

THE DOCTRINE OF REVELATION Chapter 8

THE HOLY BIBLE DECLARES IT COMES FROM GOD HIMSELF

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Transcript

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We have presented a portion of that abundant evidence which makes it unmistakably manifest that God has given us a clear revelation of Himself in creation, in the constitution of man (physical, mental, and moral), in His government of this world (as evinced in the annals of history), in the advent to this earth of His incarnate Son, and in the Holy Scriptures. We based our first argument that the Bible is an inspired communication from God on the fact that man is in urgent need of a written revelation, because his own faculties—especially as he is now a fallen and sinful creature—are insufficient as a guide to virtue and eternal happiness. Second, that there is therefore a presumption in favour of the Bible's being a revelation from God, since man urgently needs such and God is well able to supply it. Since all nature evinces that a merciful Creator has made suitable provision for every need of all His creatures, it is unthinkable that this supreme need of the highest of His earthly creatures should be neglected. We now come to point 3: Its own claims. These are unambiguous, positive, decisive, leaving us in no doubt as to what the Scriptures profess to be. The Bible declares that, as a Book, it comes to us from God Himself. It urges that claim in various ways. Its very names proclaim its Source. It is repeatedly denominated "The Word of God." It is so denominated because as we express our thoughts and make known our intentions by means of words, so in His Book God has disclosed His mind and declared His will unto us. It is called "The Book of the LORD" (Isa. 34:16) because He is its Author and because of the Divine authority with which it is invested, demanding our unqualified subjection to its imperial edicts. It is termed "The Scripture of Truth" (Dan. 10:21) because it is without confusion, without contradiction, without the slightest mixture of error—infallible in every verse, every word, every letter inspired—Divine. It is designated "The Word of Life" (Phil. 2:16) because it is invested with the very breath of the Almighty, indelible and indestructible, in contradistinction from all the perishing productions of man. It is entitled "The Oracles of God" (Rom. 3:2) because in it God Himself is the Speaker. The Bible proclaims itself to be a Divine revelation, a direct and inerrant communication from the living God, that He "spoke by the mouth of His holy Prophets, which have been since the world began" (Luke 1:70). They announce that "the Law of the LORD is perfect" (Ps.

19:7)—without flaw or blemish; that "the Word of God is quick and powerful" (Heb. 4:12)—living, pungent, dynamic. They claim that "the Word of the Lord endureth forever" (1 Pet. 1:25)—surviving all the passages of time, withstanding all the efforts of enemies to destroy it. They affirm themselves to be "the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation" (2 Tim. 3:15). The article there is emphatic, being used to distinguish the Sacred Writings from all others, to aver their excellence and eminence over all the writings of men. The Holy One is their Author, they treat of the holy things of God, and call for holy hearts and lives from their readers. And just so far as our characters are formed and our conduct regulated by their precepts, will the fruits of holiness appear in our lives. The instruments which God employed to bring to us the Word were themselves conscious of and frankly owned to the fact that they were but His mouthpieces or penmen. Again and again we find them avowing that truth. "Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD" (24:2). "The LORD spake thus to me" (Isa. 8:11). "Hear ye for the LORD hath spoken" (Jer. 13:15). "Hear this word that the LORD hath spoken" (Amos 3:1). "The mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it" (Micah 4:4). Said the royal Psalmist, "The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and His Word was in my tongue" (2 Sam. 23:2). So, too, when the Apostles quoted a passage from the Old Testament they gave their testimony to the same truth. When Peter addressed the disciples, he said, "this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spake by the mouth of David" (Acts 1:16). "Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said" (Acts 4:25). "Well spake the Holy Spirit by Isaiah the Prophet" (Acts 28:25). Whoever were the human spokesmen or writers, the language of the Scriptures is the very Word of God. Not once or twice, but scores of times, there are passages which, without any preamble or apology, declare, "Thus saith the Lord." In the Bible, God is the Speaker. Chapter after chapter in Leviticus opens with, "And the Lord spake, saying." And so it runs to the end of the chapter. Moses was but a scribe, God the Author of what is recorded. The question of Inspiration is, in its ultimate analysis, the question of Revelation itself. If the Book be Divine, then what it says of itself is Divine. The question is one of Divine testimony, and our business is simply to receive that testimony—without doubting or quibbling, with thankful and unreserved submission to its authority. When God speaks He must be heeded. "If at this moment yonder heavens were opened—the curtained canopy of star-sown clouds rolled back; if amid the brightness of light ineffable, the Dread Eternal were Himself seen rising from His throne, and heard to speak in voice audible, it could not be more potent, more imperative, than what lies now before us upon Inspiration's pages" (G. S. Bishop). God requires us to receive and accredit His Word, and to do so on His own ipse dixit. All faith rests on testimony, and the testimony on which faith in the Scriptures reposes is amply sufficient to support it, for it is Divine. "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater. .. he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave" (1 John 5:9, 10). If the witness of men of respectability and integrity be received in the judicatories of all nations, then most assuredly the witness of God is infinitely more worthy of our acceptance. The best of men are fallible and fickle, yet in matters of the greatest importance their testimony is credited—the affairs of the world would soon come to a standstill if it were not so. Then with how much more confidence may we receive the testimony of Him who is infallible and immutable, who can neither deceive nor be deceived?! How unspeakably dreadful the alternative: if we believe not God's record, that is virtually calling Him a liar—regarding Him as a false witness! May the reader be delivered from such wickedness. Now we proceed to point 4: No other explanation is even feasible. Whence comes the Bible is a question deserving of the very best attention of every serious mind. The subjects of which it treats are of such tremendous importance both to our present welfare and our future felicity, that the question of its derivation calls for the most diligent examination. The Bible is here, and it must be accounted for. It holds a unique place in the literature of mankind and it has exerted an unrivalled influence in molding the history of the world; and therefore it calls loudly for an

adequate rationale to be given of its origin. Only three explanations are possible: the Bible is either a deliberate imposter, manufactured by wicked men; or it is the product of deluded visionaries, who vainly imagined they were giving forth inspired messages from Heaven; or else it is what it claims to be: an infallible and authoritative revelation from God Himself unto the sons of men. Between those three alternatives every thoughtful investigator of the matter must choose. If he ponders carefully the first two and tests them by the evidence adduced in favour of the Bible's being a Divine communication, he should have no difficulty in perceiving they are not only inadequate, but utterly absurd. It is proverbial that "water will not rise above its own level," as it is self-evident that no cause can produce any effect superior to itself. Equally incredible is it that wicked men should bring forth a Book which has done far more than all other books combined (except those drawn from the Bible) in promoting morality and producing holiness. Grapes do not grow upon thistles! To assert that the Bible was produced by evil men is refuted by the very character of its teachings, which uniformly condemn dishonesty and declare that "all liars shall have their part in the Lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" (Rev. 21:8). It is thoroughly irrational to suppose that the authors of the most impious and gigantic literary fraud ever imposed upon mankind (if such it be) should invent for themselves such a fearful doom as that! It must also be remembered that some of the penmen of the Bible laid down their lives for a testimony to its verity; but the annals of history contain no record of men willingly suffering martyrdom for a known lie—from which neither they nor their families received any advantage. Another class of skeptics dismiss the Bible as the fanciful flights of poets, the ravings of mystics, the extravagances of enthusiasts. Much in it is no doubt very beautiful, yet it is as unsubstantial as a dream, with no reality corresponding thereto, and those who credit the same are living only in a fool's paradise. They say, If there be a God, He is so absolute and transcendent, so remote from this scene, as to take no personal notice of our affairs; that it is both unphilosophical and a slur on His greatness to affirm (as the ancient Psalm does), "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." Thus we are asked to believe that mystics and fanatics have invented a god with more tender and nobler attributes than the real God has. But to say that fancy has devised a superior god than actually exists is the acme of irrationality. Were it possible for us to choose what kind of excellence deity should possess, would we not include among them pity linked with infinite power, using that power as its servant to tenderly minister unto the suffering? Surely this is the most amazing chimera that has ever been invented: that men have endowed God with grander qualities than He really possesses, that they have predicated of Him a perfection which He is incapable of exercising. Rather must we affirm that that wondrous statement, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16), is a revelation which opens to us a new moral kingdom, a kingdom of unimaginable benignity and grace. The message of redemption is a Divine light breaking in upon us from Above, a revelation that proves itself. That God should send here His own Son, clothed with our humanity, to seek and to save rebels against His government, to suffer in their stead, and by His death make full atonement for their sins, to provide His Spirit to conform them to His image, to make them His joint heirs and sharers of His eternal glory, is a concept which had never entered human heart or mind to conceive. Yet it is worthy and becoming of our Maker. The Gospel is the noblest force which has ever touched human character. As another has pertinently asked, "Is it a dishonor to God that, being great, He stoops to us? Does it make Him less? Is it a reproach to Him that He gives Himself to us? Would it be more for His glory if He mocked us? Is it this very wedlock of the wisdom that planned the heavens—the measureless Power that guides the stars—with the tenderness that stoops to the whispered prayer of a child, that counts the tears of a widow, that hears the sighs of the prodigal—which makes the unconceivable greatness of God. It completes the mighty curve of His attributes. And is it credible that we can conceive this amazing greatness and yet God not be capable of it? . . . The Bible represents God as

saying, 'My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor My ways your ways, for as the heavens are higher than the earth so are My thoughts above your thoughts and My ways above your ways.' And this ought to be true! The realities of God ought to be nobler than the dreams of men. It would be the perplexity and despair of man if this were not so" (The Unrealized Logic of Religion). Equally false is it to assert, as some ignorant Infidels have done, that we owe the Bible to the Church. It is an indubitable historical fact that the larger part of the Bible was in known existence more than 200 years before the dawn of the Christian era, and every doctrine, every precept and promise contained in the New Testament is based upon that earlier revelation. Such was the sufficiency of the Old Testament Scriptures that Paul could say they were "able to make wise unto salvation." While it is true that Christian churches existed before the New Testament was written, yet it must be borne in mind that there was the spoken Word by Christ and His Apostles ere the first of those churches was formed. On the day of Pentecost the Old Testament was quoted and expounded, the revelation of God in Christ was proclaimed, and it was upon the acceptance of that Word that the New Testament came into being. Thus, the fact is that the Word created the Church and not vice versa. It was only after some of the Apostles had died and others were engaged in extensive travel that the need arose for the permanent embodiment of the final portions of God's revelation, and this was given gradually in the New Testament. From that time until now, the written Word has taken the place of the original spoken Word. For centuries before the inauguration of Christianity, the Jews beheld the books which comprised the Old Testament as being the genuine productions of those Penmen whose names they bear, and they were unanimously considered by them, without any exception or addition, to have been written under the immediate direction of the Spirit of God. Those books of the Old Testament had been preserved with the utmost veneration and care, and at the same time had been jealously guarded from any spurious or apocryphal writings. It is a fact well authenticated that while the Jews of Christ's day were divided into numerous sects, which stood in the most direct opposition to one another, yet there was never any difference among them respecting the divinity and authority of the sacred writings. Josephus appealed to the public records of different nations and to many historical documents existing in his day, as indisputable evidence, in the opinion of the Gentile world, of the verity and fidelity of those portions of Israel's history to which he referred. Even to this day the bulk of the religious Jews retain an unshakable conviction of the Divine origin of their religious laws and institutions. Yet their own Scriptures record their unparalleled hardness of heart, resistance to the light God gave them, and their rejection and murder of their own Messiah—things which would have been accorded no place in a spurious production. That the Jews did not manufacture the Old Testament—on which the New is largely based—is apparent from other considerations. The immense disparity between the Old Testament as a book, and the Hebrew people as a nation, shows that the knowledge of God and of Divine things contained in the former, but wanting in the latter, came ab extra, that it was communicated from on high. One has but to read the writings of Josephus, the Jewish Targum and Talmud, or the Kabbala, to recognize at once the vast difference there is between them and the Holy Scriptures. That might be illustrated at great length, from many different angles, but we will confine ourselves to a single feature, and treat of it in a way that the ordinary reader will have no difficulty in following: the extreme exclusiveness of the Jews, and then call attention to a number of passages in the Old Testament which cannot possibly be accounted for in the light of that dominant national characteristic. There has never been another people so outstandingly clannish in sentiment and so provincial in outlook as the Jews: nor had any other equal reason for so being. God dealt with them as with no other nation: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth" (Amos 3:2). "He hath not dealt so with any nation" (Ps. 147:20). He forbade Israel to have anything to do with the religion of other nations, prohibited all marriages with them, and the learning of their ways. Yet they carried the spirit of bigotry and exclusiveness to an unwarrantable extent—far beyond the requirements of Scripture. Their violent

prejudice appears in that statement, "the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans" (John 4:9), in Peter's reluctance to go unto Cornelius, and the unwillingness of the Christian Church at Jerusalem to believe the grace of God extended to the uttermost part of the earth. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the teaching of the Old Testament was very far from inculcating that the Israelites must confine their benevolent affections within the narrow bounds of their own twelve tribes. No spirit of bigotry breathes in the sacred songs sung in their temple. "God be merciful unto us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us. Selah. That Thy way may be known upon the earth, Thy saving health among all nations. Let the people praise Thee, O God, let all the people praise Thee. O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for Thou shalt judge the people righteously and lead the nations upon earth" (Ps. 67:1-4). "All nations whom Thou hast made shalt come and worship Thee, O Lord, and shall glorify Thy name" (Ps. 86:9). "O sing unto the LORD a new song. Sing unto the LORD all the earth. Sing unto the LORD, bless His name: show forth His salvation from day to day. Declare His glory among the heathen, His wonders among the people . . . Give unto the LORD the glory due unto His name, bring an offering and come into His courts" (Ps. 96:1-3, 8). Who, we ask, put such words as those into the Psalmist's mouth? Who caused them to be given a permanent record on the Sacred Scroll? Who preserved them intact for the thousand years which followed till the advent of Christ, during which interval the Jews were possessed of most fanatical egotism and the bitterest hatred of the Gentiles!? The same striking feature appears even in the Pentateuch. "Thou shalt speak and say before the LORD your God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father: and he went down into Egypt and sojourned there with a few, and became a nation, great, mighty and populous. And the Egyptians evil entreated us and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage" (Deut. 26:5, 6). The whole of that remarkable passage (vv. 4-10)—which Israel was required to recite before God at one of her most solemn acts of worship—should be carefully weighed. What could more effectually repress their national pride than that confession? But who instructed them to make such a humble acknowledgment of their lowly origin? Who bade them utter this perpetual avowal of their base beginnings? And more—it was on the very basis of their lowly origin and the sore oppression their fathers had suffered in a foreign land that a number of most un-"Jewish" laws were framed—laws which bade them pity and relieve the stranger. If that fact be critically pondered it should be evident that such precepts could not have originated from such a bigoted and hard-hearted people. Those precepts were quite contrary to flesh and blood. It is natural for sinful men to strongly resent harsh treatment, for the memory of it to cherish rancor and malevolence, to feed the spirit of revenge, so that if the positions should be reversed they would "get even." Instead, we find the Mosaic Law enjoining the very opposite—inculcating the warmest and purest benevolence toward the wretched and defenseless of other nations. "Thou shalt not vex a stranger nor oppress him; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Ex. 22:21). Yea, more—"The stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself" (Lev. 19:34). Now, my reader, what explanation can possibly account for such benign statutes?—statutes which were repeatedly flouted by Israel! Who was it that originated and inculcated such unselfish tenderness? Who taught the haughty Jews to return good for evil? Who but the One who is both "no respecter of persons," and, who is "very pitiful and of tender mercy" (James 5:11). It also requires to be pointed out that the Pentateuch contains a narration of many events which took place in the actual lifetime, yea, before the eyes, of the very people who were called upon to receive those books as authentic. Thus there was no opportunity for Moses, or anyone else, to palm off upon the Hebrews a lot of fictions, for each one of them would know at once whether the records of their cruel bondage in Egypt, the judgments which Jehovah is said to have executed there, and the miraculous deliverance of His people at the Red Sea, were true or not. Had those events been of a commonplace character, few perhaps had been sufficiently interested to scrutinize the narratives of them, still less have taken the trouble to refute them, were they untrue. But in

view of their extraordinary nature, and especially since those miracles were designed to authenticate a new religion upon which their future hopes were to be based and by which their present deportment was to be regulated, it is unthinkable that a whole nation gave a mechanical assent, and still more so that they unitedly endorsed evidence which they knew to be false, especially when those same narratives inculcated a code of conduct which they certainly had never designed of their own accord. But more—not only were many of the Mosaic institutions radically different from those practiced by all other nations, and from what the Hebrews had themselves observed in Egypt, they also involved numerous rites which required constant attention and which must have been most irksome and unpleasant. Moreover, those ceremonies subjected the Israelites to considerable expense by the costly sacrifices they were frequently required to offer and the tithes they were commanded to pay the priests. Furthermore, some of the laws bound upon them were of such a character that it is altogether unaccountable, on the principles of political wisdom, that any legislator should have proposed or that a whole nation should meekly have submitted to them. Such was the law of the Sabbath year, which forbade them tilling or sowing the ground for a whole twelve months (Ex. 23:10, 11). Such was the law ordering all the males to journey from every part of the land to the tabernacle (Deut. 16) —leaving their homes unprotected. Such was the law which prohibited their king multiplying horses (Deut. 17:16); and more especially the law of jubilee, when all mortgaged property had to be restored to the original owners and all slaves freed (Lev. 25:10). Now we submit that it is utterly incredible to suppose that any sane legislator would, on his own authority, have imposed enactments which interfered so seriously with both private and public liberty, and which involved such hazards as the people dying of starvation while their fields lay fallow, and their wives and children being murdered by invaders when all their men-folk were far removed from them. Still more inconceivable is it that, instead of bitterly resenting and openly revolting against such unpopular statutes, the whole nation should quietly acquiesce therein. It is quite pointless to say that Israel was imposed upon by Moses, that he deceived them into believing those laws were of Divine authority. No such deception was possible, for the simple reason that the entire nation was assembled at Sinai and had witnessed the supernatural and awe-inspiring phenomena when the Lord had descended and given those Laws audibly—they had with their own ears heard a portion of it published. Israel's reception of such a Law can only be accounted for on the basis that they were fully assured it proceeded from God Himself. Having demonstrated that the Scriptures could not have been manufactured by either wicked impostors or deluded fanatics, that they were not invented by the Christian Church or the ancient Jews, we are shut up to the only remaining alternative, namely, that they are a revelation from God—His own inspired and infallible Word. No other choice is left; no other explanation is credible. Every other attempt to explain their origin is found, upon critical examination, to be not only altogether inadequate, but utterly absurd. If a thinking man finds it difficult, nay, impossible, to explain a created universe apart from a Divine Creator, it is no less so for him to account for the Book of books without a Divine Author. This is a matter which admits of no compromise: if the Bible has come to us from God, then it has claims upon us which infinitely transcend those of all other writings. If it is not from God, then it is an impious fraud, unworthy of our attention. There is no middle ground! Moreover, if the Bible is not what it claims to be, then we are left without any revelation which, with any reliability or authority, can impart to us the knowledge of God or warrant its reception by mankind! We now come to the 5th point—It bears the hallmark of genuineness: the contents of the Bible are just what might be looked for. What are the essential characteristics we should expect to find in a written communication from God unto fallen mankind? Would they not be, first, the imparting to us of a knowledge of the true God; and second, of that instruction which is best suited to our varied needs? Such is precisely what we have in the Bible. The grand truth taught throughout the Sacred Scriptures is that God does all things for His own glory and for the manifestation of His own perfections. And is not that exactly in

accord with right reason? Once men are led to entertain any true conceptions of the Supreme Being, they are brought to the irresistible conclusion that One who is self-existent and self-sufficient, the Creator and Proprietor of the universe, could not be swayed by any creature or moved to action from a regard to anything outside of Himself, or irrespective of Himself—that in all His works—both of creation and providence, He will have a supreme regard unto His own honour and the maintaining of His own perfections. If, then, the Bible is the Word of God, proceeding from Himself, stamped with the autograph of His own authority, we naturally expect to find it possessed of that characteristic and directed to that end. Thus in fact it is. The cardinal design of the Sacred Scriptures is to make God known, to exhibit the peerless excellence of His character, to teach us the homage and adoration which are His due. Their supreme end is to display to us the glorious attributes of God, that we may learn to form the most elevated conceptions of His Being, our own entire dependence upon Him, our deep obligations to show forth His praise. The scope of the entire Bible is to teach us our relations to God, and that the business of our lives is to give Him His true place in our hearts, to act always so as to please Him. Yet the very reverse of that is what obtains in human practice: in view of which we are forced to conclude that had men originated the Bible its teaching thereon had been very different, and that it had contained no such statements as, "The LORD hath made all things for Himself" (Prov. 16:4), "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31). Again—would we not naturally expect to find a revelation from God couched in a strain very different from that in which one man speaks to another? Since the Creator is so high above the creature, does it not befit Him to address us in terms which become His august majesty? Such is just what we find in the Bible. Its instructions are delivered to us not in an argumentative form, but in an authoritative manner, for while arguments are suited to equals, they would be quite out of place for the Allwise when directing the ignorant. Its precepts are not proffered to us as so much good advice which we are free to heed or not at our pleasure, but rather as imperial edicts which we disregard to our eternal undoing. The commandments of Scripture admit of no questioning: "Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not," are its peremptory terms. In the most uncompromising way, and without the least semblance of apology, the Bible claims the absolute right to dictate unto all men what they should do, condemns them for their failure, and pronounces sentence of judgment upon every offender. From Genesis to Revelation the contents of Holy Writ are set forth in dictatorial language beyond which there is no appeal. It speaks throughout as from an infinitely elevated plane. Moreover, the Bible does not single out for address merely the ignorant and the base, but issues its orders unto all classes alike. The cultured as well as the illiterate, the high as well as the low, the rich equally with the poor are imperatively told what they must do and from what they must abstain. And that one feature alone places the Bible, my reader, in a class by itself. If it possessed not the same, then we should have grave reason to suspect its authenticity. It would be most incongruous for the Ancient of Days to use a conciliatory tone and employ the language of obsequiousness when vouchsafing a communication to creatures who are but of yesterday. So far from the language of dogmatism being unsuited, it is exactly what might be looked for in a revelation from the Most High. Nevertheless, the dictatorial ring of the Bible accords it a unique place in the realm of literature. There is no other book in the world which demands, on pain of eternal perdition, the total submission of all mankind unto its authority; as there is none other which pronounces a fearful curse on anyone who has the audacity to take away from its contents. The ring of imperial authority which sounds through all its chapters indicates that it is the voice of the living God who is the Speaker. Yet it will also follow that if the Bible be a Divine revelation, then it must be suited to the needs of man, and not simply this or that man, but of all without distinction. One of the clearest marks of the handiwork of God in the material creation is that of design and adaptation—that all His productions are perfectly fitted to answer the ends for which they are made—as the human hand to perform so many different tasks. We should therefore expect to

find this same characteristic stamped upon the Bible; nor is that expectation disappointed! It imparts to us the knowledge of God's glorious character and our relations to Him, and reveals the means by which we may regain His favour and secure our own eternal happiness. The Holy Scriptures furnish us with an accurate diagnosis of the human heart and all its manifold workings. They describe to us our enemies and make known the stratagems which they employ, and how they are to be resisted and overcome. They discover to us the character of that malady which has smitten our moral nature, and the great Physician who is able to recover us therefrom. They specify the most serious of the dangers which menace us, and faithfully warn us against the same. They supply instruction which if heeded promotes our welfare in every way. The Bible makes known to us how wisdom, strength, and true joy are to be obtained here, and how Heaven may be our portion hereafter. It supplies salutary counsels which are admirably suited to all our varied circumstances. It is adapted equally to the young as to the aged, to those in prosperity or those in adversity. Its language is simple enough for those of little education, yet it has depths in it which the most learned cannot fathom. In the Scriptures there is as great a variety as there is in Nature, something to meet the most diverse temperaments and tastes: history, poetry, biography, prophecy, legislation—the essentials of hygiene, profound mysteries, and a message of glad tidings to those in despair. Moreover, the Bible is self-explanatory. No reference library is required to be consulted in order to arrive at the meaning of anything in it: one part interprets another. The New Testament supplements the Old, and by patiently comparing Scripture with Scripture the diligent reader may ascertain the significance of any figure, symbol, or term used therein; though its spiritual secrets are disclosed only unto the prayerful and the obedient. As the light is accommodated to the eye and the eye formed and fitted to receive the light, so though the Scriptures have come from Heaven, yet are they perfectly suited to those who live on earth. They contain all the information that is required by man as a moral and accountable being. There is no important problem relating to either our temporal or eternal welfare upon which the Bible does not supply excellent counsel. Though its contents be ineffably sublime, they are at the same time intensely practical, meeting every moral and spiritual need, adapted alike to Jew and Gentile, ancient or modern, rich or poor. The Bible not only makes known how the State should be governed and the Church ordered, but it furnishes full instruction to direct the individual and to regulate the home. In a word, the Bible is qualified to be a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. When, then, we examine this Book which claims to come from God, and find it possesses all those marks and evidences which could reasonably be expected or desired, that it is exactly suited to answer all the ends of a Divine revelation, we are obliged to conclude that our Creator has graciously met our deep need, and therefore that revelation should be received by us with the utmost reverence and welcomed with the deepest thanksgiving. Let us move on to the 6th point—Christ and the Scriptures. What was His attitude toward them? What was His estimate of them? What use did He make of them? The answers to those questions are of supreme importance and must settle the matter once and for all, for what is the opinion of any man worth when placed over against the verdict of the Son of God! Give, then, your best attention while we seek to furnish a reply to those inquiries. Negatively, Christ never cast the slightest doubt upon their validity or called into question their authenticity. When His detractors reminded Him, "Moses wrote unto us" such and such a thing, He did not say that Moses was wrong, but told them they "erred, not knowing the Scriptures" (Mark 12:19-24). When a lawyer sought to ensnare Him, so far from brushing aside the authority of the Scriptures, He enforced the same, saying, "What is written in the Law?" (Luke 10:26). When engaged in any controversy, His invariable appeal was unto the Old Testament, and declared that what David said was "by the Spirit," (Mark 12:36). Not once did He intimate that it was unreliable and untrustworthy. But let us turn to the positive side. Behold the Lord Jesus when He was assaulted by the Devil, and note well that the only weapon He made use of was the Sword of the Spirit. Each time He repulsed the Tempter with a sentence

from the Old Testament (Matthew 4)! And observe that as soon as that mysterious conflict was over, God—to evince His approbation of Christ's conduct—sent angels to "minister unto Him" (Mark 1:13). Mark how He commenced His public ministry, by entering the synagogue, reading from the Prophet Isaiah, and saying, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:16-21). Hear Him as He declared, "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till Heaven and earth pass, one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law till all be fulfilled" (Matthew 5:17, 18). He had come to enforce the teachings of the Old Testament in their minutest detail, to honour and magnify the same, by rendering a personal and perfect obedience to them. He owned the Scriptures as "the Word of God" (Mark 7:13) just as they stood—without any reservation or qualification—thereby authenticating all the books of the Old Testament. So far from regarding the Old Testament as being full of myths and fables, He taught that Abraham, Lot, Moses, Daniel, were real entities. He expressly ratified the very incidents at which the skeptics scoff: the Flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire from Heaven (Luke 17:28-29), Jonah being three days and nights in the whale's belly (Matthew 12:40), thereby denying they were but "folk lore," and establishing their historicity. Christ placed the words of Moses on a par with His own—(John 5:46, 47). Jesus said, "If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:31), which again evinces our Lord's estimate of the Old Testament. It was of supreme authority to Him. When vindicating Himself for affirming His Deity, after quoting from the Psalms He added, "and the Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35)—it is infallible, inviolable. When engaged in prayer to the Father He solemnly declared, "Thy Word is Truth" (John 17:17): not simply contains the Truth, or even is true, but "is Truth"—without the least tincture of error, the word of Him "that cannot lie" (Titus 1:2). When His enemies came to arrest Him in the Garden and Peter drew his sword, the Saviour rebuked him, saying, "Thinkest thou that I cannot pray to My Father, and that He shall at once give Me more than twelve legions of angels," yet note well how He at once added, "But how then shall the Scripture be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" (Matthew 26:53, 54). Very blessed is that: showing that the written Word was what regulated His every action, and that it was His strong consolation in His darkest hour. Reverently behold Him on the Cross, and observe Him placing homage upon the sacred Psalter by using its words when undergoing the extreme anguish of Divine desertion (Ps. 22:1; Matthew 27:46). But more—"Jesus . . . that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst" (John 19:28). There was yet one detail predicted of His dying sufferings which had not been accomplished, namely, that, "in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink" (Ps. 69:21), and therefore in subjection to the Divine authority of the Old Testament, He cried "I thirst"! After rising in triumph from the grave, we find our blessed Lord again magnifying the Scriptures: "Beginning at Moses and the Prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24:27). Thus we are left in no doubt whatever of Christ's attitude toward, estimate of, and the use which He made of the Scriptures. He ever treated them with the utmost reverence, affirmed their Divine authority, and considered that one word of theirs put an end to all controversy. He averred the Old testament was "the Word of God," entirely inerrant, verbally inspired, as a whole and in all its parts. He affirmed that the Scriptures are the final court of appeal, and asserted their perpetuity. For the Christian, the testimony of Christ is final: he requires no further evidence or argument. Nor should the non-Christian. It is the height of absurdity to suppose that One who was endowed with infinitely superior wisdom to Solomon should have been imposed upon by a fraud; as it would be horrible blasphemy to say that He knowingly set His imprimatur upon what He knew to be false. Whose judgment, my friend, do you prefer: that of the so-called "advanced thinkers" or the verdict of the Son of God? Which deem you the more trustworthy?

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