

THE BIBLE

A Miracle Book

by

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CHAPTER ONE

“THE BOOK”

Some time ago Robert L. Ripley, of “*Believe It or Not*” fame, declared that General Von Clausewitz “has caused more loss of life than any other man in history.” He then proceeded to show that since the publication in 1810 of the General's book entitled, “*Principles of War*,” the German militarists have used it as their textbook in the prosecution of their aggressive wars.

This lays a tremendous indictment at this General's door. It means that he is largely responsible for the destruction of both men and materials by militant Germany since the book was written.

However, it is my desire to focus attention upon another book. It is the one which Sir Walter Scott, the noted historian, rightly called “*The Book*.” For let it be said without fear of contradiction from any unbiased scholar, this is the king of literature; the sun from which all light emanates; the way, the truth, and the life of God Himself, revealed in the Person of Jesus Christ. And because of this, it stands out in marked contrast to the General's book, for it is the fountain and channel of blessing to all who believe it.

I believe that away down deep in the hearts of people who have heard the gospel message; there is the strong conviction that the Bible is the Word of God.

It seems just as natural to accept this fact as the fact that God is. The two go together. I frankly admit that some deny and dispute its authority, but for lack of evidence they have no case.

Often these criticize the Book because it criticizes them. They know not God and desire not the knowledge of His ways. Nevertheless, with all their denials and disputings, the Bible stands. At this we marvel not. Let me introduce you to the grand secret. It is God-spoken and God-breathed.

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son” (Hebrews 1:1, 2).

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

GOD IN THE BOOK

It has always interested me to listen to men debate on how we received the Bible.

Some insist that the thoughts and words were inspired but not the men. Others contend that both the thoughts, words, and men were inspired. But one thing is most gratifying, and that is the general consensus that the written Word is God-breathed.

To me, at least, that is the main thing. God is in the Book regardless of how He entered.

- I am sure Moses did not quibble about how God got into the bush.
- Neither did Israel argue as to the manner in which God took His place in the Tabernacle.
- The three Hebrews quarreled not as to how God the Son joined them in the fiery furnace.
- Still less did the Apostles try to unravel the mystery that “**God was in Christ.**”

Therefore, let us approach the Book with the utmost confidence and becoming reverence that we are in the presence of Deity.

OUR LORD’S ENDORSEMENT

All Bible-lovers should be strengthened and stabilized, cheered and comforted, in the knowledge of Christ's endorsement and appraisal of the Book. He certainly accepted it as inspired and infallible, authentic and authoritative.

If I may so speak, He played the part of “Champion” in its defence. He knew the vile and vicious nature of ungodly men who would arise and challenge the very existence of many of its characters. So He champions them. They may leave the rest with Him.

For, if Christ be for them, who can be against them?

What caviler will accuse Him of ignorance or brand Him as a liar? He might as well shoot boiled peas at Gibraltar to blast it out of the Mediterranean as try to overthrow the authority of Christ.

One of the most precious ministries of Jesus was to put His stamp of approval upon the Old Testament. I delight to hear Him;

- Verify the Edenic marriage (Matthew 19:4-6);
- Certify the death of Abel (chap. 23:35);
- Testify about the days of Noah (chap. 24:37-38);
- Clarify the existence of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (chap. 22:32);
- Magnify the ministry of Moses (chap. 5);
- Ratify the historicity of Daniel (chap. 24:15);
- Specify the exact time spent in the belly of the fish by Jonah (chap. 12:39-41);
- Amplify the visit of the Queen of Sheba to King Solomon (chap. 12:42);
- Qualify the cleansing of Naaman (Luke 4:27);
- Notify us about the Book written by Isaiah (John 12:37-41).

OTHER CONFIRMATIONS

Another fascinating feature about our Lord's ministry is His coverage of Old Testament events; somehow there savors the element of satire, especially in view of our knowledge of the Modernist's view toward them.

In His own masterfully fashion;

- He authenticated the story of the flood (Genesis 7; Matthew 24:37-39);
- He asserted that fire fell upon the ungodly cities of the plain (Genesis 19; Luke 17:29).
- He acknowledged the food, or manna, Israel ate (Exodus 16; John 6).
- He advocated the truth about the feasts of the Lord (Leviticus 23; John 5:6,7).
- He affirmed that the famine took place in Elijah's day (1 Kings 17; Luke 4).
- He assured that Zechariah prophesied about His entry into Jerusalem on the foal of a donkey (Zechariah 9; Matthew 21).
- He confirmed that the Sabbath was for man (Genesis 2; Matthew 12).
- He characterized the Serpent as a Liar and a Murderer (Genesis 3; John 8).
- He comprehended Sinai where Moses gave the Law (Exodus 20; Matthew 5).
- He compared the Serpent of Brass with Himself (Numbers 21; John 3).
- He condemned the Jews in their attitude toward the Sanctuary for worship (1 Kings 7; John 2).
- He consigned Judas for His betrayal for thirty pieces of silver (Zechariah 11; Matthew 26).
- He conversed freely about the fulfillment of the prophecies in regard to the “**Tree**” (Exodus 15; the “**Throne**” (Isaiah 32); the “**Tribulation**” (Jeremiah 30); and the “**Triumph**” (Psalm 72).

Finally (for I cannot go into any more detail here),

- He asserts that He is the “**Lamb**” for redemption (Exodus 12; John 1:29);
- He is the “**Ladder**” for reconciliation (Genesis 28; John 1:51);
- He is the “**Light**” for revelation (Genesis 1; John 1:5,9);
- He is the “**Laver**” for restoration (Exodus 30; John 13);
- He is the “**Lord of the Harvest**” for reaping (Ruth 2; Matthew 9);
- He is the “**Lion of the Tribe of Juda**” for rule (Genesis 49; Revelation 5).

A VISIT

Some of these soul-thrilling truths were flooding my soul one afternoon when I was called upon to visit the chief detective's office in a certain Lancashire town in England.

After finishing our business, I began to preach the Gospel to him. He seemed quite restive. Then, in a tone which meant to convey surprise at my simplicity in accepting the Bible as the Word of God, he said:

“But surely you do not accept everything in the Bible as inspired. You must know that there are many mistakes and many contradictions there.”

“Well, sir,” I replied, “I do accept every word as inspired. I believe also that there is not one mistake or contradiction in it. Maybe you feel surprised at my credulity, but might I ask you one question?”

When he consented, I put this matter before him, “Do you believe, sir,” I continued, “that I am greater than Jesus Christ?”

For a moment he was silent; then half-heartedly said, “No, sir; I do not. I believe that Jesus Christ is the greatest Person that ever lived.”

That gave me the green-light. I then told him, "I always feel safe when I take sides with Christ. Since He endorsed the Bible, who am I that I shouldn't?" And that is the stand I take.

Has it ever dawned upon you that when Christ's Deity was being contested, He appealed to the Scriptures as a witness, in the way that He appealed to John the Baptist, His own works, and His Heavenly Father. In other words He put the testimony of the Scriptures on a par with the others.

It stands to reason that He would not have considered them for one moment had they been like a broken reed, or like the ever-shifting, sinking sand. He knew, and the Jews knew too, that the Old Testament was the unerring Word of the Covenant-keeping God. So He brings into court this witness, saying:

"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me" (John 5:39).

Think with me for a moment of the risen Christ as He approaches the two disciples on the Emmaus road. There is not the least suspicion or the slightest doubt in His mind in relation to the veracity of the Old Testament. On the contrary, He upbraids them for their unbelief, and immediately expounds the meaning of those many prophetic passages. Here are His actual words:

"Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24:26,27).

I hardly think I could do better than to bring forward the thought of Dr. W.H. Thomas, that great exponent of the truth of God, who writes thus:

"What, then, was our Lord's general view of the Old Testament? That His Old Testament was practically, if not literally, the same as ours, and that He had a thorough knowledge of its contents, are admitted.

"Nor does any one seriously deny that Jesus Christ accepted the Old Testament as authoritative, inspired, and the final court for all questions connected with it. No one can go through the Gospels without being impressed by the profound reverence of our Lord for the Old Testament and with His constant use of it in all religious matters.

"Whether He referred to Bible names, or incidents, or to its deep teachings about God, it was always with the utmost reverence and with the evident conviction that it embodied a divine revelation. This general view is confirmed by His detailed references."

NEW TESTAMENT APPRAISED

So much for the Christ's evaluation of the Old Testament. Enough has been advanced to prove that the person that turns down the Book also rejects the Christ that endorsed them. That means that he is left without a Saviour from sin and its consequences, and that he has no divine guide as he moves through the world. It is a sad condition, yet nonetheless true.

But what about Christ's attitude toward the New Testament? In the first place, we appreciate that no part of the Book was written till long after the ascension. And, more amazing still, He never contributed one line to it. This was left the chosen eight to do. But there is no doubt in my mind that the New Testament was before Him in that upper room as He scanned the future and spoke of the work of the Holy Spirit subsequent to His glorification. He said:

“When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come” (John 16:33).

The eight writers employed in the writing of the New Testament, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, James, Peter and Jude, give abundant evidence that what they wrote was the product of the Holy Spirit. And the work is the climax to the Old Testament. The whole Bible has Jesus Christ as its center. J. Paterson Smyth in his book, *“How God Inspired the Bible,”* says, “It cannot be dissociated from Him. It is closely, inseparably bound up with His life.

THE INCARNATION

“The Incarnation does not appear as a separate solitary event unconnected with the history before and after. It appears as a climax in a long historical manifestation of God to man recorded in the New.

The Old Testament tells of the preparation for Christ. The New Testament tells that when that preparation was completed in the fulness of time God sent forth His Son.

Jesus Christ, as it were, stands between them and lays His hand upon them both . . .

The Old Testament is incomplete
looking forward to the New,
the New is incomplete
looking backward to the Old.

“Therefore to him that believes that Jesus Christ is God, the divine origin of the Bible stands safe for ever, no matter how his opinion may have to be modified.”

CHRIST’S TESTIMONY FINAL

And so I conclude on the note that Christ's evaluation of the Book is final. To me there is no other court of appeal. I am not unaware of what the archaeologists have brought to light. Neither do I set aside such a lucid testimony to the accuracy and authority of its revelations. But had no spade ever been employed, the testimony of Christ would have remained valid. In fact, I take this thing the full distance and declare that he who disputes the Bible disputes also the Person of Christ.

One thing I heartily commend to you. It is to place implicit trust in the Christ of God.

“Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it.” He will not lead you astray. He is all He claimed to be, and He will do all that He has promised. Surely we cannot doubt His love! His death proves it. Now that He is risen and upon God's Throne He requires our confidence. Shall we give it?

THE NEW BIRTH

The moment we believe in Christ, the Son of the living God, the One who died for our sins and was raised again for our justification, that moment we are born again.

“As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in His Name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12,13).

Again, when we believe in Him we are saved and have eternal life. Jesus said so,

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation: but is passed from death unto life” (John 5:24).

Friend, believe the Word of God. Accept it as the divine revelation to you. Let it lead you to Jesus. Acknowledge Him as Lord.

“For if you shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, THOU SHALT BE SAVED” (Romans 10:9).

- He will take away your sins.
- He will impart His perfect peace.
- He will fill your heart with joy.
- He will be everything to you both in time and throughout eternity.

Lift up your heart to Him now and say:

“THOU BLESSED CHRIST OF GOD, I WHOLEHEARTEDLY RECEIVE THEE AS MY PERSONAL SAVIOUR AND LORD.”

~ end of chapter 1 ~

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