of the great deity in his heart. May he not give way to sin. May he be satisfied with life's abundance. And may reverence for the great divinity dwell in the heart of Belshazzar, my first-born favorite son." Tablets have been found written by Cyrus containing the record of sales and contracts made through the steward of Belshazzar.

Even such incidental references of the Old Testament as those of 1 Kings 10:28,29; 4:26; 9:18-19, where it is indicated that King Solomon collected horses in such enormous quantities that he had to stable them about in different cities, have been corroborated by archeological discoveries. Megiddo is named as one of the cities where Solomon collected large numbers of horses. In 1928 The Oriental Institute Megiddo Expedition of the University of Chicago uncovered at Megiddo the very horse stables of Solomon with stalls for large numbers of horses as well as with living quarters for their grooms and space for chariots.

Mr. Guy, the field director of this Expedition, was reported in a newspaper as thus describing these stables: "The stalls were arranged in double rows. The horses, therefore, stood in two rows, about twelve horses in each row, one row facing the other. Between each two rows of heads was a passage for the grooms and keepers of the horses to control and feed them. In front of each horse was a stone manger, and the rows of mangers were divided into sections by massive stone hitching posts still containing the original tie-holes for the insertion of the halter ropes for tying the horses."

The face value of the record has been and is being corroborated at every place where archeological discovery touches it. I have not attempted to demonstrate this in detail, for that would require a description of every definite item of archeological evidence bearing on the Biblical record which scientific research in this field has produced during the past century. And there is no space here to do that. Nor is it necessary.

## **THE VERY STONES CRYING OUT**

So it can be said with assurance that, since man has begun to dig about in scientific archeology, no heap of ruins anywhere in the world has been opened that has brought any comfort to unbelieving critics. Every find of excavators in the lands of the Bible serves only to corroborate the Old Book and confound its critics.

Never before in history have science, discovery, and learning testified so fully and set forth such abundant and scientific proofs of the truth of God's Word. Today even the very stones are crying out of the dust in witness to the reliability of the eternal truth of Scripture.

## **Its Versions**

VERY early the original manuscripts of the Books of the Bible were translated into other languages than those in which they were written. These translations are known as versions.

When the Jews returned to their own land following the Babylonian captivity it became apparent that their language had changed. Gradually Hebrew ceased to be the language of the common people, and another Semitic language took its place, the Aramaic.

This language was divided into two principal dialects, the West Aramaic, or Syriac, and the East Aramaic, or Chaldee. The Syriac was spoken almost universally in Palestine in Christ's time. Practically all the Semitic words in the New Testament are from the Aramaic, such as *mammon*, *raca*, *talitha cumi*, *abba*. Aramaic is obsolete now, having given place to Arabic and Persian.

### **THE SEPTUAGINT**

As the Aramaic displaced the Hebrew after the captivity, although Hebrew was retained as the sacred language and became the language of the priests almost exclusively, it became necessary for an interpreter to stand beside the teaching priest and translate the Hebrew to those who knew only Aramaic. Later on these interpreters began to add explanations to their translations, and in this manner originated the Targums, or Aramaic paraphrases of the Old Testament.

The outstanding Old Testament version is the Septuagint, or the version of the Seventy, often designated by the Roman numeral, LXX. It is agreed this was begun about 280 BC. It was done at Alexandria in Egypt, and was for the benefit of the Jewish colony of that city. It was a translation of the Old Testament from the original Hebrew into Greek, which had by that time become the common language of the countries bordering the eastern end of the Mediterranean.

The Septuagint became very popular among the Greeks peaking Jews. It was the version most in use in the time of Jesus, who, together with His apostles, referred to it and quoted from it in all their work. It is of special value today inasmuch as it is a translation from older Hebrew manuscripts than any other now extant. The Old Testament portions of all most ancient manuscripts known today, such as the Sinaitic, Vatican, Alexandrian, and Ephraem, are from the Septuagint.

### **OTHER GREEK VERSIONS**

Three other Greek versions of the Old Testament were made by Aquila, a Jewish proselyte of Pontus, in the early part of the second century after Christ; by Theodotion, another Jewish proselyte, in the first half of the same century; and by Symmachus, an Ebionite, later in the same century.

The great Alexandrian scholar, Origen, in the early part of the third century, unsatisfied with the Greek versions then existing, set to work to thoroughly revise the Septuagint. The result was his "Hexapla," or six-version edition, containing in parallel columns (1) the Hebrew text; (2) the Hebrew text transliterated into Greek; (3) Aquila's translation; (4) the translation of Symmachus; (5) Origen's own version of the Septuagint; and (6) Theodotion's translation.

The most important version of the Old Testament in Syriac is known as the "Peshito," or "simple." It was made by Jewish Christians in the second century.

### **THE VULGATE IN LATIN**

The chief Latin version of the whole Bible is that known as the Vulgate, because translated into the tongue of the common people. It was done by Jerome at the request of Pope Damasus, Jerome was the most noted scholar of his day. He traveled widely in Italy and the East, studied under Gregory Nazianzen in Constantinople, commenced his work of translation at Rome, where he issued first the Gospels, then the Acts, followed these with the rest of the New Testament, and then the Psalms from the Old Testament. He then went to Bethlehem in Palestine, where for more than a third of a century he lived and studied and translated. In the year 404 the great work was completed, and he issued his translation of the Old Testament. His version became the standard version of the church and remained such for more than a thousand years. It was the source of Wycliffe's English version, exercised great influence upon Tyndale's translation and others, and was the sole basis of the Roman Catholic translation of 1582 and 1609 known as the Rheims-Douay Version. The great value of the Vulgate, like that of the Septuagint, is that it was translated from manuscripts much older than any now existing.

Egyptian, or Coptic, versions of the Scripture were made from the Septuagint in the third and fourth centuries; a Gothic version in the fourth century; and later many Ethiopic, Arabic, Armenian, Persian, and others, most of which are translations from the Septuagint or Vulgate.

### **WYCLIFFE'S ENGLISH TRANSLATION**

One of the foremost scholars of England as well as one of the most devoted servants of God put the Scriptures into the English language. His name was John Wycliffe. He was born about 1320 and died in 1384. His work is a translation from the Vulgate, not from the Hebrew and Greek, and consequently shares any defects the Vulgate possesses.

Wycliffe did his great work in the face of the most venomous opposition. While he remained in the Church of Rome until his death, he must be numbered as among the boldest Reformers. He was twice tried for heresy, and his translation of the Bible into English was looked upon by the Roman Church as the work of the devil. Every effort was put forth to suppress it, but without avail. The people rejoiced to get it. They gathered in secret to read it or hear it. As printing was not yet known, it was very costly, as the

expense of its slow copying was great. Nevertheless the people were so eager for God's word that many gave the products of their labor for even a few favorite chapters, even though their possession of these might be the means of bringing them to the dungeon or stake. Some were burned with copies around their necks. Others went to death for teaching the Bible to their children. Priests hunted still others like wild beasts.

What Wycliffe and his translation of the Bible meant to the English-speaking world is expressed in a lecture by Prof. Montagu Burrows, delivered at Oxford in 1881, from which the following is taken:

### **ENGLAND'S DEBT TO WYCLIFFE**

To Wycliffe we owe, more than to any one person who can be mentioned, our English language, our English Bible, and our reformed religion. In Wycliffe we have the acknowledged father of English prose, the first translator of the whole Bible into the language of the English people, the first disseminator of the language of the English people, the first disseminator of that Bible amongst all classes, the foremost intellect of his times brought to bear upon the religious questions of the day, the patient and courageous writer of innumerable tracts and books, not for one, but for all the different classes of society, the sagacious originator of the whole system of ecclesiastical reformation, which in its separate parts had been faintly shadowed forth by a genius here and there, but which acquired consistency in the hands of the master. By him and by those he had trained, that Reformation was so firmly planted that it took deep root in the land, and after giving the impulse to similar and later movements on the continent, issued at last in the great system under which we live, one almost identical with that of the Rector of Lutterworth, who died a century and a half before his work had fulfilled its appointed results.

"Wycliffe founded no colleges, for he had no means; no human fabric enshrines his ideas; no great institution bears his name. The country for which he lived and died is only beginning to wake up to a sense of the debt it owes his memory. And yet so vast is that debt, so overpowering the claim, even when thus briefly summarized, that it might be thought no very extravagant recognition if every town in England had a monument to his memory, and every university a college named in his honor.

"Consider what a portent this Oxford Doctor (or Professor, as he virtually was) must have appeared in the fourteenth century, attacking from his chair, close to this very spot, every portion of the existing Church system, from the pope at the head to the friar at the foot, not with the vulgar weapons of reckless fanaticism sharpened upon popular prejudice, still less with the weapons of professed unorthodox sentiment, but with the well-tempered steel of philosophical reasoning, based on an appeal to the Scriptures and the Primitive Church, and invested with the defensive panoply of a strictly moral, industrious, self-sacrificing, courageous life."

### **PAPAL OPPOSITION**

At a Convocation of Canterbury in 1408, at which a law was enacted forbidding anyone to translate the Scriptures into English on pain of excommunication, Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, referred to Wycliffe as "that pestilent wretch, the son of the old serpent, the forerunner of Antichrist," who had "completed his iniquity by inventing a new translation of the Scriptures."

And Thomas Fuller, in his "Church History," discloses that "though Wicliffe had no Tomb, he had an Epitaph, such as it was, which a Monk afforded him, and that it was no worse, thank his want, not of malice, but invention, not finding out worse expressions,

"The Devil's Instrument, Churches Enemy, Peoples confusion, Heretics Idol, Hypocrites Mirror, Schisms Maker, hatreds maker, lies forger, flatteries sink, who at his death despaired like Cain, and stricken by the horrible Judgements of God, breathed forth his wicked Soul to the dark mansion of the Black Devil."

### **WYCLIFFE'S ASHES**

Many years after his death the Council of Constance ordered his bones to be disinterred and burned, a quaint account of which is given by the same Thomas Fuller as follows:

"Hitherto the Corpse of John Wycliffe had quietly slept in his grave, about one and forty years after his death, till his body was reduced to bones, and his bones almost to dust. For though the Earth in the Chancel of Lutterworth in Leicester-shire, where he was interred, hath not so quick a digestion with the Earth Acheldama, to consume Flesh in twenty four hours, yet such the appetite thereof, and all other English graves, to leave small reversion of a body after so many years.

"But now such the spleen of the Council of Constance, as they not only cursed his Memory, as dying an obstinate Heretick, but ordered that his bones (with this charitable caution, if it may be discerned from the bodies of other faithful people) to be taken out of the ground and thrown far off, from any Christian burial.

"In obedience hereunto Richard Fleming Bishop of Lincoln, Diocesan of Lutterworth, sent his Officers (Vultures with a quick sight scent at a dead Carcass) to unbury him accordingly. To Lutterworth they come, Sumner, Commissarie, Official, Chancellour, Proctors, Doctors, and the Servants (so that the Remnant of the body would not hold out a bone, amongst so many hands) take, what was left, out of the grave, and burnt them to ashes, and cast them into Swift a Neighboring Brook running hard by. Thus this Brook hath conveyed his ashes into Avon; Avon into Severn; Severn into the narrow Seas; they, into the main Ocean. And thus the Ashes of Wycliffe are the Emblem of his Doctrine, which now, is dispersed all the World over."

### **PRINTING AND THE BIBLE**

The invention of printing from movable type brought a great enlargement of Bible circulation and Biblical knowledge. Johannes Gutenberg printed a Latin Bible at Mainz in 1456. William Caxton operated the first English printing press in London in



1477. The first printing press in North America was set up at Harvard College in 1639, but South America was printing before that date.

The first New Testament printed in English was William Tyndale's translation in 1525. It was a real translation directly from the original Greek. It is to Tyndale, probably more than to any other, that we owe the majesty of style which is the outstanding feature of the English Bible.

Tyndale was treacherously arrested in 1535, confined in Vilvorde Castle near Brussels, and after sixteen months' imprisonment was first strangled and then burned at the stake on October 6, 1536. As he died, his last words were, "Lord, open the King of England's eyes."

During his imprisonment Tyndale labored hard at his never-ended task of translation. He worked under great privations. This is disclosed in a letter he wrote the governor of the prison in which he begged for warmer clothing, a candle in the evening, "as it is wearisome to sit in the dark," and his Hebrew Bible, grammar, and dictionary that he might spend all his time at study.

## **TYNDALE AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

In concluding a preliminary essay on the facsimile reproduction of a fragment of Tyndale's translation, Edwin Arber writes:

"Of the fruits of the English Scriptures who may sufficiently speak? One great tangible result has been the ennobling and perpetual elevating of the English character. Had the bishops stamped out the Bible, England would have been as Italy and Spain were, and much of the world's history would have been differently written. Hence the story of the English Bible is forever interwoven with the history of England and of the United States. The free Word of God has brought to us freedom of mind, of soul, and of estate; and we in this, as in so many other things, now inherit, without even a passing thought, principles and privileges which our forefathers oftentimes purchased with their lives. May we in like manner be found faithful to all that is true and right in our day and generation, and hand down intact to our children the munificent gifts which we have received, for nothing, from our ancestors.

"What shall we say of the illustrious translator? Strange alchemy! By transmuting the thought of one language into the expression of another to free a people from ignorance, priest craft, mental and spiritual serfdom! Yet by the grace of God so it was. Tyndale saw his life's work accomplished. Ere he was taken away, the plough boy came to know the Scriptures."

And James Anthony Froude has written: "The peculiar genius which breathes through the English Bible, the mingled tenderness and majesty, the Saxon simplicity, the grandeur unequalled, not approached in the attempted improvement of modern scholars-all are here and bear the impress of the mind of one man and that man William Tyndale."

The relation of our Authorized, or King James, Version of the English Bible to Tyndale's translation is thus stated in a preface to Bosworth and Waring's "Gothic and Anglo-Saxon Gospels." "Our present English Version was based upon the Bishops' Bible of 1568, and that upon Cranmer's of 1539, which was a new edition of Matthew's Bible of 1537, partly from Coverdale of 1535, but chiefly from Tyndale. In other words, our present Authorized translation is mainly that of Tyndale made from the original Hebrew and Greek."

## **ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS AND REVISIONS**

The first complete printed English Bible was issued in 1535. It was the translation of Miles Coverdale. This was followed in 1537 by Matthew's Bible, and in 1539 by Taverner's Bible. Then came the Great Bible, so called on account of its large size, also in 1539, and sometimes called Cromwell's Bible, because of the interest Thomas Cromwell took in furthering its translation and publication. A second edition of this in 1540 was known as Cranmer's Bible, as it contained a prologue by Archbishop Cranmer.

For the six years of the reign of Edward VI, 1547-1553, no new translations were issued, but many new editions of Tyndale's, Coverdale's, Matthew's, and Cranmer's were called for and circulated. By this time it was apparent to all that the possession of the Bible by the common people encouraged the spread of Protestant principles; so that when Mary took the throne, Bible translation and circulation were suppressed as much as they could be.

The work of revision, however, was not stopped. Many of the reformers had found refuge in Geneva, among them being John Knox and Miles Coverdale. In 1557 they issued the New Testament, and in 1560 the complete Geneva Bible. The dedication was to Queen Elizabeth. This was heartily welcomed in England, and 150 editions were called for before the Authorized Version finally displaced it.

In 1568 the Bishops' Bible was issued, being what its name implied, the official version of the English bishops. Some notes in the Geneva Bible were not relished by the bishops, and the cordial reception of that Bible by the people stirred them to great activity. They used the Great Bible as a basis for their revision.

## **THE CATHOLIC BIBLE**

All of these English versions so far mentioned were the work of reformers, or Protestants. We come now to the Catholic version in English. Just as influential Protestants had been compelled to flee to the continent when Mary became queen, so influential Catholics were likewise driven out of England when Elizabeth took the throne. Some of these established English institutions of learning at Douay and Rheims in France. At Rheims in 1582 they issued an English New Testament, which was a translation from the Vulgate by Gregory Martin, assisted by Cardinal Allen and Richard Bristow.

Lack of funds delayed the issuance of the Old Testament, but it was finally published in two volumes in 1609-1610. The complete Bible of this version, which has come to be known as the Rheims-Douay, or Catholic, Version, did not appear until 1633-1635, and was published at Rouen. Many changes and revisions have been made in it since 1635, so that the Catholic Bible today is

very different from what it was originally. A few expressions from the familiar twenty-third Psalm will disclose the peculiarity of its wording:

It Our Lord rules me, and nothing shall be wanting to me: in place of pasture there He hath placed me. Upon the water of refection He hath brought me up: Thou has fattened my head with oil: and my chalice inebriating how goodly is it."

## **THE AUTHORIZED VERSION**

The great Bible of the English-speaking world for more than three centuries has been the Authorized, or King James, Version. There were two strong parties in the church when King James ascended the throne, the bishops and the Puritans. Two versions of the Bible were in common use, the Bishops' Bible among the clergy and the Geneva Bible among the common people.

An attack against all Protestant versions had been made in the Rheims New Testament. This had opened a vigorous dispute between Protestants and Catholics over Bible translation. A staunch Protestant, William Fulke, had in 1589 printed the Bishops' Version and the Rheims Version side by side with the Catholic notes and his replies to them.

On the Puritans complaining to King James about numerous things in the church, the king named a convention at Hampton Court Palace in January, 1604. Among the subjects discussed at this convention was Bible translation. The decision arrived at was to make an entirely new translation from the Hebrew and Greek. By the middle of the year a carefully prepared list of 54 of the best scholars in England had been made and authorized by the king to proceed with the work.

These scholars were divided into six companies. Two companies met at Oxford, two at Cambridge, and two at Westminster. Each company dealt with a separate portion of the Bible. The whole result was later reviewed at London by a committee composed of members appointed from the six companies, and finally Bishop Bilson of Winchester and Dr. Miles Smith.

No financial remuneration was given the translators, but they were promised preferment to higher posts in the church as these might become available.

In 1611 the Authorized Version was printed in a very beautiful edition. It had been eagerly awaited, for all had great confidence in the impartiality and scholarship of its translators. Changes in spelling and to some extent in wording have been made from time to time so that there is considerable difference noticed now from the first editions, but it is substantially the same. It is recognized as the finest example of English literature in existence. Indeed, the best in English writing is modeled after it, so that it has influenced the English language as has nothing else in the world.

The excellence of the translation has been acknowledged, not alone by Protestants, but by Catholics as well. F. W. Faber, the noted Catholic, pays it this eloquent tribute: "Who will say that the uncommon beauty and marvelous English of the Protestant Bible is not one of the great strongholds of heresy in this country? It lives on the ear, like music that can never be forgotten, like the sound of church bells, which the convert hardly knows how he can forego. Its felicities often seem to be almost things rather than words. It is part of the national mind, and the anchor of national seriousness. Nay, it is worshiped with a positive idolatry, in extenuation of whose grotesque fanaticism its intrinsic beauty pleads availing with the man of letters and the scholar. The memory of the dead passes into it. The potent traditions of childhood are stereotyped in its verses. The power of all the grief and trials of a man are hid beneath its words. It is the representative of his best moments, and all that there has been about him of soft and gentle, and pure and penitent and good, speaks to him forever out of his Protestant Bible. It is a sacred thing which doubt has never dimmed and controversy never soiled."

## **THE ENGLISH REVISION**

For 270 years after 1611, while there were many private revisions of the Bible, of the New Testament, and of separate books, nevertheless the Authorized Version held the affection of the people, and nothing came to challenge its supremacy until 1881, when the English Revised Version of the New Testament was issued, followed in 1885 by the Old Testament.

Seventeen years after the publication of the Authorized Version, the great Alexandrian manuscript arrived in England. It dated from the fifth century. It is now in the British Museum. In 1862 the Sinaitic manuscript, probably the oldest Greek manuscript known, was made available. In addition to these two great manuscripts many others of early dates had been discovered, earlier than any that were available to the translators of the Authorized Version.

In 1870 the finest scholars of the day, seventy in number, were appointed by the Convocation of Canterbury, and set to work, in two companies, thirty-nine on the Old Testament and thirty-one on the New. The Old Testament revisers had 794 sittings, the New Testament 407. They gave their time and their services free, and the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge agreed to meet all expenses, including travel and printing, on consideration of owning the copyright.

The reasons for the new revision were, chiefly, five in number: First, there was the availability of the new manuscripts. Second, changes had already been made in the text in revisions by private parties from the new manuscripts. Third, changes in the meaning of English words made some words retained in the Authorized Version obsolete. Fourth, there was need of greater uniformity in translation. Fifth, there were bad translations and misspellings in the Authorized Version.

After laboring eleven years, the revisers published the Revised New Testament in 1881. Four more years produced the Revised Old Testament in 1885.

## **AMERICAN PARTICIPATION**

Not long after work had been started on this revision the co-operation of American scholars was sought and secured. Thirty-four men in America were added to the list of revisers, under the leadership of one of America's foremost scholars, Dr. Philip Schaff. They formed two companies, one for the Old Testament and one for the New. While their associates were laboring in England, these

were laboring in America. They met the last Friday and Saturday in each month from September to May, beginning in 1872, at the Bible House in New York City, holding a summer meeting either in Andover or New Haven. Like their English associates, they received no remuneration, their traveling expenses and the cost of their meetings being met by voluntary contributions.

### **THE AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION**

The companies in England sent the American companies copies of the Bible portions they revised. The Americans either approved these or suggested alterations for them. Many of the suggestive changes made by the American revisers failed of acceptance by the English companies. It was agreed, however, not to publish two distinct versions at once. The American revisers agreed to issue no publication for at least fourteen years after the publication of the complete English Revision. The English revisers agreed to publish at the end of their version a list of the unaccepted American suggestions. These agreements were faithfully carried out.

Meanwhile the American revisers maintained their organization and continued their work, making still further revision, and, as a matter of fact, an entirely new translation. Their work covered a period of twenty-nine years, from 1872 to 1901. They labored earnestly, conscientiously, capably, while one by one their members were claimed by death until when their work was completed only four of the Old Testament company of fifteen remained, and but three of the New Testament company of nineteen.

They produced the American Standard Version. It was issued in 1901 and in the judgment of many authorities is the best version of the Scriptures yet known.

### **PRIVATE TRANSLATIONS**

Many private translations, especially of the New Testament, have been published during the past half century. As most of these have been the work of single scholars, they have not obtained or exercised wide influence. Among the most important of these are Rotherham's "Emphasized," Wilson's "Emphatic Diaglot" (the New Testament in the original Greek, with an interlinear, word-for-word translation together with a free translation), Ferrar Fenton's "The Holy Bible in Modern English," Weymouth's "The New Testament in Modern Speech," the "Twentieth Century New Testament," Moulton's "Modern Reader's Bible," and Conybeare's "Epistles of Saint Paul."

Not all these private translations of the Bible are reliable, even though they may be made by excellent scholars. In such an important work as translating God's Word it is obviously of supreme importance that those who engage in this work really believe it is indeed God's Word they are handling, and deal with it accordingly, seeing in it an inspired, supernatural, divinely given, altogether unique volume, consisting of writings that "came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." This has not always been true of those who have taken it upon themselves to translate God's Holy Word. Consequently their translations do not create the confidence which the great versions do. It is better, far better, to use the accepted, approved, and reliable Authorized, English Revised, and American Standard versions. These are the product, not of one man, but of groups of impartial, devoted, Christian scholars.

## **Its Message**

THE sixty-six different sections of the Bible deal with many subjects, but set forth one message. They treat of the very beginning of the world, the origin of human life, and many early events of which we have no other authentic history.

There are parts which give a history of the Hebrew people, their worship, system of government, travels, hardships, exile, and return to their own land.

Other parts describe a system of sacrifices and offerings, a priesthood, and forms and ceremonies of worship, the giving of a divine law, together with sundry warnings about obedience and disobedience to that law.

The New Testament contains a record of the birth, labors, miracles, teachings, parables, betrayal, crucifixion, burial, resurrection, ascension, priesthood, and intercession of Jesus the Christ, together with the prediction of His coming again. It contains also an account of the establishment of the Christian Church, the epistles of the apostles of Christ, and the Revelation.

### **A MESSAGE OF SALVATION**

What is the purpose of such a Book? Of what benefit is it to man? What is its meaning, and what is its message? Is it to be viewed as a history, as a statement of ethics, as a system of teaching, or as a guidebook to morals?

The message of the Bible is a message of salvation from sin. It is a revelation of God's mercy, disclosing to human beings the steps God has taken to provide a remedy for them from the ruin which sin has caused. Its two big words are "salvation" and "sin."

### **SIN AND ITS CONSEQUENCES**

It was not God's purpose that sin should ever come into the world. Nevertheless, contrary to the purpose of God and altogether outside of His original plan, but not without His foreknowledge, sin thrust itself into the world. It brought death and sorrow and eternal loss. It brought an end to the fellowship between God and man. It marred the harmony of the universe. It placed man under the sentence of death. It ruined his nature, which fell into corruption and depravity. It removed hope from the earth and placed it under a curse. It has produced every evil thing that has ever existed.

And there was no hope in man that he could ever recover his original standing before God. He could not remove his guilt. He could not cleanse his heart. He could not change his corrupt, depraved nature. He could not remove or cancel the sentence of death which hung over him. He could not attain to righteousness. He was lost, irretrievably, hopelessly, eternally lost.

### **THIS OFFER OF GOD'S MERCY**

And in that helpless condition, man was offered free pardon for the past, victory over all the power of sin for the present, and eternal salvation and restored fellowship with God for the future-offered it without money and without price, as a free gift from God, without effort of his own, on the simple and sole condition of faith and acceptance.

God did this because He was not satisfied that man should be lost. He was not satisfied that man should be separated from Himself. He hated sin, but He loved the sinner. He was determined to destroy sin, but save the sinner. And seeing that man could not save himself, God's own arm brought salvation. He provided His own remedy for the sin of man and the sinful condition of man.

### **PURPOSE OF GOD TOWARD SIN**

The Bible sets forth the remedy for sin-the salvation which is in Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us of the origin of sin and of God's dealings with it, together with His purpose to destroy it utterly.

From the beginning of sin until now, God has had no other purpose toward sin than to destroy it; for God and sin are antagonistic. He can never take any other attitude toward it but one of complete antagonism. So long as it exists, He must fight it. There never can be any peace between them until one or the other is destroyed. There never can be any truce between them. Either God or sin must go. The conflict between them can never end except in the complete destruction of one or the other.

From the beginning until now God has shown it to be His purpose to destroy sin, and save the sinner. In all His dealings with the human family He has taken every means to reveal this. He caused to be established among His ancient people the sanctuary and its furniture, its ceremonies, its sacrifices, its offerings, its worship, its ritual, its priesthood. One wonders, and many today fail to see, why so much of the Bible is devoted to these ancient forms of religious service and worship, and why such a vast amount of detail is necessary in describing them. What is it all about? Why is it so fully set forth in the Bible?

### **GOD'S REMEDY FOR SIN**

That whole ardent system, and everything connected with it, was an attempt to disclose God's remedy for sin. What was the sanctuary for, the priesthood, the sacrifices, and all the unvarying round of services day by day and year by year? Why were the people instructed to bring animals to the gate of the sanctuary, slay them, and have their blood taken in before the law of God and sprinkled there? For this reason, and this alone; namely, to get rid of sin. And in the New Testament, why did Jesus come into the world, and labor, and teach, and preach the gospel, and die, and be buried, and be raised, and ascend to heaven? It was to set forth God's remedy for sin, and to save the sinner.

Through all these years since He was here on earth Jesus has been ministering in the heavenly sanctuary above, as our High Priest, offering His blood in our behalf, interceding for His people, as the Mediator of the new covenant and our Advocate with His Father. What for? Again the answer is, to get rid of sin, to apply the great divine remedy for sin, and to save the sinner.

And He is coming again. What for? To complete His destruction of sin, to wipe it out of existence forever, to cleanse the universe of its curse, and to establish renewed and eternal fellowship between His Father and saved sinners.

### **GOOD NEWS, GLAD TIDINGS**

So the Bible was written to reveal to men, to sinners, not alone their lost condition, but the only remedy for their sins. It contains the glorious message of salvation. It is good news, glad tidings. It is more than history, or prophecy; it is more than poetry and eloquence; it is more than romance and tragedy. It was not prepared merely for the intellect of man, but for his heart. It is not merely a message for his mind, but for his soul. It was designed not merely to teach doctrines, but to bring men to God. It is not the reasoning of men about God; it is God speaking to men in order to impart His own nature to them.

The paramount purpose of the Bible, then, is to make men wise unto salvation. The grandeur of such a purpose, and its bearing on the deepest and most enduring interests of the human race, are calculated to excite the deepest concern. The Bible deals with interests so vast that it becomes of greater value than all other literature, and ought to command the most reverent study and the most earnest obedience. It is nothing less than the voice of God calling us away from our sins into paths of love and light and holiness and truth. No other writings in the world have such a lofty purpose as the Bible. No other writings have such power actually to accomplish their purpose.

## **Its Person**

THE fascination of the Book is due to the fact that it is the story of a Person. The inmost central glory of the Bible is Christ, the Son of God. The writers of the Old Testament thrill with hope and expectancy as they sing and prophesy and prepare for the coming of the Messiah, the Savior of the world. The writers of the New Testament are moved to reverence, admiration, and worship as they tell the story of His actual appearance and work among men.

What the Bible is in human speech, Christ was in human flesh-the Word of the living God. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and

without Him was not anything made that was made. The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” John 1: 1-3, 14.

What the Word of God is in written form, Jesus was in the flesh. The Word of God was in the world in written form before Jesus came into the world. All that was in that Word in written form was made to be in human form in Christ, for He was the Word of God made flesh. There is nothing the written Word contains but is in Him. There is no truth He taught or lived but is in the written Word.

### **WITNESSES TO CHRIST**

From beginning to end the Bible witnesses to Christ. He is the Seed promised to the first woman. He is the Angel of the Presence who appeared to the patriarchs. He is the ancient Deliverer of His people. He is the Messiah of the Jews. He is the Redeemer of the world. He is the crucified Savior. He is the Babe born in Bethlehem. He is the Miracle Worker of Galilee and Judea. He is the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world. He is the risen Christ. He is the ascended Christ. He is the great High Priest standing before God in the holy of holies. He is the Mediator between God and man. He is the King on the holy hill of Zion. And He is the Coming King. The patriarchs of old are represented in the Holy Scriptures as looking and waiting with eagerness and longing for the coming of the Messiah. His ancient people sang of His coming into the world to deliver them. Their prophets thrilled them with predictions of His coming and glory. Their psalmists heralded His coming with deepest joy. Their priests taught generation after generation the good news of His predicted advent. Christ is the central figure of the Old as well as of the New Testament. To Him does all the Bible give witness.

### **SALVATION THROUGH CHRIST**

The Bible’s message of salvation is the message of Christ. The purpose of the Bible is to bring salvation to men. It does this by presenting Christ, the Savior of men. No wonder, then, that He is the central figure in, and the central theme of, the Book.

The first Adam fell under sin. His children derive from him a double heritage, or curse: first, a debt of guilt, which, instead of being able to reduce, they are constantly increasing; second, a fallen, corrupt, carnal nature, which is altogether incapable of righteousness. Out of these two grow all the woes of humanity.

Christ is the last Adam. He is the new head of the race. Those who by faith are united to Him become heirs of a double heritage of an exactly opposite kind. Born of the flesh, we are entangled in Adam’s guilt. Born of Christ, we come into an illimitable heritage of merit, which Christ has made the common property of all the members of the family of which He is the Head. This extinguishes the debt of our guilt, cancels the record of our sins, brings pardon for all our transgressions, removes the sentence of death hanging over us, and makes us rich in the righteousness of Christ and thus places us in the favor of God with restored fellowship.

More than that, as Adam conveyed to his posterity a carnal, fallen, corrupt nature, separated from God and inherently unfit for righteousness, so the last Adam transmits to the race of which He is the Head an entirely new nature, a spiritual nature akin to God’s, partaking of and delighting in righteousness.

### **REDEMPTION IN CHRIST**

When, therefore, a man turns away from his own works, and looks alone to Christ for salvation, God declares that man just. This declaration of God is grounded on the finished work of our Lord. This is the very heart of Paul’s argument in Romans. The passage making this most clear is Romans 3: 23-26: “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness. That He might be just, and the justifier of him which believes in Jesus.”

Analyzing this passage discovers these points: 1. All men, without exception, are sinners. 2. All stand in need of a justification which they cannot provide of themselves. 3. God has set forth Christ to be the propitiation for the sins of all. 4. On the ground of this propitiatory work of Christ, we are declared to be just, or reckoned as just. 5. This act of God in declaring us just is entirely by grace and on condition of our faith in Christ. 6. Lastly, this work of Christ is necessary in order that God might himself be just, as well as being able to justify him who believes in Christ.

### **FAITH IN CHRIST**

The gospel, then, is God’s arrangement by which He brings sinners into a new relation to Himself by faith in Christ. In this new relation God justifies the ungodly without effort on their part. (Romans 4:5) The sole basis of this justifying act of God is the atonement of Jesus Christ.

The declarative act of God in justifying the sinner is on condition of faith. This is not merely stated many times in the New Testament, but the Old Testament is appealed to as proof of the fact that faith has always been the condition of justification. The great typical illustration of this is Abraham’s faith. (Romans 4: 3; Genesis 15: 6)

A long list of Old Testament saints is given in Hebrews 11, all of whom lived by faith. Habakkuk 2:4 gives a terse but comprehensive statement of this principle. Galatians 2:16,20, sets forth clearly the idea of faith as contrasted with the works of the law as a ground of justification. justification is never on the ground of works. (Ephesians 2:8; Romans 4:3,9) If a man seeks to earn

salvation by works, the fundamental principle of the gospel is destroyed so far as he is concerned. (Romans 4:4) To him who believes in Christ, and renounces works as a ground of salvation, his faith is imputed for righteousness. (Romans 4:5)

### **GRACE OF GOD IN CHRIST**

When God pronounces us just, we are freed from condemnation and restored to His favor. A new standing before God is bestowed upon us. We are pardoned. The penalty of death for the transgression of the law is remitted. We are received into God's favor. His grace now flows out actively to us, and imparts every spiritual blessing. And the basis of all this is Jesus Christ and His finished work.

In comprehensive terms, Paul sets it forth in Romans 5: 1, 2. Here is the ground of justification "through our Lord Jesus Christ"; here is the condition of justification "being justified by faith." Here is the remission of the penalty "we have peace with God," which means the broken law no longer menaces us with death; and here is the new standing in the divine favor by Whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.

To those who stand in this new relation to God, He imparts a new nature and builds an entirely new character. The old nature is crucified, a new life is imparted by virtue of a new birth. And this, too, equally with justification, is entirely on the ground of the finished work of Christ, and solely by grace without works, and on the one condition of faith.

### **UNION WITH CHRIST**

The life of the Christian, therefore, may be summed up in one phrase, union with Christ. In repentance we turned away from sin and turned to Christ. Then we trusted Christ as Redeemer and Lord. Then we assumed the life and duties of followers of Christ. God's regenerating power then reproduced in our souls the image of Christ. The new life thus implanted is the life of Christ himself.

Becoming a Christian, then, is not merely a mental assent to a set of doctrines, nor believing the truth of the Bible in a purely intellectual way. It is more than joining the church and partaking of its ordinances. Christian teaching, acceptance of sound doctrines, belief in the truths of the Bible, church membership, and participation in the ordinances of the Lord's house, all have their place in the gospel plan; but the true Christian does more than accept outward forms and doctrines and church membership. He enters into a new, personal relationship with Christ.

"As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." "He that has the Son hath life." "As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk you in Him." John 1:12; 1 John 5: 12; Colossians 2: 6.

The inmost central glory of the gospel, therefore, is Jesus Christ himself. Without Him there could be no gospel. He came, not alone to proclaim a message, but also that there might be a message to proclaim. He himself was, and is, the message. Not only His teachings, but Himself, constitutes Christianity.

### **COMMUNION WITH GOD IN CHRIST**

The gospel is a revelation of the redemption of men by the work of Christ. But the gospel is infinitely more than all of this. It is the giving by God of Himself to men. It is man's union and communion with God in Christ. It was for this that prophecy was given, that preparation was made, that patriarchs, priests, and kings witnessed and wrought. It was for this that Bethlehem and Nazareth and Calvary and Golgotha and Joseph's tomb, and the hill of ascension, and the fiery tongues of Pentecost entered the Scriptural story.

It was for this that He has imputed His righteousness, imparted His holiness, and revealed the coming redemption and glorification of the body. All the saving process, the entire scheme of salvation, centers here.

That God might give Himself to man, and dwell in man, and walk in man, and manifest His glory in him, and shine forth from him, and bring him at last to Himself,-for this was the gospel instituted. And all this God does-in and through Christ.

### **PERSONAL ACCEPTANCE OF CHRIST**

Jesus bids us, "Come unto Me," "Believe in Me," "Learn of Me," "Follow Me," "Abide in Me." Personal acceptance of Him as a personal Savior is the condition of salvation, and the only condition. Surrender to Him, repentance towards Him, confession to Him, acceptance of Him, believing Him, faith in Him, following Him, learning of Him, trusting Him, knowing Him, abiding in Him, resting in Him, these are the indications and blessed privileges of Christian experience.

To be a Christian, then, is to enter into relationship with a Person, a Person who loves you, cherishes your friendship, deals tenderly and gently with you. Who guides you in the way of righteousness and obedience and teaches you His truth. Who has strength for all your needs, and supplies it to you; who walks with you as a Friend, communes with you, shares His own eternal life with You, comforts you in trouble, supplies you in need, solves all your troubles and perplexities. Who meets every crisis of life with you, stands by your side always, smooth your pillow in sickness, goes down into the dark valley of death with you, and with whom you are safe.

Knowing Him as a Friend and Savior, you feel assured in leaving all the future in His hands, just as you commit all the present to Him.

Imparting His own life to you, He will fulfill all His commandments in you. Yours will be a commandment-keeping life, because it is His life. There will be no failure in obedience, because He is your obedience. Trusting Him, relying on Him, abandoning yourselves to Him, giving yourselves clear away to Him, you shall be brought into full harmony with every requirement of God because of His life in you.

This is the glorious message of the Bible. Christ only, Christ crucified, Christ risen, Christ ascended, Christ interceding, Christ coming again, Christ the only Savior from sin, Christ our righteousness, Christ our obedience, Christ our coming King,-let us cease “not to teach and preach Jesus Christ,” “the chief among ten thousand,” and the One “altogether lovely.”

## **Its Study**

THERE are five ways in which we can profitably study the Book of God, all of them important. There is the study of the text, the true text. This involves the examination of evidence that we have, as nearly as we can possibly have them, both in our own and in the original languages, the very words of the inspired writers. This is, of course, of importance, for it provides the foundation for all after study. It is called textual criticism.

We may study the Bible as literature, analyzing its authorship, composition, style, date, and contents. This discovers much that is beautiful and satisfying. It is called literary criticism.

We may study the meaning of the text, striving to arrive at a right understanding of its separate parts, the precise meaning of passages, sections, chapters, and verses. This covers a knowledge of Biblical language, grammar, manners, customs, and the true interpretation of the meaning of its teachings. This is called Biblical exegesis.

We may study the great doctrines of the Bible, its morals, its duties, and its requirements. This brings us to an understanding of the great religion revealed in the Book of God, and makes us acquainted with the true God and the truth regarding His Son, the Savior of the world. This is called Biblical theology.

Important as all these are, there is a way of studying the Bible more important than any or all of them, and this is to use it as God's own personal Word to ourselves. Coming to its sacred pages in the attitude described by Paul when he said, Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? and seeking an answer therein, we will find this Book will guide us in all right living and to a true faith. It will convey to us a revelation of God's will for us. The first work of the Bible is to lead the individual soul direct to its Maker and keep it in constant contact and fellowship with Him. All Bible study that fails to do this is failing in its chief objective.

## **SPIRITUAL NATURE REQUIRED**

This last method of Bible study requires equipment that the other methods do not demand. What this is declared in this passage: “But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” 1 Corinthians 2: 14.

The spiritual discernment here required for a proper understanding of “the things of the Spirit of God,” grows out of a spiritual nature. The “natural man” is without this equipment. It belongs alone to the spiritual man, the saved man, the forgiven, converted man. He alone is in possession of the faculty which enables one to rightly understand the things of God, the voice of God, the will of God, the truth of God, in Holy Scripture.

Many a Christian man discovers that the Word of God is dark to him, its meaning hidden, its truth concealed. Here is the reason. He is out of spiritual condition. His fellowship with God has not been maintained. What he needs in order to get all that is possible for himself out of Bible study is a renewal of true fellowship, a pure and sensitive conscience, a teachable self-distrustful mind, a submissive and obedient will, an instant readiness to carry out God's revealed will. It is to them that fear Him that the secrets of the Lord are revealed.

All of which means that prayer and obedience are the most efficient channels of Biblical knowledge. The more these are exercised the more knowledge one has.

## **SEARCH**

In employing these agencies to obtain a true understanding of the Word of God it is necessary to proceed in accordance with well-defined rules in order to obtain certain results. And the results are altogether assured if these rules are followed.

First, search. The mind of God is not likely to be disclosed to indifferent, listless readers. The treasures of this mine yield themselves only to diligent, eager searching. Its precious things do not lie on the surface. Bible language must be diligently pondered, its statements must be thoughtfully considered, its message must be prayerfully examined. There must be a real desire to know, and a zealous digging down into the essential meaning. The mind must be put to the stretch in thinking God's thoughts after Him. Such effort will be richly rewarded in understanding and knowledge.

## **MEDITATE**

Second, meditate. “Thou shalt meditate therein day and night”; “in His law does he meditate day and night.” Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:2. This is searching with attention: more, it is searching with intention. It has as its purpose the important matter of personal application. It is searching with the intention of putting into practice. “Thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou may observe to do.” Joshua 1: 8. This, it will be observed, is first-hand meditation on God's Word itself, not what someone else has done for us. It is our own thought, our own musing, our own application to our own experience. This is actual assimilation of spiritual food and the building up of spiritual power. There is marvelous growth and development in this kind of Bible study.

Certain human helps may at times be found useful here, but great care should be taken in the matter of their use. There are many books of devotion, many commentaries, and there is a pronounced tendency to substitute these for the Bible, and do our meditating second hand. These may become positively harmful to the student of God's Word. Like milk, they represent nourishment

which has passed through the digestive processes of another before reaching us. Recognized and used for what it is, this may be helpful, but if this is taken to the exclusion of solid food, actual, first-hand, personal meditating on the Word of God for ourselves, it may be weakening and positively dangerous. If kept in their place, and the Word of God put first, these helps to devotion may be pleasant and in some respects valuable, provocative to additional thought, and highways to larger blessings. But the Word of God must be made first.

## **COMPARE**

Third, compare. "Comparing spiritual things with spiritual." 1 Corinthians 2:13. To arrive at the full meaning of God's truth takes time. The Bible covers many topics and many phases of truth. One is set forth in one place, another elsewhere. These must be assembled in order that the truth on any one subject may be understood in its entirety and its proper proportion. Passages must be compared with scrupulous care before we can appreciate the complete glory of the revelation of God.

Proceeding to the study of the Bible in accordance with these three rules, the result will be to build up and maintain spiritual life. The Bible represents itself as God's seed. (Luke 8:11; James 1:21.) We owe our spiritual birth to this Word. (1 Peter 1:23) It gives us our spiritual growth. (1 Peter 2:2) It cleanses us. (John 18:3) It edifies us. (Acts 20:32) It sanctifies us. (John 17:17) It protects us. (Ephesians 6:17) It illuminates us. (Psalm 119:105.) It satisfies us. (Psalm 119:103.) It will finally give us an inheritance among the redeemed. (Acts 20:32)

## **SUPREME RULE OF FAITH**

The Book is the supreme rule of faith. We reject a man who claims to be infallible. We refuse to acknowledge a church which claims infallibility, But we gladly submit to God's infallible Book.

By speaking of the Bible as an infallible Book, we mean that it does not err, and cannot mislead the soul that is seeking for salvation. All who read the Bible may err in their understanding of its meaning. Yet they do not need to err, and if they will submit to be led in their understanding by the Spirit of God, which is the only infallible interpreter of the Book, they will not miss the way to the Redeemer. "If any man wills to do His will, he shall know of the teaching." John 7: 17, A. R. V.

So it is in this sense that we speak of the Bible as perfect. It may not be perfect as literature, but it is perfect in its fitness and adequacy for its own purpose. Minor imperfections may be found in the Scriptures in grammar, in style, in artistic order of thought, in poetic flights, and in other features. There may appear slight inaccuracies of quotation and reference, dates and proper names, fragmentary reports of discourses and events; but such imperfections do not impair the perfect fitness of the Scriptures for their own end, to make men wise unto salvation.

## **THE CHURCH NOT DIVINE INTERPRETER**

Sometimes the difficulties in the way of a full understanding of the Bible, together with its obscurities and deficiencies, are exaggerated, and the position is taken that a clear understanding of its mysteries must be supplied by "the church," and that from "the church" we can learn the true way of life and salvation.

Our reply is that the Bible is its own expositor. Comparing scripture with scripture, each reader may arrive at a correct understanding of God's will concerning him. It is the work of God's Holy Spirit to make clear every man's duty, and the promise of the Savior is: "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth."

Some, through no fault of their own, may be unable to obtain that fullness of knowledge and certainty of understanding concerning the teachings of the Bible which others enjoy. Many a person believes in Christ to the saving of his soul before he knows very much about the deeper teaching of the Bible. But all that is necessary to salvation is presented in the Bible with such fullness and clearness that ordinary readers or hearers may easily learn from it the way of life.

The purpose of the Bible is to reveal to the sinner the way of salvation. The knowledge it supplies, therefore, must be sufficient to accomplish this sublime purpose. It is in this sense that the Bible is perfect and infallible. It makes one "wise unto salvation." And it does more. Said the apostle Paul to Timothy: "From a child thou has known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Jesus Christ. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3: 15, 16. Again we read: "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." Romans 15:4.

## **FORM OUR OWN OPINIONS**

Only in the Scriptures are the paramount problems of God and salvation solved which have profoundly moved the minds of the greatest thinkers, and which have found no solution outside the Bible. Only in the Scriptures have we a satisfactory manifestation of the existence, omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, and nature of God; an explanation of sin and its results; and a revelation of salvation from sin.

Here the conditions of salvation are clearly set forth; the purest principles of morality are declared; a noble system of ethics is made known; the way to approach God in worship is disclosed; the veil hiding the future state is lifted. Here the old, old question which philosophy has never been able to answer, "What is man's chief good?" is fully answered, and in addition, the way to reach it is revealed.



There is no higher duty for mankind than to become acquainted with the teachings of the Scriptures. One writer has said: "It is the first and highest duty of every rational being to learn from the Scriptures what is truth, and then to walk in the light, and encourage others to follow his example. We should day by day study the Bible diligently, weighing every thought, and comparing scripture with scripture. With divine help, we are to form our opinions for ourselves, as we are to answer for ourselves before God." – "The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan," p. 598.

Creeds, sermons, interpretations, exegeses, commentaries, are not sufficient for the soul that is groping for the light, and desires to place his feet upon immutable truth. The Bible itself should be studied, and the individual judgment guided by its teachings. It is not enough, and it is not safe, to take the word of any man, no matter how sincere and learned he may be.

It is a natural craving of the human heart to understand its relationship to God, its connection with its fellow men, the meaning of its existence in this world, the possibility of a hereafter, its present duty and happiness, and the supreme good of human existence. That craving can be satisfied only by learning what the Scriptures say, and by bringing the life into harmony with their divine principles.

## **NOT CREEDS**

Many creeds and confessions of faith are good, and contain much that is true and worthy. They are not, however, the fount of Christian truth. They are not the standard of appeal on questions of doctrine and duty. They may be a convenient and useful way of stating what is believed. By means of them a church may make itself better understood among its own members and by others. They may lessen the liability to confusion and error. They may standardize worship, and focus many lines of Christian faith for discussion and contemplation. They cannot, however, not even the great historical creeds, rank with the Bible as standards. The highest authority they can possibly have is an ecclesiastical authority.

The authority of the Bible is divine. The creeds are often very able, but they are the productions of men, and therefore fallible. The Bible was produced under the control and guidance and direction of the Spirit of God, and is therefore infallible. The creeds are not binding upon the conscience; the Bible is. They contain only human echoes of the heavenly message; the Bible is that message.

No man's interpretation of the Bible is infallible just because the Bible is. Men bring to its study imperfect faculties, ignorance, and it may be, misleading preconceptions. Their understanding may be clouded, their judgment biased, their reasoning faculties feeble. They can give no assurance of inerrancy.

## **COMMENTARIES NOT TO REPLACE SCRIPTURES**

The man who studies the Bible may understand enough to save him, but he does not understand it all. In drinking of the well of undefiled truth which the Bible contains, what he fills himself with may be immediately defiled by his preconceived ideas. He may be brought to a clearer understanding daily, but not likely into perfect vision. He may by constant application and research become a great theologian and expositor of God's Word, without ever coming to be the court of last appeal for the people of God.

It will be of help to the student of the Bible to understand the geography, the customs, the topography, the language, and the peoples of the Bible. It is right, therefore, for him to avail himself of all the aids to Bible study which are available. He will derive great advantage from the reading of side lights to the Bible, which illuminate the historic perspective and interpret words and statements in regard to their respective connections. Hence commentaries on the Bible may help to its understanding, but they can never share or lessen its divine authority.

As each individual must stand at the judgment bar of God and answer for himself for the deeds he has done, it is plain that God requires each one to conform to the standard He has established and which He has revealed in the Sacred Scriptures. It is the right, therefore, of each individual to compare himself and his life with that standard for himself. We do not challenge the right of any church to determine the ecclesiastical standard by which its members or public teachers are voluntarily and mutually bound so long as they elect to remain in its communion, but we insist that the individual Christian has a duty, as well as a high privilege, to make use of and study the Bible for himself, and determine his conduct by its teachings. The truth of the Scripture being that by which he will finally be judged, he surely has the right to test himself by that truth in his daily walk with God. To deprive him of this right is to take from him far more than gold and silver.

Certainly, if others have no right to take this right from him, neither can he on his part renounce that right without forsaking his duty. This responsibility of the individual carries with it the impossibility of throwing off the obligation to learn and obey the rule of duty. Because of weakness or wickedness, a man may barter away his privilege and his birthright, may neglect the duty of consulting the standard of truth and righteousness, may substitute something else for it; but if he does, let him know that the sovereign judge is no party to the bargain, and he will be without excuse in the day when he stands before God.

## **CHRIST THE CENTER**

We must study the Bible in order that we may know Christ. He is not only the revelation, but also the revealer. Prophets and apostles were but bearers of His message; He is the message. They were but heralds of the King; He is the King. It is by the study of the Holy Scriptures that we learn of Him, that we are brought to Him, that we accept Him, that we grow up into Him.

## **IMPORTANCE OF SOUND DOCTRINE**

We must study the Bible in order that we may know its doctrines, and thus become “thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” Some would cast all doctrines aside. They applaud the morals of Christianity, but dislike its doctrines. Such a conception overlooks the surpassing importance of true doctrine.

The primitive Christians “continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine.” (Acts 2: 42) It is a rich gift from heaven to “know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.” (John 7:17) Paul thanked the Lord that the believers in Rome “obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered” them. (Romans 6:17) He exhorted Timothy to “give attendance to doctrine,” and bade him “take heed” unto himself, “and unto the doctrine,” which would save him and his hearers. (1 Timothy 4:13,16.)

“Whosoever transgresses, and abides not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abides in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed.” 2 John 1:9,10. “Holding fast the faithful words as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the doubters.” Titus 1: 9. “Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine.” Titus 2:1. “If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou has attained.” 1 Timothy 4: 6.

To take away the chief doctrines of Christianity is to emasculate it. It is true that doctrine without godliness is a barren tree. At it is equally true that godliness without doctrine is as impossible as fruit without a tree. Doctrine appropriated by living faith results in loving obedience. The followers of a religion without doctrine are lost in a thick fog, imagining things that are not, and missing things that are. Strong belief in sound doctrine constitutes a clear grip of realities.

Forgetting the vitalizing power of truth, some one cries, “Christianity is a life.” We agree. But it is a life “by the faith of the Son of God”; that is, faith in the written doctrine. “These are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through His name.” John 20:31. Another says, “Christianity is a new birth which comes through believing that Jesus is the Christ.” (See 1 John 5:1.) “Christianity,” says another, “is salvation.” So we believe. But it is salvation through “belief of the truth.” (2 Thessalonians 2: 13) Christianity is proclaimed to be freedom. So it is. But it is the truth that makes men free. (John 8:32) By others Christianity is declared to be the doing of good deeds just so. But the man of God is made “perfect,” and thoroughly furnished unto all good works,” by the “doctrine,” “reproof,” “correction,” and “instruction in righteousness” given in the God-breathed Scripture. (2 Timothy 3:16,17)

## **THE SUPREME STANDARD**

The Bible, then, is the supreme standard by which every moral act and every doctrine claiming to be Christian must be tested, and to which they must conform. The Bible is the source of religious knowledge and the test of doctrine and conduct; and it is designed not only to uplift the sinner morally and spiritually, but also to secure his full and eternal salvation. After begetting us unto newness of life, the Scripture feeds and nourishes that newly begotten life. It brings to us the familiar voice of our Redeemer, counseling us in our hopes and fears, our joys and sorrows, our struggles and triumphs. It makes Him our Companion through all the days of our pilgrimage. Its special business is with our character.

Receiving it into the heart with sincere affection means that we receive thereby infinite power for safety and victory, infinite wisdom for counsel, infinite love for helping others in need. Dwelling in God’s Word, we think His thoughts after Him, and thus our character is built after the similitude of His. It is all this, however, only if we obey it. “Who looks into the perfect law of liberty, and continues therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.” James 1:25.

## **“THE BIBLE AND THE BIBLE ONLY”**

While the Bible is a mine of untold treasure, it is only a partially worked mine. It has far more truth than is being drawn from it. It has far more power than men are utilizing. Even among Christians it is a neglected Book. We substitute everything for it—missionary activity, education, literature, the daily newspaper, social schemes. But none of these can build Godlike characters. None of these can satisfy our deepest longings. We mourn our spiritual leanness, yet how scantily we partake of the abundant nourishment there is in God’s Word, and how feeble we are as a result! Let us beware how we neglect this Book of books.

We Protestants glory in our slogan, “The Bible, and the Bible only.” But how empty are such words when we content ourselves with only a smattering of Biblical knowledge. When we teach so little of it to our children. When we read so much about it, and so little in it; when we neglect its counsel in our home life and friendships. When we, are indifferent to its principles in our daily thoughts; when we are swayed by superstition and skepticism and prejudice until our practice is a far distance from our belief. There is too much diluted Bible in what professes to be Christian teaching; too much adulterated Bible in mixing God’s truth with man’s errors; too much distorted Bible, perverting its letter to support doctrines altogether contrary to its teachings. And altogether too little fidelity to “the Bible, and the Bible only.”

## **MAKE THE BIBLE SUPREME**

Make the Bible supreme, then, in the life. It is effectual in secret prayer and communion with God. Prayer brings light upon God’s Word, and the Word throws light on prayer. There is no better moral attitude, no better mental fitness for searching the Scriptures of truth, than is obtained at the throne of grace in conversation with its divine Author.

Make the Bible supreme in study and research. The wealth of its spiritual treasures is most accessible to devout, habitual pondering. Prophecy, history, law, proverbs, hymns, Gospels, Epistles, are all here before you. Where is there a more fascinating course of study than this?

Make the Bible supreme in meditation. There is no choicer field than this. Daily communion with it will expand our views of God, of ourselves, of all mankind, and of the universe. It builds up moral fiber, and provides an incentive to aspire to, and power to reach, perfection. Nothing can compare with its precepts and doctrines, its contemplation of sublime themes, its beautiful harmonies, its pensive threnodies, its songs of rapture, its inimitable narratives.

Make the Bible supreme in the home. It will be to the family a voice from heaven, a stronghold in temptation, a solace in grief, a standard of purity, a safeguard of morals, a bond of unity and peace, and the oracle and guide through the difficulties and perils of mortal life. No matter how lowly and humble the home may be, with the open Bible there, it has a light from heaven and an atmosphere of contentment and love.

### **THE ONE SOURCE**

Make the Bible supreme in the church. Apostasy and corruption are the certain results of a failure in the church to maintain direct intimacy with the Word of life. Straying away from the one source of saving knowledge, there follows a declension of faith and practice. If a high state of spiritual life is expected in the church, it must be obtained by a close and intimate acquaintance with the truth of the Holy Scriptures.

The quickening instrument in all the great revivals of the church has been the Bible. The church can never preserve itself from fatal inroads of false doctrines and low morals without the diligent use of the oracles of God. In proportion as this Book is pushed into the background, the church will sink into corruption. No church is so impoverished, no matter how rich it may be in spiritual things, as the church which is suffering from a famine of the Word of God. The church can spare its magnificent buildings, its organizations and activities, its literature and its wealth, and its ecclesiastical grandeur, far better than it can spare the Word of life. If the church is to exert its rightful influence on a world lost in sin, it must wield the power of the Scriptures to a degree far beyond that now displayed.

Make the Bible supreme in the pulpit. It is the bread of heaven with which Christ's ministers are to feed their flock. Let them have "the sincere milk of the Word." Nothing provides such an antidote to fanaticism, such a corrective of false Christianity, as the Bible. Nothing else is to be substituted for it. Let the ministers of God carry out their orders to "preach the Word." Anything else is a betrayal of sacred trust, and places in the utmost peril the souls under their care. Themes that are not Biblical do not make wise unto salvation. It is by the inspired Scriptures that men of God are "thoroughly furnished unto all good works." It is by the Word of God that men are drawn from their wanderings back to the "good way, "where they" shall find rest unto their souls. If the work of God is to advance from strength to strength and from conquest to conquest, the inspired Word must be enthroned in the seat of instruction, and the everlasting gospel must be preached from the pulpit.

### **SUPREME IN EDUCATION**

Make the Bible supreme in education. It has been banned, and perhaps properly, from the schools of the state, which are not designed to, and cannot, train men to be subjects of the kingdom of heaven. But the Bible must not be disparaged in schools of Christian learning. Above all, it must have effective play in the Sabbath school, and not be crowded out by secular themes. It should not be perfunctorily handled and taught, but with clear understanding and intelligence explained and lovingly pressed home to the heart. Only so can our youth be rightly trained. Only so can the manhood and womanhood of the race be leavened with wholesome principles.

### **SUPREME IN THE LIFE**

Make the Bible supreme in every life. This will lead to that righteousness by which a nation is exalted. Without the Bible there would have been no Protestant Christianity. Without Protestant Christianity there would have been no such freedom in the world as we see today, nor the commerce, the industries, the wealth, the progress of civilization. Its teachings penetrate the consciences of millions. Because of its presence the vicious are less vicious; crime, if not checked, is restrained; atheism is driven back by the knowledge of God; and the powers of evil are held in leash. Let a people exalt the Bible and its divine teachings in their lives, and that nation will be founded on the truth and justice of God.

The intrinsic worth of the Bible was never greater than it is today. Its beneficent influence was never needed more than it is now. Among those nations that sit in darkness and the shadow of death, its light is urgently needed. To the millions who know not God it brings news of a loving heavenly Father. To the sin-cursed and hopeless of every nation it brings the glad tidings that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," and that He "is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him." Its "good tidings of great joy " are to be taken into all the world. It does not belong to any class or nation; it is not the monopoly of the preacher or student, it belongs to the millions of all races and peoples. They are entitled to it. And the church of Christ is bound by its fundamental principles never to rest until the Bible and its glorious message of salvation and the coming kingdom of Christ are within the reach of every man throughout an the world.

Those of us who have it, how we should cherish, love, meditate on, and appropriate to ourselves, its immense wealth of knowledge and instruction - that wisdom which " cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof."

## **Its Interpretation**

STUDENTS of the Bible do not always agree as to the meaning of its teachings. This ought not to be considered surprising. It would be a miracle impossible to account for if it were otherwise. The nature and structure of the Sacred Writings, their number, their

variety, the different epochs to which they belong, the vast period of time over which they extend, their inexhaustible content and infinite character, their depth and inwardness, their references to the past, the present, and the future, their profound comprehension of the hand of God in history, their amazing prophetic revelations of future events even now unfolding, their germs of truth ever enlarging-when all these are considered we readily understand why there are differences of opinion regarding the interpretation of a volume so ancient, so wonderful, and so multiform.

Rules of interpretation which will assist students in properly understanding this remarkable Book must be based on a recognition of three facts regarding the Bible. It is different from any other book in the world. In many instances its words have more than one meaning and application. It is God-breathed, and though written by men, it shadows forth His eternal fullness and perfection.

## **PRINCIPLES GOVERNING INTERPETATION**

Considering these facts in order, it becomes apparent at once that as the Bible is like no other book in the world, the principles governing its interpretation may differ from those for interpreting other books. A collection of many treatises, written in many different styles at many different periods, can never be put side by side with the works of a single author. The one will require a different method of approach from that used for the other for complete understanding. It would be unreasonable to insist on similarity in methods of interpretation when dealing with writings so widely dissimilar.

This becomes more apparent when we consider the second fact, that Scripture has frequently more than one meaning. This complicates the matter of interpretation. It is not as easy as some would have us believe. If this were not so, it might be possible for the interpreter to disengage himself from the viewpoints of the present, free himself from the bias of prejudices and creeds, transport himself back into the past, mingle in spirit with those who first spoke, or wrote, or heard the words, feel as they felt, hear as they heard, and thus to recover the one true and original meaning, and bring it back to the hearer and reader of his own time.

But it is not so simple as that. We are dealing not with the words of men but the words of God. Their meaning was not always understood by those who first heard them, and sometimes not even by those who first spoke them. God gave men words the men did not know the meaning of, or fully grasp. The fullness of their meaning has been unfolding ever since. This can be illustrated by citing three examples-the double meanings, or applications, of prophecy; the uses of types and symbols; and the deeper sense of simple historical statements.

## **DOUBLE MEANING IN SCRIPTURE**

Of the first we get an example in our Lord's great prophecy recorded in Matthew 24, covering both the fate of Jerusalem and the end of the world. Here are mingled allusions to a near as well as a remote future, and such resemblance between the two predicted events as make references to one almost interchangeably applicable to the other. The fall of Jerusalem thus becomes more than an isolated historical event, more than the mere military destruction of an ancient city, but a type of the end of the present dispensation. So, too, was the destruction of the Noahic world by a Flood, and the cities of the plain by fire. (Luke 17: 26-30)

The course of things in history is not fortuitous. The providential dispensations of creation's Ruler are not a dream. The gradual development of the counsels of God is not a fiction. There are profound harmonies in the government of God. There are mystical recurrences of fore ordered combinations in the arrangements of heaven. There are spiritual ties between the past and the present. There are foreseen and foretold resemblance and predestined counterparts in epochal events. And because of all this there is reasonable ground to believe in double meanings and double applications of prophecy which must be taken into consideration in seeking adequate rules of interpretation.

## **TYPES AND SYMBOLS**

The use of types and symbols in the Scripture affords us another illustration. There can be no doubt at all of the employment of these. The Master Teacher himself referred to the brazen serpent as typical of His being raised aloft on the cross (John 3:14,15). He illustrated the mystery of His own three days in the heart of the earth by an event of the past which He called a sign, the experience of Jonah and the whale. (Matthew 12:39,40).

Matthew recognizes the existence of types in connection with the infant Savior being in Egypt and coming out of that land (2:15). John in connection with the crucifixion (19:36); Paul constantly refers to this form of what have been called "acted prophecies" (Romans 5:14-19; 1 Corinthians 5:7; 10:2-11; Galatians 4:24-31; Colossians 2:11). The greater part of the Epistle to the Hebrews is one continued explanation of the spiritual significance of the chief features of the Levitical law, its sacrifices, rites, priests, all being set forth as shadows of the good things of the gospel. Peter plainly declares that the water of the Flood is typical of baptism (1 Peter 3:21). And in the Revelation the realms of blessedness and glory are so described as to fully warrant us in recognizing the earthly Jerusalem as a type of the Heavenly City which God has prepared for His faithful servants, and the earthly Canaan as a symbol of the heavenly Canaan, a shadow of the incorruptible inheritance of the people of God (Revelation 21,22; Hebrews 11:16).

## **DEEPER MEANINGS IN SIMPLE WORDS**

The existence of deeper meanings in Scripture, even in what might appear as simple historical statements, will be apparent in many parts of the Bible. Our Lord himself discloses, in what might have been looked on as a mere title of Jehovah, a meaning so full and so deep that it formed the basis of a profound argument. (Matthew 22:31-33; Mark 12:24-27; Luke 20:37,38) This title was shown to contain a spiritual truth of the broadest application. And it appears that the mere recapitulation of the names of a son, a

father, and a grandfather (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), in connection with the God whose servants they were, and whom they worshiped, is not only submitted as proof of a fundamental doctrine, but it is acknowledged as being convincing proof by doubters and opponents. (Luke 20:39) It is clear from this that there is more in Scripture than appears in the mere literal sense of the words.

The third fact, that the Scripture is God-breathed, or divinely inspired, we have already considered at length. The bearing of this upon the rules and methods of interpretation is obvious. The Scriptures are of a nature and possess characteristics which render them unlike any other writings known to men. We cannot apply to these sacred writings rules of interpretation which may, be adequate for merely human writings. These may be found to be entirely inadmissible and inadequate.

## **RIGHT METHOD OF APPROACH**

And this leads us most naturally to a consideration of those principles of interpretation which are appropriate, suitable, and effective in the study of such a Book as we have found the Bible to be. These must now engage our attention. What is the true and right method of approaching this Book in order to understand the meaning of its teachings? In seeking an answer to this inquiry we shall endeavor to present only the chief rules of Biblical interpretation, together with a few comments on their use and application.

Let this be clearly understood at the beginning: There is only one proper, helpful approach to the study of the divine Word, an absolute prerequisite, a necessary preparation. This is of more value in rightly understanding what we are about to study than a knowledge of all the rules of the wisest interpreters of the world. That essential prerequisite is Prayer. This is a preparation for Bible study simply and plainly indispensable. It is well for us to be reminded, because of the natural tendency of the human heart to take pride in and give glory to our intellectual efforts, that it is more than probable, -it is altogether certain, -that the very simplest reader who takes his translated Bible on his knees, and reads and searches and meditates with eager prayer that he may understand, will arrive at a truer and more inward knowledge of the meaning of God's Word than will ever be vouchsafed to him, no matter how completely equipped with all the appliances and advantages of grammar, ancient languages, philology, and criticism, who reads the original but neglects to mark its holy character and divine origin, and forgets to pray that he may not only read, but may learn and understand and do.

## **LITERAL AND HISTORICAL METHOD**

Approaching the Scripture in this reverent way, seeking enlightenment from the very Spirit which gave these words to holy men of old, we believe the most fitting and trustworthy method of interpreting Holy Scripture will be found in what has come to be known as "the literal and historical method."

By this is meant the method which concerns itself with the simple and grammatical meaning of words, letting historical relationships and bearings throw what light they will upon these meanings. This will necessitate an acquaintance with the historical connections of the text, study of the context, fitting the whole into the entire tenor of the Holy Book, and allowing minor specialties and details to have their bearing.

Reducing this to rules we would have this result: 1. Ascertain as fully as it may be possible the literal and grammatical meaning of the words. 2. Bring to bear on the meaning whatever light a reference to history, topography, and antiquities will provide. 3. Develop or modify the meaning by the application of the light provided by the context, or, briefly, interpret contextually. 4. In every passage bring forth the full significance of all details.

## **RETURN TO FIRST PRINCIPLES**

These rules are not complicated or difficult to follow. They are almost axiomatic. They seem so necessary and rudimentary that some may smile at the idea that they need to be emphasized. But there are really no rules less followed in the interpretation of Scripture than these simple, obvious ones. It is surprising how many come to God's Book in an endeavor to make it say what they think, or what they wish, and not what it really says. With such an approach they find it easy to correct the faltering logic of an apostle, serenely to clear up the misconceptions of an evangelist, with superior assurance to rectify the inaccuracies of a seer, and altogether to ignore the meanings of words. It is plainly necessary, therefore, to insist on a return to first principles, however simple and rudimentary they appear.

These rules mean merely that the student will first of all endeavor to learn what is the ordinary meaning of the individual words and what is the first and simplest meaning of the sentence which they make up. He will find that attention to grammatical accuracy often results in removing difficulties and misapprehensions.

## **TRUE AND PROPER MEANING**

Close application of the second rule will bring out many different and helpful aspects of the leading events of Scriptural history. The narrative will gain in freshness and interest. We seem to be brought much nearer this storied past. A deeper effect is produced on the mind and heart. There will be a positive increase to our faith furnished by this method of interpretation, which, too, has been much undervalued and much neglected.

The value of the third rule and its real importance will be found in giving the fundamental doctrines and precepts their true and proper meaning. There are cases without number where nothing is found to guide in determining the real meaning except the connection and general placement and aspect of the text in a passage. There may be difficulty in arriving at any decision regarding the meaning of a text from its grammatical construction. It leaves the student in a state of uncertainty. There may be two or more competing interpretations possible on the basis of grammar and syntax. Often in such a case the context is the final arbiter.

The fourth rule is equal in importance with the other three. It speaks for itself. It has to do with the whole spirit of the passage under study. In addition to being a rule of common sense, it really becomes a necessity and duty if we are to rightly divide and rightly understand the word of truth. Words are the appointed media of ideas and sentiments. And as these ideas we are dealing with are heaven-sent and the statements God breathed, it clearly becomes the highest duty and privilege of the student of the Bible to exhaust the fullest meaning of the outward letter, inasmuch as it contains enshrined in it an inward spirit which is holy and divine.

These four rules will be found of great importance, and of most practical value. They tend to insure precision, to stimulate research, to restrain prejudice, to check impatient and hasty study. They are, moreover, simple and obvious. Indeed, they may be reduced to one general rule, which would be expressed in these words: Interpret grammatically, historically, contextually, and minutely.

### **OTHER RULES NECESSARY**

It will be noticed, however, that they contain nothing different from the ordinary, common-sense rules for the interpretation of other writings. Consequently, up to this point, we have really been agreeing to interpret the Bible as we would interpret any other book. There is no feature, of these rules which can be considered so unique that it cannot be used for the understanding of all literature. If our premise that the Bible is unlike all other literature is correct, then these rules may be discovered to be insufficient and incomplete.

And so they are. While their use is greatly helpful in interpreting the vast bulk of Scripture, yet there are at least three classes of passages in which they fail to bring us the true meaning of the Bible. These are: first, those passages of general difficulty, where the context and the grammar and the connected details give us no way of deciding between two or more competing interpretations, all of which are possibly correct so far as logic or grammar are concerned; second, those passages of doctrinal difficulty in which the essential meaning is clouded and doubtful, or perhaps opposing conclusions have been advanced regarding the doctrine taught; third, those passages of theological difficulty in which the truth stated in the text relates to some mysterious relation between things divine and human which is imperfectly known to us.

### **LET THE WRITER INTERPRET HIMSELF**

While the rules which have been stated and stressed are of real use and help in clearing the ground in these particular cases of preliminary difficulties, it is clear that additional rules are needed to settle the main difficulty. The very inadequacy of these former rules forces upon us the necessity of other rules which must be of a more unique character in order to solve these unique difficulties.

Always it is the practice of safe interpreters in cases of general difficulty such as have been referred to examine at once other passages of the same writer in which reference may be made to the same subject or principle. Any other text which clearly alludes to the same thing may be found to provide some light which may be directed on the difficult passage, or contain some authoritative hint which will clarify its meaning. This often is found of the greatest help in clearing away difficulties.

This is, again, a rule of common sense, but it is also based on a conviction and recognition of the unique character of the Scripture, a general and pervading inspiration which keeps the writer, when discussing subjects often transcending human faculties and above even the writer's natural powers, always in harmony, and makes his words self-explanatory and consistent. Stated as a rule it would be: Let the writer interpret himself.

### **LET SCRIPTURES INTERPRET ITSELF**

Passing on to the second class of difficulties, those of a doctrinal character, an enlargement and extension of this first rule is made necessary. To make plain what is needed in this field, and to illustrate the difficulty out of which a rule may be developed, a passage of real doctrinal difficulty may be pointed to, that of 2 Thessalonians 2:37, regarding the mystic man of sin. Interpreters arrive at widely different results here. And yet no wise, intelligent, experienced interpreter would fail, in seeking for a right understanding of this passage, to go to the writings of Daniel and study the parallels he sets forth, and to those of John in which he describes the characteristics of the Antichrist. That is, the rightly guided interpreter would seek for light on the great apostle's passage by directing his attention to the writings of a prophet and an evangelist on the same subject, and by comparing and collecting the meaning of all three writers arrive at a harmonized view.

The mere statement of this method of procedure is significant and suggestive with reference to the character of the writings we are studying. It involves a tacit recognition that the Scriptures can be an organized and harmonious whole, all the parts of which are so quickened by the same life and animated by the same Spirit, that no teaching of any one of the Bible writers can possibly receive a more convincing and trustworthy explanation than that which is provided by the teachings and writings of another, who is guided by the same inspiration. It is, indeed, a recognition that the truth of Scripture has one Source, and is God-breathed. Stated as a rule it would be: When possible, let Scripture interpret itself, or, Interpret according to the analogy of Scripture.

### **THE ANALOGY OF FAITH**

With reference to those difficulties in the third class, theological difficulties, the rule will be found to be a still greater amplification of the two already set forth. We may come to a passage in which two interpretations, widely different, yet both grammatically tenable, are possible, perhaps even obvious and plausible.

A case in point would be that majestic affirmation regarding our Lord in Colossians 1:15: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature." Which of the two views which have been advanced regarding the meaning of this are we to take?

According to one view our Lord would be understood to exist before every creature, and then the reference would be to the eternal generation of Christ, His uncreated eternity of being. According to the other view He would be the first begotten of all creatures, prior to them all in origin, yet a created being like themselves. Grammar here does not determine. The context is difficult and not decisive. The reasoning is profound and mysterious. What shall we believe? Our whole understanding of the essential nature of the Son of God, our Savior, is involved.

Ah, but things so weighty must not be permitted to rest upon one single passage isolated from all the rest. If this particular text is not decisive, there are other texts referring to the same truth. What do they teach? This text must be made to harmonize with the whole teaching of Scripture, and then we may be certain we have the right interpretation of this or any other particular passage.

Proceeding in this way, and in accordance with this principle, we reject the second interpretation of this passage, that which makes Christ a creature, and accept the one which discloses Him as the uncreated Son of God with eternity of being. Why? Because the whole tenor of Scripture supports the first and rejects the second, and the faith of God's people from the beginning has inclined because of this to the view of eternity of being for Christ, and been repelled by the view that He is a creature. From this we are led to a full expression of the rule which here discloses itself. Scripture itself teaches us, by the gentle leading of its own difficulties, a true and vital principle of Scriptural interpretation: Interpret according to the analogy of faith.

### **ONE LIVING BOOK**

With these rules to guide us, and in an attitude of reverent and humble prayer, we may venture to draw near to the great and deep things of God. The interpretation of these things is to be not merely grammatical, historical, contextual, and minute, but each writer is to interpret himself, or be interpreted by other writers, or by the analogies of the age-long faith. All Scriptural difficulties, in other words, are to be explained consistently with Scripture truth.

### **Conclusion**

Holy Scriptures are finished. But the Holy Spirit by whose inspiration they were written still watches over them. The history of these Sacred Writings during the centuries of the Christian era sheds most wonderful light upon the history which is recorded in their pages.

Jehovah, the Creator, after He had finished the heavens and the earth did not abandon creation to care for itself. He still upholds all things by the Word of His power. "My Father works hitherto, and I work."

Jesus our Savior, after He had laid the foundation of the Church by His incarnation, ministry, death, and resurrection, did not leave the Church to itself. He is Emmanuel-God with Us. "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." And so the Holy Spirit, by whom the Scriptures came into existence, did not leave them after they were finished. He still breathes in them and breathes through them the very breath of divine life and of everlasting blessedness.

And as we draw near to look into these deep things of the literature of heaven, let us be sure to approach the Scripture rightly, seeing it, feeling it, believing it, to be what it truly is. One living Book; one, because it is pervaded by the holy presence of one ever-blessed Lord; living, because it ever teaches of Him who Himself is life, and whose "life is the light of men."

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