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CHAPTER I

THE BIBLE: THE WORD OF GOD

IT is a marvelous thing that we have an infallible Book from the hand of God. Every student and teacher should be fully convinced of this fact. There are two lines of evidence to be traced: (1) That which is internal, or the Bible's own claim concerning itself, and (2) that which is external, or outward, obvious facts concerning the Scriptures.

I. THAT WHICH IS INTERNAL

By hundreds of passages the Bible both directly declares and assumes itself to be the Word of God (note Psa. 12:6; 93:5; 119:18, 98, 99, 100, 105, 130; Isa. 55:10, 11; Jer. 23:29; Rom. 10:17; 2 Tim. 2:15). Psalm 19:7-11 declares that the Old Testament is the Word of Jehovah. Six perfections of that Word are named with six corresponding transformations which that Word accomplishes. Likewise, Hebrews 1:1, 2 states that God is speaking in the Old Testament through the prophets and in the New Testament through His Son.

II. THAT WHICH IS EXTERNAL

Considering the external evidence that the Bible is the Word of God, the Book is a phenomenon and as such presents a challenge to the most skeptical among men. Certain facts should be noted:

1. *Its Continuity.*

The Bible appears in one volume in which there is a perfect continuity of historical sequence from the creation to the new heavens and the new earth; a perfect unfolding of doctrine from the blade to the full corn in the ear; from type to antitype; from prophecy to its fulfillment; and the anticipation, presentation, realization, and exaltation of the most perfect Person on earth or in Heaven. Yet this one volume which exhibits the most perfect continuity of thought that the world has ever seen is, nevertheless, a collection of sixty-six books written by about forty authors—kings, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, physicians, statesmen, scholars, poets, and plowmen—who could have known but little of each other, since their lives were lived in various countries and their writings were distributed over sixty generations of human history, representing a period of about sixteen hundred years.

2. *The Extent of its Revelation.*

In its unfolding of truth, the Bible is inexhaustible. Like a telescope it sweeps the universe from the heights of Heaven to the depths of hell, and traces the works of God from their beginning to their end. Like a microscope it reveals the minutest details of the plan and purpose of God and the perfection of His creation. Like a stereoscope it places all beings and objects whether on earth or in Heaven in right relation the one to the other. Though written in the earlier days of human knowledge when the present world discoveries could not reasonably have been disclosed, it is in harmony with every discovery made by man.

3. *Its Output.*

In fullest satisfaction the Bible is claimed by all races as their own, and is, as no other book, translatable into every tongue. It has already been translated into over seven hundred and seventy different languages and dialects. Thirty societies are now specializing in its publication, and over thirty million copies are printed annually. Of this number the British Bible Society publishes *every hour* more than two thousand copies. The French infidel Voltaire who died in 1778 predicted that the Bible would become obsolete within a hundred years. Contrary to the statement of this skeptic, the Bible abides. For nineteen hundred years it has endured the systematic, destructive attacks from Satan and men; but never has its predicted endurance been more tested than now when those who pose as its friends and exponents are subtly denying its most vital truths and its supernatural character. Its influence is transforming. To the unsaved it is the "sword of the Spirit" (Eph. 6:17), and to the saved it is a cleansing, sanctifying, and reflecting power (Eph. 5:25, 26; John 17:17; 2 Cor. 3:18); it is the basis of all true civilization, law, and morality.

4. *Its Subject Matter.*

The supernatural character of this Book is seen in the fact that it deals as freely with the unknown and otherwise unknowable as it does with that which is known, and those who follow its teachings are unfailingly led in the paths of God's eternal Truth. Likewise, as no other book, the Bible accounts for those who do not receive its teachings. Of them it records that they are unregener-

ate men who receive not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can they know them because only by the Spirit are these things discerned (1 Cor. 2:13).. Its qualities are real, for those who know it best love it most.

5. *As Literature.*

Merely as literature, the Bible is supreme. It satisfies the simple-minded and entrances the sage; yet here, again, consideration should be given to the limitations of its human authors. To God alone be the glory!

6. *Unprejudiced Authority.*

This Book is not prejudiced in favor of men. It unhesitatingly records the sin, the weakness of the best of men and the doom of all who rely alone on those virtues and merits which are their own. Men do not so speak of themselves. It assumes to be a message from God to man rather than a message from man to man. It speaks with authority of things in Heaven and things on earth; of the seen and of the unseen; of God, of angels, and of men; of time and of eternity; of life and of death; of sin and of salvation; of Heaven and of hell. Apart from its message, there is no knowledge of these eternal issues in all the world: with its message, there is certainty, assurance, and peace.

7. *The Supreme Character.*

Above all else in this supernatural Book is its revelation of the Person and glory of God as manifested in His Son. Let no one suppose that this Character is a mere fiction—the invention of a mortal mind; for His perfections have never been comprehended by the wisest and holiest of this earth. If He were a mere fiction, let the mind which conceived Him be extolled and adored!

8. *The Bible and Christ Compared.*

Because of the combination of supernatural qualities which enter into the Bible, a similarity may be observed between the Bible as the Written Word and the Lord Jesus Christ as the Living Word. They are both supernatural as to their origin, presenting an inscrutable and impeccable blending of that which is divine and that which is human. They both exercise a transforming power over those who believe, and are alike allowed of God to be set at naught and rejected by those who do not believe. The untainted, undiminished divine perfections are embodied in each. The revelations which they disclose are at once as simple as the demands of a child, as complex as the infinite treasures of divine wisdom and knowledge, and as enduring as the God whom they reveal.

QUESTIONS

1. What are the two general lines of evidence that the Bible is the Word of God?
2. Name six transformations it accomplishes as stated in Psalms 19: 7-11.
3. Since the Bible was written by so many different authors and in various ages, how do you account for its marvelous continuity?
4. Recount the various classes of men who are the human authors.
5. Does the Bible revelation conflict with modern discoveries?
6. To what extent is the Bible being circulated?
7. What was Voltaire's prediction in 1778?
8. Has the Bible ever been more assailed by its enemies than now?
9. Does the Bible hesitate to speak with authority on supernatural and eternal things?
10. What does it say of the limitation of man?

Major Bible Themes

11. What is peculiar about its literary appeal?
12. What evidence is suggested by the fact that the Bible discloses the sins of all men?
13. What character is its supreme revelation?
14. Indicate the outstanding similarity between Christ and the Scriptures.

CHAPTER II

THE BIBLE: INSPIRED OF GOD

THE Bible rightfully assumes to be God's message to man. The books of the world assume to be no more than man's message to his fellow-man. The Bible therefore deals with things eternal, infinite, and otherwise unknowable as freely as other books deal with things temporal, finite, and known. In forming the Scriptures, it is true that God employed human writers, but these men, though they may have understood but little of the whole to which they were contributing, did nevertheless, under the mighty hand of God, produce a single Book in which there is infinite continuity and which manifests every evidence of being the work of one Writer who alone is its Author.

The true doctrine of inspiration contends that God so directed the human authors that, without destroying their own individuality, literary style, or personal interest, His complete and connected thought toward man was recorded. Various opinions have been advanced as to the extent of the divine control over the human authors. These have been called "theories of inspiration," and all students of the Bible should be clear in their own minds with regard to these vital issues.

I. GENERAL THEORIES OF INSPIRATION

1. *Naturalistic*.—This, as the name implies, is the theory that the Bible is only a human product and

therefore void of any supernatural elements. This view, which discredits and degrades the Word of God, is held only by infidels and unregenerate men.

2. *Partial*.—By this term a theory of inspiration is indicated which suggests that only certain parts of the Scriptures are inspired. When this theory is accepted, of necessity each person is left to determine for himself what portions of the Bible are inspired and what are not. All authority is broken down since people are not naturally inclined to receive and apply to themselves those words of reproof and correction which are contrary to their own wishes. Those who hold this theory usually make much of the words of Christ as being more authoritative than other portions of the Scriptures; disregarding the fact that Christ wrote nothing and that His words are, at best, the report of the very men whose writings they, in other connections, discredit.

However, it should be remembered that Christ declared His own acceptance of every word of the Old Testament to be the Word of God, and that He provided for the full authority of every word of the New Testament.

3. *Gracious*.—This theory of inspiration suggests that the writers of the Bible were inspired in the same way, though to a fuller degree, as Spirit-filled men are empowered to-day. The writings of the Apostle Paul are said to be comparable with the writings of John Calvin or Martin Luther, and equally liable to be marred by human error. This and the "Partial" theory of inspiration are the theories which are held by Modernists to-day.

4. *Verbal*.—This theory, as its designation implies, maintains that the Bible is, even to its very words, an inspired book. This claim is made for the original writ-

ings only and not for copies, translations, or quotations, even though they may date back to the early days of the Christian era. However, though no original manuscripts are now in existence, it is important to observe that the most careful study of those copies, translations and quotations which are available yields clear evidence that our present text of the Bible is a very close reproduction of the original.

It is sometimes claimed that it was not the very words but the thought, or concept, which was inspired. The sufficient answer to this suggestion is that, apart from the exact words, there could be no precision in a mere conception, particularly such precision as is demanded in the Scriptures. So, also, the declaration of the writers who knew the facts is that they were responsible for words rather than the mere concept (note Moses, Exod. 34:27; David, 2 Sam. 23:2; Psa. 45:1; Solomon, Prov. 30:6; Isaiah, Isa. 6:5-8; Jeremiah, Jer. 1:7; 36:1, 2; Zechariah, Zech. 7:7, Christ, Matt. 8:17; John 14:10; 8:47; 12:48; 17:8; Paul, 1 Cor. 2:4; Jude, Jude 1:17, 18: R. V.). Nor does the Bible's own claim to be inspired, even in its very words, limit the choice of words or the flow of style on the part of the human writers, for God is abundantly able to secure the exact expression He demands even within the literary limitations of a fisherman.

II. THE TESTIMONY OF CHRIST

Beyond its own claims, the Old Testament was declared by Christ to be the inspired Word of God. When He spoke, none of the New Testament had been written, therefore He could have referred only to the Old Testament (John 17:17). Likewise, the New Testament was written according to His provision and

promise. He had said that He would leave a revelation and that it would be completed after His departure (John 16:12, 13). This revelation was committed to certain men (John 15:27; Acts 1:8; Matt. 28:19; Luke 10:22), and He gave their words the same authority as His own (Matt. 10:14, 15; Luke 10:16; John 13:20; 17:14, 18; Heb. 2:3, 4).

III. TWO IMPORTANT PASSAGES

1. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16). The word which is here translated *inspiration* is used but once in the New Testament. It means "God-breathed," and, according to this verse, this divine element extends to all the Scriptures.

2. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:21). The phrase, "moved by the Holy Ghost," is the vital element in this revelation and its literal meaning is that the writers were "borne along" by the Spirit of God. Such is the Bible's own claim to inspiration.

IV. QUALIFYING CONSIDERATIONS

1. Inspiration provides that the exact divine message be given. If it is God's Truth which is reported, it is recorded exactly. If it is Satan's lie, it is presented as a lie, for inspiration does not change a lie into truth. If it is history, it is true to the facts. If it is prophecy, it indicates precisely what will come to pass.

2. Inspiration aims at inspired writings and not at inspired men. The very infallible Scriptures themselves record the sins and failures of the human authors.

3. Since we depend upon the Bible alone for the knowledge of the most vital facts of our existence, there is every reason to contend for the divine accuracy of

God's Word and to be grateful that it is "God-breathed" and therefore not merely as *fallible* as its human writers, but is as *infallible* as its divine Author.

QUESTIONS

1. Wherein does the Bible assume to be God's message to man?
2. For what does the doctrine of Inspiration contend?
3. Define the Naturalistic Theory of Inspiration.
4. Define the Partial Theory of Inspiration.
5. Define the Gracious Theory of Inspiration.
6. Define the Verbal Theory of Inspiration.
7. Which of these do you accept?
8. Why is it that inspiration cannot be limited to the thought or concept?
9. What theory of inspiration does the Bible claim for itself?
10. Indicate Christ's attitude toward the inspiration of the Old Testament Scriptures.
11. What provision did He make for the inspiration of the New Testament?
12. State the meaning of the word *inspiration* as used in 2 Timothy 3:16 and of the words *moved by the Holy Ghost* as used in 2 Peter 1:21.
13. Indicate the effect of inspiration on the recorded words of God, of Satan, of men, of history, and of prophecy.
14. Does inspiration aim at inspired men or inspired writings? What proof can be given for your answer?

CHAPTER III

THE BIBLE: ITS SUBJECT AND PURPOSE

REVELATION from God is reasonable. In the presence of the fact of the material universe, a belief in a sufficient Creator is demanded of all rational beings. And, having recognized the Creator and man as the consummation of creation, it is reasonable to expect that the Creator will communicate with the creature, revealing His purpose and will. God the Creator has done this having revealed Himself in various ways:

1. *Through Nature.*—The eternal power and Godhead, we are told, are revealed by the things which are created (Rom. 1:20), but, while the revelation is limited in that it discloses nothing of those divine attributes which have to do with redemption and the destiny of men, it is sufficient to the extent that the heathen world is without excuse if they do not recognize that there is a God.

2. *In Christ.*—In the fullness of time (Gal. 4:4), God became manifest in the flesh. The Son of God came into the world to declare God to men in terms of human understanding. By His incarnation, otherwise inscrutable facts concerning the eternal God have been translated into the limited range of human comprehension. This revelation contemplates not only the Person and power of God which was already set forth to a limited degree in the things created, but more particularly the love of God as set forth in the sacrificial

death of Christ. Christ is an exact portrait of God (Heb. 1:3), and we should always consider Christ as God manifest in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16).

3. *The Written Word.*—This chapter has to do with the written Word as a manifestation. The Bible not only presents God as its supreme Subject, but also unfolds His purposes. The written revelation is all-inclusive. It not only restates all the facts concerning God which are revealed through nature, and gives the only record concerning God's manifestation in Christ, but it enlarges the divine revelation into infinite detail regarding God the Father, the Son, the Spirit, angels, demons, man, sin, salvation, grace, and glory. In recognizing the unique character of the Bible, two things especially noted in the title of this chapter may be emphasized:

I. THE PURPOSE OF THE BIBLE

We understand from the written Word of God that there is one supreme purpose which actuates God in all He has done or will do from the beginning of creation to the farthest reaches of eternity whether it is in Heaven or on earth. For this one purpose angels were created; so, also, the material universe and man, and, though hidden behind an inscrutable mystery, we know that even sin was permitted and redemption was provided with a view to the realization of this supreme purpose. This supreme purpose is *the Glory of God*.

That God should bring all things to pass that He might be glorified would seem self-seeking to an infinite degree, from a mere human view-point; but this theme cannot be limited to the range of human conceptions. In the light of Scripture revelation, we conclude that because God is infinite in His being, His perfections, and

His blessedness He is worthy of infinite glory, and it would be an injustice of infinite proportions should His creation withhold from Him that honor and glory which are rightfully His.

God is not self-seeking; He who is the fountain source of all truth must be true to Himself as Creator and Lord of all. It is man who is self-centered and who can conceive of nothing more desirable than that man should be exalted and glorified. It is man who does not understand the normal relation which should exist between the Creator and the creature, and does not ascribe to the Creator that glory which is rightfully due Him because of His person, His position, and His character (Exod. 24:10, 17; 1 Chron. 16:17-29; Psa. 57:11; Isa. 6:1).

Since the Bible is God's message to man, its supreme purpose is His supreme purpose; which is, that He may be glorified. The Bible records:

1. That "all things . . . 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" (for his glory, Col. 1:16). Angels and men, the material universe and every creature, are all created for His glory. "The heavens declare the glory of God" (Psa. 19:1).

2. The nation Israel is for the glory of God (Jer. 13:11; Isa. 43:7, 21, 25; 60:1, 3, 21; 62:3).

3. Salvation is unto the glory of God (Rom. 9:23), even as it will be a manifestation of the grace of God (Eph. 2:7), and is now a manifestation of the wisdom of God (Eph. 3:10).

4. All service should be unto the glory of God (Matt. 5:16; John 15:8; 1 Cor. 10:31; 1 Pet. 2:12; 4:11, 14). The Bible itself is God's instrument by which He

prepares the man of God unto every good work (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

5. The Christian's new passion is that God may be glorified (Rom. 5:2).

6. Even the believer's death is said to be to this one end (John 21:19; Phil. 1:20).

7. The saved one is appointed to share in the glory of Christ (John 17:22; Col. 3:4).

II. THE SUBJECT OF THE BIBLE

The Lord Jesus Christ is the supreme subject of the Bible. Like a glass, this Book reflects "the glory of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18); but the Lord Himself has been manifested that He, in turn, might reflect the glory of God. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6).

QUESTIONS

1. On what ground is it reasonable to expect that God would reveal Himself to man?
2. What passage of Scripture indicates that God has revealed Himself to man through nature?
3. What concerning God is thus revealed?
4. Is nature's revelation complete?
5. By what means has God made a perfect revelation of Himself to man?
6. Wherein is this revelation superior to that of nature?
7. Indicate the various aspects of the divine revelation as set forth in the Bible.
8. What is the supreme purpose of God as revealed in the Scriptures?

9. Why is it in no way self-seeking on the part of God to wish to accomplish His own glory?
10. Wherein is real self-seeking disclosed?
11. Name seven ways which are indicated in the Scriptures whereby God is said to be glorified.
12. Point out the Scriptures which state that all creation is for the glory of God.
13. In what way is God glorified through the salvation of a soul?
14. Describe how Christ is the manifestation of God's glory.