

TALKS TO MEN

ABOUT THE BIBLE AND THE CHRIST OF THE BIBLE

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SECOND TALK

TWO MORE REASONS WHY I BELIEVE THE BIBLE TO BE THE WORD OF GOD

IN the address of yesterday, we saw that if we accepted the authority of Jesus Christ we must accept the entire Old Testament and the entire New Testament, because He set the stamp of His authority on both; that it was either Christ and the whole Bible, or no Bible and no Christ. We saw, in the second place, that we must accept the authority of Jesus Christ because He was accredited to us by five unmistakably divine testimonies. First, the testimony of the divine life that He lived. Second, the testimony of the divine words that He spoke. Third, the testimony of the divine works that He wrought. Fourth, the testimony of His divine influence upon all subsequent history. Fifth, the testimony of His resurrection from the dead.

We saw, in the next place, that there was a school of criticism that assumed to set its authority up against that of Jesus Christ, that this school of criticism demanded that we should give up the infallibility of Christ and the Scriptures, and accept in the place of it the infallibility of this school of criticism. Before yielding to their demand, we demanded their credentials. We saw that Jesus presented His credentials, which were convincing, but that this school of criticism had absolutely no credentials to present over against those of Jesus Christ. Therefore we refused to bow to their claim of authority and infallibility, but most gladly bowed to the fully proven authority and infallibility of Jesus Christ.

My second reason for believing the Bible to be the Word of God is because of its fulfilled prophecies. The average infidel knows absolutely nothing about fulfilled prophecy, and this is not to be wondered at, for the average Christian knows nothing about fulfilled prophecy, and even the average preacher knows practically nothing about fulfilled prophecy. The subject of prophecy is a large one, and to go into it thoroughly would take many days, but it can be presented in outline in a few moments with sufficient fulness to show the overwhelming weight of the argument. There are in the Bible two kinds of prophecy: first, the explicit, verbal prophecies, and second, the prophecies of the types and symbols.

We will take up first the explicit verbal prophecies. These are of three kinds; first, prophecies regarding the coming Messiah; second, prophecies regarding the Jewish people; third, prophecies regarding the Gentile nations. We will limit ourselves this morning to prophecies regarding the coming Messiah, and take only five of them by way of illustration. Isaiah liii. (the entire chapter); Micah v. 2; Daniel ix. 25-27; Jeremiah xxiii. 5, 6; Psalms xvi. 8-11. In the passages cited we have predictions of a coming King of Israel. We are told the exact time of His manifestation to His people, the

exact place of His birth, the family of which He should be born, the condition of the family at the time of His birth (a condition entirely different from that existing at the time the prophecy was written, and contrary to all the probabilities in the case), the manner of His reception by His people (a reception entirely different from that which would naturally be expected), the fact, method, and details regarding His death, with the specific circumstances regarding His burial, His resurrection subsequent to His burial, and His victory subsequent to His resurrection. These predictions were fulfilled with the most minute precision in Jesus of Nazareth.

An attempt has been made by the rationalists to show that Isaiah liii. does not refer to the coming Messiah. It is natural that they should attempt this, for if it does refer to the coming Messiah, the case of the rationalists is hopeless. That it does refer to the coming Messiah is evident from the fact that this chapter was taken to be Messianic by the Jews themselves until its fulfilment in Jesus of Nazareth, and their unwillingness to accept Him as the Messiah drove them into the attempt to show that it was not Messianic. Furthermore, the desperate straits to which those who deny its Messianic application are driven show the hopelessness of their case. When asked who the suffering One of Isaiah liii. is if He is not the Messiah, the best answer they can get is that it refers to suffering Israel, but any one who will carefully read the passage will see that this interpretation is impossible. The sufferer of Isaiah liii. is represented as suffering for the sins of others than Himself, and those for whom He is suffering are represented as “My people,” that is, Israel (verse 8). Now, if the sufferer is suffering for sins of others than Himself, and the others than Himself for whom He is suffering are Israel, then surely the sufferer Himself cannot be Israel.

You can bring the prophecies cited down to the very latest date to which the most daring destructive critic ever thought of assigning them, and still they are hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. How are we going to account for it, that this Book has the power of looking into the future hundreds of years and predicting with most minute precision things to come to pass then, and that these predictions are fulfilled to the very letter? Facts demanding accounting for. You are business men—theologians may weave their theories out of their own inner consciousness without regard to facts, but business men must face facts, and here are facts. There is but one rational explanation of it. Any book that has the power of looking hundreds of years into the future, and predicting with minute precision as to person, place, time, circumstances, detailed things to occur at that remote period, must have for its author the only person in the universe who knows the end from the beginning—that is God. Of course, it is quite possible for a far-seeing man to look a few years into the future, and by studying causes now operant, predict in a

general way some things that will occur. But this is not at all our problem with the Bible. It is not a few years into the future, but hundreds of years into the future; not in a general way, but with minute and specific fulness. It is not of things the causes of which are now operant and discernible, but things the causes of which are not discernible at the present time, and these predictions fulfilled to the letter. To a mind willing to bow to facts and their necessary meaning, it is conclusive evidence of the Divine origin of the Book.

A noteworthy fact regarding the prophecies of the Bible is that oftentimes there are two seemingly contradictory lines of prophecy, and it seems as though if the one line of prophecy were fulfilled, the other could not be; and yet these two seemingly contradictory lines of prophecy will converge and be fulfilled in one Person. For example, in the Old Testament we have two lines of prophecy concerning the Messiah; one line predicts a suffering Messiah, “despised and rejected of men,” “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,” whose earthly mission should end in death and ignominy. The other line of prophecy predicts with equal clearness and definiteness an all-conquering Messiah, who should rule the nations with a rod of iron. How can both of these lines of prophecy be true? The best answer the ancient Jew had, before the fulfilment of both lines in Christ, was that there were to be two Messiahs, one a suffering Messiah of the tribe of Joseph, and one a conquering Messiah of the tribe of Judah, but in the actual fulfilment, both lines of prophecy meet in the one Person, Jesus of Nazareth, who at His first coming is the suffering Messiah, making atonement for sin by His death upon the cross, as so often predicted in the Old Testament, and at His second coming He will come as a conquering King to rule the nations.

But the prophecies of the types and symbols are even more conclusive than the explicit verbal prophecies. If you ask the ordinary, superficial student of the Bible how much of the Old Testament is prophetic, he will reply something like this, “Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the Minor Prophets are prophetic,” and may add that there are also prophetic passages here and there in the Psalms and Pentateuch. But if you asked a thorough-going student of the Bible how much of the Old Testament is prophetic, he will tell you that the entire book is prophetic, that its history is prophetic, that its personages are prophetic, that its institutions, ceremonies, offerings and feasts are prophetic. If you are incredulous (as you have a right to be until you have investigated, but you have no right to remain incredulous unless you do investigate), but will take time, he will sit down and take you through the whole Book from the first chapter of Genesis to the last chapter of Malachi, and will show you everywhere unmistakable foreshadowings of things to come. He will show you in the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, David, and Solomon, unquestionable foreshadowings of the truth regarding

Christ. He will show you in every sacrifice and offering, in every feast, in every institution, in the tabernacle and in every part of the tabernacle, its outer court, Holy Place and Most Holy Place, brazen altar, golden candlestick, table of shew bread, golden altar of incense, the veil that hung between the Holy Place and Most Holy Place, ark of the covenant, in its boards, bars, sockets and tenons, and the very coverings of the tabernacle, the clearest setting forth of every truth about Christ— His Person, His nature, His character, His atoning death, His resurrection, His ascension and coming again, and of all the facts of Jewish and Christian history. He will show you every profoundest truth which was to be fully revealed in the New Testament prefigured in the types and symbols of the Old Testament. At first this very likely will seem to you like a mere happy coincidence, but as you go on verse after verse, chapter after chapter, book after book, if you are a fair-minded man, you will at last be overwhelmingly convinced that this was the thought and intention of the real author; and as you see in this ancient history and in this legislation ordained to meet the immediate needs of the people the setting forth of all the profoundest truths of Christian doctrine, and the perfect foreshadowing of all the facts of the history of Christ, the Jewish people and the Church, you will be driven to recognise in it the mind and wisdom of God. The modern critical theories regarding the construction of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy go all to pieces when considered in the light of the meaning of the types of the Old Testament. I have never known a destructive critic that knew anything to speak of regarding the types. One cannot study them thoroughly without being profoundly convinced that the real author of the Old Testament, back of the human authors, is God.

My third reason for believing the Bible to be the Word of God is because of the unity of the Book. This is an old argument, but a good one. The Bible is composed, as I suppose you know, of sixty-six parts or books. It is often-times said that the Bible is not a book, but a library. This is partly true, partly false. It is true the Bible is a library, but at the same time it is the most intensely one book of any book extant. The sixty-six books which compose the Bible were written by at least forty different authors. They were written in three different languages, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. The period of their composition extends over at least 1500 years. They were written in countries hundreds of miles apart. They were written by men upon every plane of political and social life, from the king upon the throne down to the herdsman and shepherd and fisherman and the petty politician. They display every form of literary structure. In the Bible we find all kinds of poetry, epic poetry, lyric poetry, didactic poetry, erotic poetry—elegy and rhapsody. We find all kinds of prose as well—historic prose, didactic prose, theological treatise, epistle, proverb, parable, allegory and oration. In a book so composite, made up of

such divergent parts, composed at such remote periods of time, and under such diverse circumstances, what would we naturally expect? Variance and discord, utter lack of unity. In point of fact, what do we find? The most marvellous unity. Every part of the Bible fits every other part of the Bible—one ever-increasing, evergrowing thought pervades the whole.

The character of this unity is most significant. It is not a superficial unity, but a profound unity. On the surface, we often find apparent discrepancy and disagreement, but, as we study, the apparent discrepancy and disagreement disappear, and the deep underlying unity appears. The more deeply we study, the more complete do we find the unity to be.

The unity is also an organic one—that is, it is not the unity of a dead thing, like a stone, but of a living thing, like a plant. In the early books of the Bible, we have the germinant thought; as we go on we have the plant, and further on the bud, and then the blossom, and then the ripened fruit. In Revelation we find the ripened fruit of Genesis.

How are we to account for it? Here is another fact that demands accounting for, and as business men you have to deal with facts, not theories; realities, and not fine-spun speculations of cloistered theologians, dreaming apart from the substantial realities of life. There is one easy and simple way of accounting for it, and only one rational way of accounting for it at all, and that is, that back of the forty or more human authors was the One all-governing, all-controlling, all-superintending, all-shaping mind of God.

Suppose it were proposed to build in our capital city in America, Washington, a temple that should represent the stone products of every State in the Union. The stones were to come from every State in the Union; some from the marble quarries of Marlboro, New Hampshire, others from the granite quarries of Quincy, Mass., some from the brownstone quarries of Middletown, Conn., some from the white marble quarries at Rutland, Vermont, some from the grey sandstone quarries at Berea, Ohio, some from the porphyry quarries below Knoxville, Tenn., and some from the redstone quarries near Hancock, Michigan, some from the brown-stone quarries at Kasota, Minnesota, some from the gypsum quarries of the far west; some stones from every State in the Union. The stones were to be of all conceivable sizes and shapes—some large, some small, some medium, some were to be cubical, some spherical, some cylindrical, some conical, some trapezoidal, and some rectangular parallelepipeds. Each stone was to be hewn into its final shape at the quarry from which it was taken. Not a stone was to be touched by mallet or chisel after it reached its destination. Finally the stones are at Washington, and the builders go to work. As they build, they find that every stone fits into every other stone, and into its place. It is found that there is not one stone too many, or one stone too few, until at last the builders' work is done

and there rises before you a temple with its side walls, its buttresses, its naves, its arches, its transepts and its choirs, its roof, its pinnacles, and its dome, perfect in every outline and in every detail, not one stone too many and not one stone too few, not one stone left over, and no niche or corner where one stone is lacking, and yet every stone hewn into its final shape in the quarry from which it was taken. How would you account for it? There is one very simple way to account for it, and only one to account for it at all, namely, that back of the individual quarry-men was the master architect who planned the whole building from the beginning and gave to each individual quarryman his specifications for the work. Now this is precisely what we find in that temple of eternal truth which we call the Bible, the stones for which were quarried in places remote from one another by hundreds of miles, and at periods of time 1500 years apart; stones of all conceivable sizes and shapes, and yet every stone fitting into its place and fitting every other stone, until when the Book is finished there rises before you this matchless temple of God's truth, perfect in every outline and every detail; not one stone too many and not one stone too few, and yet every stone cut into its final shape in the quarry from which it was taken. How are you to account for it? There is but one rational way to account for it, and that is, that back of the human hands that wrought was the master-mind of God that thought and gave to each individual workman his specifications for the work. You can't get around it and be honest and fair.