

The Bible

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The Bible

If I were shown a picture in mosaic, a supreme work of art, and were told that many artists had had a hand in its production, but that very few of them were known to each other, and that they lived in places widely separated, and that each had concentrated upon his own part of the picture as though it were to be complete in itself, and not a part only of the great master-piece, I should conclude that one mind had designed the picture, and chosen, directed and controlled the workmen, and nobody would charge me with stupidity for coming to such a conclusion.

Now when I read the Bible and begin to discern the beauties of its sixty-six books and epistles, and see how harmoniously they are blended together, forming one complete book with one great central theme, and that no part of it could be dispensed with without serious loss to the whole, and when I learn that fifteen centuries passed between the first writings and the last, and that the contributors to it were men of widely different stations in life, learning and culture; that kings, great leaders of men, prophets and priests, fishermen, physicians, publicans, and pharisees all had their part in producing it, I conclude that one mind must have chosen, called, sanctified, moulded, and taught the writers, and directed and inspired each one in his contribution to it, and I ask, who can have done it? There is but one answer to the question, and it is the Bible's own answer, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" – it is God-breathed. Shall the man who accepts that answer as the only possible one, be considered stupid and ignorant? Surely not, for there is none other.

We should have supposed that since God had given His Word to men, they would have valued it above all their treasures, and preserved it from all possible harm, but it has not been so. Some have; the Word of God has been more to them than life, and they have gladly died for it, but they have been but a small remnant, the majority have neglected it. And it has been a forgotten book, often for generations, and men have lived as though God had never spoken to them. But whenever it has been re-discovered and read, as it has been again and again, it has proved itself to be quick and operative, and men have repented of their Godless lives under its searching power, and have been enlightened and revived and pardoned and blest.

It has often been a forgotten book, but it has always been a hated book, men have hated it as they would hate a living foe of whom they were in mortal dread. They have loved darkness rather than light, and have done their best to destroy the Word, for it exposed them and confounded them. Decrees have been issued against it by evil men in authority, in both ancient and modern times: men who thought they could destroy the truth of the words of it as easily as they could destroy the parchment upon which the words were written. Like Jehoiakim, a son of Joash, and king of Judah, who when he heard the God-inspired words hated them, and slashed the roll with his knife and burnt it in the fire: and Antiochus Epiphanes, the Syrian, whose "heart was against the holy covenant," and was so determined to destroy the word of it that he had a search made every month for copies of it, and burnt all the copies found along with those who had treasured and concealed them. But Jehoiakim got "the burial of an ass" for his mad folly, and Antiochus Epiphanes "came to his end and there was none to help him." In modern times both pagan and papal Rome have made great efforts to destroy the Word, or to keep it from the people; but it has survived the rage of its enemies and during the last century [\[1\]](#) two Bible Societies alone, the British and Foreign, and the American, have issued 500,000,000 copies in eight hundred languages and dialects. Its preservation as well as its production proclaims it to be the Word of God. It lives on and prevails; it is indestructible; heaven and earth shall pass away but it shall abide. "The Word of our God shall stand for ever" (Isa. 40).

THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE NEW

The popular thing is to eulogize the New Testament and to treat the Old as mythical and legendary, a mass of fables and parables, and that in spite of the fact that the spade of the archaeologist, digging in Bible lands, is constantly proving the truth of Bible history, and that “in all the wide scope of their investigations they have found nothing that discredits the book as a narrator of facts” (Kyle). This is not an honest treatment of the Bible, for whoever reads it with any care must see that the Old Testament is woven into the very texture of the New, and it cannot be torn from the book and cast upon the rubbish heap without leaving the New in hopeless tatters. How bewildered we should be in our reading of the New Testament if the Old were worthy of no better treatment than this. There are many questions that arise as we read the New – Who was Adam, and from whence did he come, and how did sin enter into the world through him? Who was Abraham and what were the promises that God made to him, and why did He make them? Who was Moses and what was the law that came by him, and why and how did it come? And David, what were the sure mercies that God guaranteed to him? And the woman's Seed, the Child of the virgin mother, Him whose name is Immanuel, and to whom all the prophets gave witness, what and where are the words that were spoken of Him? And the great red dragon, who is the Devil and Satan, who hates the Man-child, the Seed of the woman: how did he gain the ascendancy over man and become the prince of this world and its god? The New Testament raises these questions and they are vital questions, and the Old Testament answers them, and no other book does, and as we read it, we learn how the sore bondage of sin commenced, and how the first light of mercy dawned on man when God announced that the Seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent. We learn as we read those ancient God-given words the necessity for regeneration and redemption of which the New Testament speaks, even if we have not learnt this necessity in our own experience of sin in our own hearts and lives, and how futile are all our own efforts to overcome it.

The Hebrew Scriptures were divided into three parts – Moses, the Psalms and the Prophets – and it is interesting and instructive to see that the first chapter of each of the four Gospels has a link with each of these three divisions. And as it is in the first chapters, so it is throughout the Gospels. Matthew has not less than seventy quotations and references from the Old Testament, Mark not less than thirty-five, Luke not less than forty, and John not less than forty, and in every book in the New Testament, with the exception of the shorter epistles, there are many quotations. These quotations from the Old Testament shine like gems upon the pages of the New, for they bear their witness to Christ, and are lighted up with the glory of Him to whom they bear witness.

THE PREDICTIONS OF THE BIBLE

A great proof that God has spoken in the Scriptures lies in the accuracy of its forecasts. An early instance of this is Noah's prophecy as to his posterity, in which the future condition and history of the three great divisions of the human race are described in a few words. “*Cursed be Canaan: a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.*” Though his descendants seemed at the first to be the greatest of all people, they became the most corrupted and degraded of all, and Ham's children are chiefly found in Africa from which land the descendants of both Japhet and Shem drew their slaves for centuries.

“*Blessed be the Lord God of Shem and Canaan shall be His servant.*” Of Shem's race came Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and God was not ashamed to be called their God. He brought them into covenant relationship to Himself, and will yet fulfil all the promises made to the fathers to their children.

“God shall enlarge Japhet, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem: and Canaan shall be His servant.” From Japhet have sprung all the European nations who have spread out to the ends of the earth, and have entered into the favour that belonged to Israel, who have been cut out of it for the time being because of their unbelief, as Romans 11 shows.

We ought to notice in this connection that when the gospel first moved out from Jerusalem and the land of the Jews, a man from each of these three great divisions of humanity was saved by it and brought into the unity of the kingdom of God and the body of Christ, showing how the gospel obliterates all distinctions of race and nation. They were the Ethiopian Eunuch, the Hamite (Acts 8); Saul of Tarsus, the Shemite (chapter 9), and Cornelius the centurion, the Japhethite (chapter 10).

The Jews also are proof of the foreknowledge of God and the truth of Scripture. Three thousand years ago Balaam was compelled against his will to prophecy of them, “Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations” (Num. 23:9). And Moses warned them at that time, that if they disobeyed the commands of their God and disregarded His covenant, they would be plucked out of their promised land and scattered among all people, that they would find no ease for their minds or rest for the soles of their feet; that they should be a people of a trembling heart and failing eyes and sorrowful mind; that their lives would hang in doubt and that in the morning they would long for the night and in the night they would say, Would God it were morning; that they would become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word among all nations, and that they would be carried into Egypt by ships and sold there for slaves until none would buy them (Deut. 28).

These solemn words have been fulfilled to the letter. Upon the thirty-sixth anniversary of that fateful Passover when they cried after their Messiah, “Away with Him, crucify Him,” practically the whole nation was gathered in Jerusalem, when Titus, the Roman, besieged the city. Exasperated by their stubborn and fanatical defence the invaders and conquerors burned and destroyed the city and temple; butchering nigh on a million of the people without remorse, and sending the remnant to the Egyptian slave markets, where they were sold until they became a glut, and no one would buy them. But they have outlived all their ancient enemies. Those that oppressed them in their early history are only known now by their broken monuments unearthed by the excavator's spade, but the Jews abide, unabsorbed by those nations amongst whom they are scattered, and maintain their identity and characteristics in spite of fierce persecutions. They are an indestructible witness to the accuracy of prophecy in the God-breathed Scriptures.

But the most arresting of all the predictions of Scripture and those that are more important to our purpose than any other are those that speak of the coming of the Lord to earth. It will be impossible, in our limited space to quote all of these; a life of Jesus might easily be written from these Old Testament prophecies. My readers must be satisfied with a few texts in this paper. They may search out the rest for themselves.

His Forerunner

- “Behold I send My messenger before Thy face.” (Mal. 3:1)
- “Saying prepare ye the way of the Lord.” (Isa. 40:3; Matt. 3:3)

The manner of His birth

- “The seed of the woman.” (Gen. 3:15)

□ “Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and thou shalt call His name Emmanuel.” (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23)

The place of His birth

□ “But 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 [the days of eternity – marg.]” (Micah 5:2; Matt. 2:5)

The slaughter of the children

□ “Thus saith the Lord; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not.” (Jer. 31:15; Matt. 2:18)

The flight to Egypt

□ “Out of Egypt have I called My Son.” (Hos. 11:1; Matt. 2:15)

His home at Nazareth

□ “He shall be called a Nazarene.” (a reproach) (Ps. 22; Isa. 53; Matt. 2:23)

His Mission

□ “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek.” (Isa. 61:1; Luke 4:18)

His character and entry into Jerusalem

□ “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion ; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem ; behold, thy King cometh unto thee. He is just and having salvation lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.” (Zech. 9:9; Matt. 21:5)

His rejection by the people

□ “The stone refused by the builders.” (Ps. 118:22)

□ “Despised and rejected of men.” (Isa. 53:3)

□ “Cut off.” [and shall have nothing – marg.] (Dan. 9:25)

The price of His betrayal

- “They weighed for My price thirty pieces of silver—a goodly price that I was prized at of them.” (Zech. 11:12-13; Matt. 26:15)

His death by crucifixion

- “And they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced.” (Zech. 12:6)
- “And one shall say what are these wounds in Thy hands?” (Zech. 13:6; John 19:34)

The object of His death

- “For the transgression of My people was He stricken.” (Isa. 53:9)

His glorious resurrection

- “For thou wilt not leave my soul in hades; neither wilt Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life.” (Ps. 16:10)

His ascension to glory

- “Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive: Thou hast received gifts for men.” (Ps. 68:18)

These are but a few of the array of texts that might be marshalled to prove the fact that the book came from the One who is omniscient, and who had purposed from the beginning to send a Saviour to men, and who cheered the hearts of those who looked for that Saviour, by His immutable promises. There is one other Scripture that I must not overlook; indeed, I have left it to the last of this series that we might be the more affected by it: it is Psalm 22. As to it I will quote in full the note in the Scofield Reference Bible.

“Psalm 22 is a graphic picture of death by crucifixion. The bones (of the hands, arms, shoulders and pelvis) out of joint (verse 14); the profuse perspiration caused by intense suffering (verse 14); the action of the heart affected (verse 14); strength exhausted and extreme thirst (verse 15); the hands and feet pierced (verse 16); partial nudity with the hurt to modesty (verse 7), are all incidental to that mode of death. The accompanying circumstances are precisely those fulfilled in the crucifixion of Christ. The desolate cry of verse 1 (Matt. 27:46); the periods of light and darkness of verse 2 (Matt. 27:45); the contumely of verses 6-8, 12-13 (Matt. 27:39-43); the casting lots of verse 18 (Matt. 27:35), all were literally fulfilled. When it is remembered that crucifixion was a Roman, not Jewish, form of execution, the proof of inspiration is irresistible.”

How impressive and conclusive is the New Testament explanation of these texts. "The prophets who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ that was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (1 Pet. 1:11). "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:20 -21).

THE LORD'S USE OF SCRIPTURE

The way in which the Lord, who gave the Old Testament Scriptures to His people, used them is instructive. He confirmed those very incidents which are most derided, and which the critics declare could not be anything but fables.

He spoke of

- The creation of Adam and Eve (Mark 10:6; Gen. 2:24).
- The murder of Abel (Luke 11:51 ; Gen. 4).
- The deluge, and Noah and the ark (Luke 17:26 -27; Gen. 7).
- The burning of Sodom and the petrification of Lot 's wife (Luke 17:28 , 32; Gen. 19).
- The burning bush in the desert (Luke 20:37 ; Ex. 3).
- The lifting up of the brazen serpent (John 3:14 ; Num. 21).
- The sending of the manna (John 6:31 ; Ex. 16).
- The visit of Elijah to the widow of Zarephath (Luke 4:26 ; 1 Ki. 17).
- The cleansing of the leper, Naaman (Luke 4:27 ; 2 Ki. 5).
- The visions of Daniel (Matt. 24:15; Dan.).
- The preservation of Jonah in the belly of the fish (Matt. 12:40 ; Jonah).

He met the temptations of the devil in the wilderness, not as the mighty God, who could have crushed him in a moment, but as the dependent and obedient Man, which He had become for God's glory and our salvation, and as such His one all-sufficient weapon in this great conflict was the Scriptures. He needed no other. He met each assault by a quotation from Moses, and stood invincible, victorious. These quotations are worth recording. We need them in our conflict with the foe; their value cannot be exaggerated since by them Jesus overcame the devil and has set us an example that we should walk in His steps. They show us: (1) That God is the Author and Sustainer of all life; (2) That He is to be the Object and end of the life that He has given; (3) His will must govern the lives of His creatures, and none should depart from it. He who holds fast to these three things will not be overcome by the devil. I give the texts as they appear in Luke's Gospel.

- "It is written, *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God ."* (Deut. 8:3)
- "It is written, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve."* (Deut. 6:13 ; 10:20)

□ "It is said, *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*" (Deut. 6:16)

He met the questionings of men by the Scriptures. When the Sadducees, who were the modernists of that day, came to Him with what they thought was a clever problem, that would bring the hope of resurrection into ridicule and confound Him, He exposed their folly and ignorance and shut their presumptuous mouths by quoting from the third chapter of Exodus, and asked, "*Have ye not read that which was SPOKEN UNTO YOU BY GOD*" (Matt. 22:31). Is it a fact that God has spoken to us in the Books of Moses? – the chief target of modern infidels? Our Lord has said so, and that is enough for us.

In John's Gospel there is recorded the most determined contradiction of men against Him, and in that Gospel He speaks with the utmost plainness about the Scriptures, and of the writings of Moses in particular. "If ye believed Moses," said He, "ye would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words" (John 5:46-47). There could be no more solemn word than that for those who despise the writings of Moses.

But more remarkable than all is the fact that in His prayer to His Father, recorded in John 17, He gave the Scriptures an honoured place, saying of His disciples, "None of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled" (quoting Ps. 109:8). He showed His disciple at the last supper that the things that were written concerning Him must be accomplished, even though it meant His being reckoned among the transgressors, and slain as a malefactor (Luke 22:37). And when Peter in his zeal for his Master drew his sword to fight for Him, He gently chided him, telling him that He had no need of his carnal weapon, for His Father would promptly send twelve legions of angels to protect Him if He did but ask, but He would not ask, for if He did the Scriptures that said it must be so could not be fulfilled (Matt. 26:53-54).

When raised from the dead also, the Lord used the Scriptures to instruct His disciples and to establish their faith and we should have supposed that if ever they could have been dispensed with, it was then. But He did not dispense with them. He opened them to his astonished followers as they had never seen them before, and He made their hearts burn as He showed them things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures. Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms, all had to yield their testimony to Him, and the disciples had to learn from the Scriptures that it behoved Him to suffer and to rise again the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, and thus would He enter into His glory. Thus it had been written and thus it was fulfilled, for the Scriptures cannot be broken.

IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

In the Acts of the Apostles the record is given of the preaching of the Lord Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit come down from heaven. In chapter 1 Peter shows how the Scriptures which spoke of the traitor had been fulfilled, and very definitely states that *the Holy Spirit had spoken* by the mouth of David concerning Judas (verse 16). In chapter 2 he explains to the people that the Holy Spirit had come fulfilling what God had said by the prophet Joel. Here are the words: "It shall come to pass in the last days, *saith God*, I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh" (verse 17). In chapter 3 he speaks of the times of restitution, and says, "of which *God hath spoken* by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (verse 21). In chapter 4 the apostles and others gathered for prayer, and in the prayer meeting they gave the Scriptures exactly the same place as they had given them in their private conference in chapter 1, and in the public preaching of chapters 2 and 3, "They lifted up their voice to God and said, Lord, Thou art God... *who by the mouth of Thy servant David hast said*" (verses 24-25). It is plain that these Holy Spirit-filled men accepted the Scriptures as the Word of God and boldly quoted them as being

fulfilled in their day.

THE EPISTLES AND THE REVELATION

It is said that "Paul is without authority," and that in many important matters he is at fault, but of himself and his writings Paul declared "Which things we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (1 Cor. 2:13), and "If any man think himself a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14:37). And of these epistles of Paul, Peter wrote: "And account that the longsuffering of the Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to understand, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction" (2 Pet. 3:15-16). Here then we have a divinely given description of those who imagine themselves learned enough to criticize and wrest the Scriptures, whether these be the writings of Paul or any other, they are "unlearned and unstable," and blind and foolish too, for they do not harm the Scriptures that they endeavour to destroy; instead they destroy themselves, for salvation is only found in God and the word of His grace which they refuse.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ was given him by God (chapter 1:1). They are the true sayings of God (chapter 19:9). The words are true and faithful (chapter 21:5). And again, "He said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true; and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show unto His servants the things which must shortly be done" (chapter 22:6). And if any man takes from them or adds to them his doom is sealed (chapter 22:18-19).

THE GOD OF THE BIBLE

Let us finally consider the character of God as the Bible shows Him to us, for we could have no surer proof of its truth and origin than this, and it is that we might know Him that the Bible has been given to us, and that we might know Him better is the object of this paper.

He is "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and the Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see to whom be glory for ever and ever" (1 Tim. 6:15-16). Yet "*The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart*" (Ps. 34:18). "*Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy: I dwell in the high and holy place with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones*" (Isa. 57:15).

The heavens are the works of His fingers. Yet "*Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings He has ordained praise*" (Ps. 8:2-3).

"He telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names" (Ps. 147:4). Yet "*five sparrows are sold for two farthings and not one of them is forgotten by God. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered*" (Luke 12:6-7).

We read, "Our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29). Yet "*God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes*" (Rev. 21:3). He is, "of purer eyes than to behold iniquity" (Hab. 1:13). Yet "*He commendeth His love toward us while we were yet sinners*" (Rom. 5:8). He is "the just God" (Rom. 3:26). And yet "*Him that justifieth the ungodly*" (Rom. 4:5).

Who could have conceived a Being of such majesty and power, and yet such condescension and grace? Who would have thought that the One who is so great as to know by name the uncountable stars, could be so deeply interested in His weak and failing children as to number the very hairs of their heads? The vast, illimitable universe is subject to His will and yet He is particularly interested in the smallest detail of the lives of those who put their trust in Him. Who would have dared to hope that the One whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, would dwell with the poor and needy, to revive their contrite hearts and uphold them in their trials? And what angel or man could have invented a gospel that presents the Holy God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, loving, pardoning, justifying and blessing ungodly sinners? It is thus that the Bible, His own Word, shows Him to our wondering eyes, and those who are wise will believe and worship. How great is the blessing of those who believe His testimony, who find their refuge from every ill in Him, and can call the God of the Bible their God.

But God was not, and could not be, fully known until the only-begotten Son which is in His bosom came forth to reveal Him, then, and not till then, was God manifested in flesh. Then, and not till then, did any, either men or angels, behold Him fully revealed. In the Old Testament Scriptures His power and wisdom and the glory of His many attributes were disclosed, but in Jesus His nature is revealed, so that if we would know God, in the fulness of His nature and the blessedness of His love, we must read the New Testament Scriptures. David longed for a complete and all satisfying revelation of God to his soul, and in the Psalms he cried, "O send out Thy light and Thy truth: let them lead me... then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy" (Ps. 43:3). God has answered the deep longing for the light and the truth that was ever in the souls of His saints in that old [dispensation](#), and in the New Testament days, the fulness of the times, He "sent forth His Son, made of a woman," and He is THE LIGHT and He is THE TRUTH. As we read the Gospels we see the light and hear the truth. Behold the Lord healing the lepers and blessing the children, moved with compassion for the widow in her sorrow and raising her dead son to remove that sorrow, stilling the storm to relieve His disciples of their fear, and feeding the multitude lest they fainted on their homeward way, weeping with bereaved and faithful Mary, and yearning with tears over unfaithful and rebellious Jerusalem. Hear Him saying to an outcast sinner, "Thy sins are forgiven," and to another, "Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more." See Him stretching out His hands to weary and sin-sick men, and saying to them, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." Behold His acts of kindness and listen to His words of grace, and in beholding and hearing Him, you will behold and hear the Father. How attractive God has become in Jesus: we see God in Christ, not imputing our transgressions to us, we draw near to Him with confidence, we feel that He is all we need, a Saviour God and the all-sufficient object of our otherwise empty, unsatisfied hearts. But we were not there to see and hear these things. We are dependent on a record of them, and that record we have in the Bible. It gives us the divinely inspired account of all that Jesus said and did that are necessary for our faith and salvation.

But the Bible tells us not only of the life and words of Jesus; it tells us also of His death. We learn from its pages that from the time that sin came into the world, death was a necessity if men were to be delivered from death and judgement. The Old Testament shows this in many types and shadows, such as Abel's lamb, and the sprinkled blood of the Passover Lamb in Egypt. They were like so many lamps shining in the darkness for the encouragement of faith until the true Light should come. They were no more than that, for the blood of those victims offered upon Jewish altars was common blood; it had no value though it flowed in rivers, yet it spoke to faith of the Lamb of God, and of His blood that cleanseth from all sin. John, the beloved, stood by the cross of Jesus, and he saw Him hanging there with His thorn crowned head, bowed in death. He saw "one of the soldiers with a spear pierce His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water." And he tells us, "*He that saw it bear record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.*" That true, unimpeachable record is given in John 19, and I cannot pass it by lightly. I appeal to my readers. Have you believed it? Has it moved and melted you, and brought you in adoring faith to the feet of the Lamb that was slain? The record has been made to this end. How terrible is that unbelief that rejects it or treats it with indifference. That great act, which

John the eye-witness records, was the supreme manifestation of the love of God, for we read, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

THE NECESSITY FOR THE DIVINELY INSPIRED WORD

If the only-begotten Son of God, divinely perfect and blessed, came into the world and died for the eternal blessing of men, it is only fitting that a record of His coming and His words and ways, also divinely perfect and blessed, should be given, that those for whom He came might have a divine and perfect assurance of it. Admit the former and the latter follows in logical sequence. To suppose that God would send His only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him, and having done that, allow an imperfect, contradictory human record to be the only record of His life and death here, would be to suppose Him to be guilty of colossal folly. The record must be as perfect in its sphere as the One whose life and mission it records was perfect in His, or else we have no sure knowledge, no certainty, of the things upon which our soul's eternal welfare depends.

If the Holy Scriptures are what the critics say they are—mere ancient human documents, in which are recorded events which the writers did but poorly remember, or which they greatly exaggerated or embellished; if they may be cut and criticized, accepted or rejected, in parts or wholly, then where are we in this matter? The angel's triumphant declaration that he brought "good tidings of great joy" when he announced the birth of Jesus may be a mockery; we cannot be sure that our great Redeemer ever did say, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Such wonderful words may have been put into His mouth by one of these "imperfect but very imaginative human writers," as Shakespeare put words into the mouths of his characters. Yet we might well ask what human mind could have imagined such divine words as those are? Did our Lord really warn men of "the damnation of hell," and speak those words about the "many mansions" in His Father's house? We cannot say unless the record of them is divinely perfect and divinely sure.

WE BELIEVE GOD, AND THE WORD OF HIS GRACE, and we are confident that if "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life," He would see to it that we should be in no uncertainty about it, else "His unspeakable gift" would have been in vain and none could have said, Thanks be unto God for it! The Scriptures are God-breathed; the men who wrote them were moved by the Holy Ghost; they had not the things they wrote from hearsay, or from their own imperfect observation, but from the source of all true knowledge—from God Himself. Hence the Lord's own veritable words are given in the divine records, and in those records they are divinely placed, and there they shine like apples of gold in pictures of silver for our blessing and joy. God be praised Who has opened our eyes to see them

Fear not, believer in Jesus, this book is part of your precious heritage, and no weapon formed against it shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise up against it shall be confounded. From its pages you have learnt the way of salvation; it has been a lamp to your feet and a light to your path. You have tasted and proved and staked your immortal soul upon its precious promises, and its truths have comforted you greatly in hours of trial and temptation. There are still depths within it which you have not fathomed, for, indeed, the best of us are but as children paddling on the verge of a mighty ocean, but it is here for us, God given and God preserved, by God's Spirit we can understand it, and we shall always find blessing in it if we remember the great subject of it is—

C-H-R-I-S-T.

[\[1\]](#)The 19 th Century. (ed.)