

# TALKS TO MEN

ABOUT THE BIBLE AND THE CHRIST OF THE BIBLE

BY

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London

NISBET & CO. LTD.

22 BERNERS STREET, W. L.

## FOURTH TALK

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

IN the three previous addresses I have given you seven reasons why I believe the Bible to be the Word of God. First, because of the testimony of Jesus Christ to that effect. We saw that Jesus Christ set the stamp of His authority upon the entire Old Testament and the entire New Testament, and that if we accepted the authority of Jesus Christ we were obliged to accept the entire Bible as to Divine origin and authority. We next saw that we must accept the authority of Jesus Christ, for He was accredited to us by five unmistakably definite testimonies. First, by the testimony of the Divine life that He lived; second, by the testimony of the Divine words that He spoke; third, by the testimony of the Divine works that He wrought; fourth, by the testimony of His Divine influence upon all subsequent history; and fifth, by the testimony of the resurrection from the dead which was God's Divine attestation to the claims of Jesus Christ. The second reason I gave was because of its fulfilled prophecies. We saw that the Bible had the power of looking into the future, and predicting with minuteness, accuracy, and precision things which were to occur hundreds of years ahead, and that these prophecies had been fulfilled to the letter. We concluded that a book which had this power of looking into the future and telling with minuteness, accuracy, and precision things that were to come to pass centuries afterwards, must have for its Author the only One in the universe who knows the end from the beginning, that is God. The third reason I gave for believing the Bible to be the Word of God was because of the unity of the Book. We saw that though the Bible was composed of sixty-six books, written by at least forty human authors, the period of their composition extending over at least 1500 years, and displaying every form of literary structure, that there was one all-pervading thought and purpose through the entire Book, that every part of the Bible fitted into every other part, and that the Bible was the most thoroughly one Book of any book extant. We saw that the only way to account for this undeniable and remarkable phenomenon was that back of the human authors was the one all-governing, all-controlling, all-superintending, all-shaping mind of God. The fourth reason for believing the Bible to be the Word of God was because of the immeasurable superiority of its teachings to those of any other book, or all other books. We saw that there were three points of radical difference between the Bible and all other books: (1) That other books contain truth, but truth mixed with error, but the Bible contained nothing but truth; (2) that other books contained part of the truth, but the Bible contained all the truth; (3) that the

Bible contained more truth than all other books together. The fifth reason was because of the history of the Book, its omnipotence against all man's attacks. We saw that what man had produced man could destroy, but that eighteen centuries of assault upon the Bible had utterly failed to destroy the Book, or to undermine confidence in it. Our sixth reason for believing the Bible to be the Word of God was because of its power to lift men up to God. We saw that the Bible has a power to lift men up to God that no other book possesses, and must therefore have come down from God in a way no other book has. Our seventh reason for believing the Bible to be the Word of God was because of the character of those who accepted it as such and those who rejected it. We saw that with absolute unanimity all the men and women who lived nearest God and knew God best believed the Bible to be His Word, and that those who had the most doubts about it were those who lived farthest from God and knew God least.

My eighth reason for believing the Bible to be the Word of God is because of the inexhaustible depth of the Book. What man has produced man can exhaust. But eighteen centuries of study on the part of tens of thousands of the ablest minds have been unable to exhaust the Bible. Many men of strongest intellect, of marvellous powers of penetration, of broadest culture, have given a lifetime to the study of the Bible, and no man who has really studied it has ever dreamed of saying that he had gotten to the bottom of the Book. Indeed, the more profoundly one digs into the Book, the more clearly he sees that there are still unfathomable depths of wisdom beneath him in this inexhaustible mine of truth. Not only is this true of individuals, it is true also of generations of men. Thousands of men in co-operation with one another have delved into this mine, but, so far from exhausting it, there are still new treasures of truth awaiting each new student of the Word. New light is constantly breaking forth from the Word of God. How are we to account for this unquestionable fact. The human mind has been progressing during these eighteen centuries—we have outgrown every other book that belongs to the past, but so far from outgrowing the Bible we have not grown up to it. The Bible is not only up to date, but always ahead of date. The best interpretation of the most recent events of our own day is found in this old Book. If this Book were man's book we would have fathomed it centuries ago, but the fact that it has proved itself unfathomable for eighteen centuries is positive proof that in it are hidden the infinite treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God. A brilliant Unitarian writer in America has given utterance to one of the keenest sentences that was ever spoken or written from the standpoint of the denial of the inspiration of the Bible. He says, "How irreligious to accuse an infinite God with having put His whole wisdom in one so small a Book!" I submit that that is keen, but this writer did not see how the keen edge of his

Damascus blade could be turned against himself. What a testimony to the Divine origin of this Book that such infinite wisdom can be packed in so small a compass! The Bible is not such a very large Book (I have a copy that I carry in my vest pocket), but yet in a Book that can be printed in so small a compass there are packed away such treasures of wisdom that eighteen centuries of study by the world's best minds have been unable to exhaust it. How are we to account for it? There is no one but God who could pack such infinite treasures of truth in so small a compass.

My ninth reason for believing the Bible to be the Word of God is because of the fact that as I grow in knowledge and in character, in wisdom and in holiness, I grow toward the Bible. The nearer I get to God, the nearer I get to the Bible. When I began the real study of the Bible, I had the same experience with it that every thoughtful student has had in the beginning of his studies. I found things in the Bible that were difficult to understand, others that seemed incredible. I found that the teachings of one part of the Book seemed to flatly contradict the teachings of other parts of the Book. It seemed clear to me that if one teaching of the Bible were true, that some other could not be, and like so many another, I accepted so much of the Bible as was wise enough to agree with me. But as I went on studying the Bible, and as I went on growing in likeness to God, I found that my difficulties were disappearing; at first, one by one, then by twos and then by scores, ever disappearing more and more. I found constantly that the nearer I got to God, the nearer I got to the Bible; the nearer I got to God, the nearer I got to the Bible; the nearer I got to God, the nearer I got to the Bible. What is the inevitable mathematical conclusion? Two lines always converging as they draw near to a given point must meet when they reach that point. The nearer I got to God, the nearer I got to the Bible; the nearer I got to God, the nearer I got to the Bible; the nearer I got to God, the nearer I got to the Bible. When I and God meet, I and the Bible will meet. That is, the Bible was written from God's standpoint. There is no honest escaping of this conclusion.

Suppose I were to pass through a vast, dark, and dangerous forest for the first time. Before starting upon this perilous tour a guide was brought to me who had often been through the forest before and had conducted many a party through in safety, and had never led a single party astray. Under his leadership I began my journey through the forest. We got on very nicely together for a ways, but after a time we came to a place where two roads diverged. The guide said to me, "The path to the right is the right path to take." But my judgment and reason passing upon the phenomena observable by the senses saw clear indication that the road to the left was the road to take. I say to the guide, "I know that you have been through this forest time and again, that you have conducted many a party through in safety, and I have great

confidence in your judgment upon that account, but in the present instance I believe you are wrong. My reason and judgment passing upon the phenomena that I can observe by my senses see clear indications that the road to the left is the road to take. Now I have never been through this forest before and you have, and I know that my reason and judgment are not infallible, but they are the best guide that I have, and I cannot throw them overboard. I must follow them." So I take the road to the left. I go about a mile and then come to an impassable morass, and have to go back and take the way the guide said. We get on well together again for a ways, but again we come to a place where two paths diverge. This time the guide says, "The road to the left is the road to take." But my reason and judgment passing upon the phenomena observable by my senses see clear indication that the road to the right is the road to take, and again we have our little parley. Again I say to the guide, "I know that you have passed through this forest time and again, and that you never led a party astray, and I have great confidence in your judgment on that account, but my reason and common-sense passing upon the phenomena observable by my senses tell me that the road to the right is the road to take. Now I know that my reason and common-sense are not infallible, but they are the best guide that I have, and I cannot throw them overboard." So again I go the way my reason and common-sense passing upon the phenomena observable by my senses suggest. I go about half a mile, and then run up against an impassable barrier of rock and have to go back and go the way the guide said. Suppose that this should happen fifty times and every time the guide proved right, and my reason and common-sense, passing upon the phenomena observable by the senses, proved wrong, do you not think that about the fifty-first time I would have reason and common-sense enough to throw my ever-erring judgment to the winds and go the way the guide said? This has been my exact experience with the Bible. Time and time again I have come to the parting of the ways, where the Bible said one thing and my reason and common-sense seemed to say another, and fool that I was, I threw the Bible overboard and went the way that my reason and common-sense said, and every time I have had to come back and go the way the Bible said. I trust that the next time when I and the Bible differ, I will have common-sense enough to throw my ever-erring reason and judgment overboard and go the way the Bible says. The most irrational thing in the world is what we call rationalism. Rationalism is an attempt to subject the teachings of infinite wisdom to the criticism of our finite judgment. Could anything possibly be more irrational than that? It never seems to occur to the rationalist that God can have a good reason for saying or doing a thing if he, the rationalist, cannot see the reason. One of the greatest discoveries that I ever made was one day when it dawned upon me that God might possibly know more than I did,

and that God might possibly be right, when to me He appeared to be wrong.

My tenth reason for believing the Bible to be the Word of God is because of the testimony of the Holy Spirit to that fact. To the one who puts himself in the right attitude toward God and truth, the Holy Spirit bears direct testimony that the voice that speaks to him from the Bible is the voice of God. One will often meet a godly old woman, of no very wide reading or culture, who still has a firm faith that the Bible is the Word of God. If you ask her why she believes the Bible to be the Word of God, she will reply, “*I know* the Bible to be the Word of God.” But again if you ask, “*Why* do you believe it to be the Word of God?” she will reply, “*I know* it to be the Word of God.” And if still again you ask, “*Why* do you believe it to be the Word of God?” again she will reply, “*I know* it to be the Word of God.” Very likely you will say, “Well, I will not disturb the old lady’s faith (no fear, you couldn’t if you would), but she is beneath argument.” You are mistaken, she is above argument. Jesus Christ says, “He that is of God heareth God’s words” (John viii. 47). Again Jesus Christ says, “My sheep hear My voice” (John x. 27). She is one of God’s children and knows her Father’s voice, and she knows that the voice that speaks to her from the Bible is the voice of God. She is one of Christ’s sheep, and she knows that the voice that speaks to her from the Bible is the voice of the true Shepherd.

I can tell you how any one of you can come to that same position, where you will be able to distinguish God’s voice, and to know that the voice that speaks to you from the Bible is the voice of God. Jesus Christ Himself tells us this in John vii. 17, R. V., “If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching whether it be of God, or whether I speak from Myself.” The surrender of the will to God opens the eyes of the soul to see the truth of God. Jesus Christ does not demand that a man shall believe without evidence, but He does demand that a man shall put himself in that moral attitude toward God and the truth that makes him competent to appreciate evidence. There is nothing that so clarifies the human mind as the surrender of the will to God. Some years ago I was lecturing to our students in Chicago on how to deal with sceptics and infidels. Our lecture-room in Chicago is open to all kinds and conditions of men, and oftentimes it is a motley crowd that gathers together—Christian and Jew, Roman Catholic and Protestant, believers, sceptics, infidels, agnostics, and atheists. At the close of this lecture, the wife of the late Dr. A. J. Gordon of Boston came to me and said, “Did you see the man sitting near me as you spoke?” I had noticed the man, because I had had some little conversation with him before. “Well,” she added, “while you were speaking, I heard him say, ‘I wish he would try it upon me.’” “I would be glad to.” “Well, there he is over in the corner.” I did not need to go to him, for when the others had gone out, he came to me and said, “Mr. Torrey, I do

not wish to say anything discourteous, but really my experience contradicts everything that you have said to these students this morning.” I replied, “Have you done what I told these students to get the infidel or sceptic to do, and guaranteed if they would do it they would come out of their doubt and unbelief into a clear faith in the Bible as the Word of God and Jesus as the Son of God?” “Yes, I have done it all.” “Now,” I said, “let’s be definite about this.” So I called my secretary and dictated something like this: “I believe that there is an absolute difference between right and wrong” (I did not say, I believe that there is a God, for this man was an agnostic, and neither affirmed nor denied the existence of God, and you have to begin where a man is), “and I hereby take my stand upon the right to follow it wherever it carries me. I promise to make an honest search to find if Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and if I find that He is, I promise to accept Him as my Saviour, and confess Him publicly before the world.” My secretary brought two copies of this, and I handed them to him and said, “Are you willing to sign this?” He replied, “Certainly,” and signed them both. He folded one and put it in his pocket. I folded the other and put it in my pocket. Then he added, “There is nothing in it. My case is very peculiar.” (His case was peculiar. He had been through Unitarianism, Spiritualism, Theosophy, and pretty much all other *isms*, and was now an out and out agnostic.) “Another thing,” I added, “do you know that there is not a God?” “No,” he said, “I don’t know that there is not a God. Any man is a fool to say he knows that there is not a God. I am an agnostic; I neither affirm nor deny.” I said, “Well, I know that there is a God, but that won’t do you any good. Do you know that God does not answer prayer?” “No, I do not know that God does not answer prayer. I do not believe that He answers prayer, but I do not know that He does not answer prayer.” “Well,” I said, “I know that He does answer prayer, but that will not do you any good; but here is a possible clue to knowledge. You are a graduate of a British University?” “Yes.” “You know the method of modern science? The method of modern science is this, if one finds a possible clue to knowledge, to follow that possible clue to see what there may be in it. Here is a possible clue. Will you adopt the methods of modern science in religious investigation? Will you follow out this possible clue to see what there may be in it? Will you offer this prayer, ‘Oh God, if there be any God, show me if Jesus Christ is Thy Son or not, and if Thou showest me that He is Thy Son, I promise to accept Him as my Saviour, and confess Him as such before the world.’” “Yes,” he said, “I will do that too; but there is nothing in it. My case is very peculiar.” “One more thing,” I said. “John says in John xx. 31, ‘These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name.’ Now John tells us here that the Gospel of John is written to show men the proof that Jesus is the

Christ, the Son of God. Will you read the proof? Will you read the Gospel of John?" "I have read it again and again," he replied; "I can quote parts of it to you if you wish to hear them." "No," I said, "but I wish you to read it this time in a new way. Each time before you read offer this prayer, 'Oh God, if there be any God, show me what of truth there is in the verses I am about to read, and what you show me to be true, I promise to accept and take my stand upon.' Now don't read too many verses at a time. Don't try to believe or disbelieve. Simply be open to conviction to the truth; pay careful attention to what you read; and when you have finished the Gospel, report to me the result." "Yes," he said, "I will do it all; but there is nothing in it. My case is very peculiar." "Never mind," I said, and went over again the three things he had promised to do, and we separated. About two weeks after I was speaking on the south side, and I saw this man in the hall. At the close of the meeting he came to me and said, "There was something in that." I replied, "I knew that before." "Well," he said, "ever since I have done what I promised I would do, it is just as if I had been caught up and was being carried along by the Niagara River, and the first thing I know I shall be a shouting Methodist." I became a Methodist for the occasion, and said, "Praise the Lord!" I went east to lecture at some schools in Massachusetts. When I came back there was a reception, and this man was present at the reception, and he came to me and said, "Are you busy?" "Not too busy to speak to you," I replied. We went into another room, and he said, "I cannot understand it. I cannot see how I ever listened to these men" (mentioning a number of infidel and Unitarian writers and speakers). "It is all nonsense to me now." "Oh," I said, "the Bible explains that in 1 Cor. ii. 14: 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' You have taken the right attitude towards truth, and God has opened your eyes to see the truth." He came out into a clear faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and the Bible as the Word of God. If any of you doubt this story, try it for yourself, and you will have one of your own to tell.

Gentlemen, the Bible is the Word of God. The voice that speaks to us from this Book is the voice of God. But some one will say, "Suppose it's the Word, what of it?" Everything of it! If the Bible be the Word of God, then Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and there is no salvation for any of us outside of a living faith in Him that leads us to put all our trust for pardon in His atoning work on the cross of Calvary, and to surrender our wills and our lives absolutely to His control. Have you done this? Will you do it now?