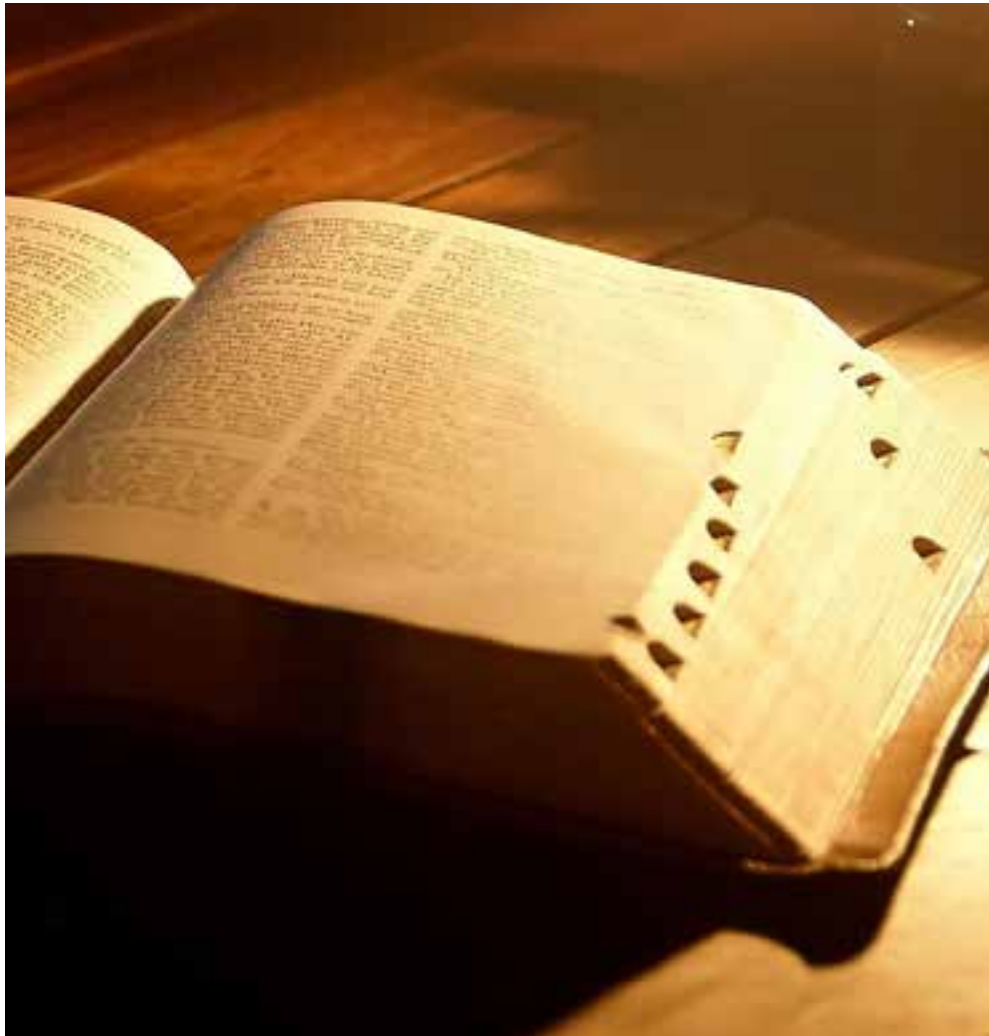


THE DIVINELY INSPIRED WORD



Arthur W. Pink (1886-1952)

Course DW2

(complete)

Name: _____ Student ID: _____ Date: _____

Instructions for this course

The reading material for this course is included in this study guide. All materials you need to take this course are included, except for a Bible and answer sheets.

Before each lesson: pray for God to give a teachable heart and understanding.
Begin the lesson by reading the related section in the book provided.



Answer the questions for the corresponding lesson in this study guide.

Use the required answer sheet format, putting your name and course information on each sheet (sample after the Table of Contents). Use any standard note paper (or the answer booklets if provided).

Skip a line between answers.

Always use your own words in your answers.

Try to be as clear and concise as possible.

Please do not rush! Meditate on what God wants you to learn.

Don't go to the next question until completing the current one.

If, and only if, you are taking the course as **correspondence study** (with written feedback from others):

After completing all the lessons, send the completed answer sheets to your course coordinator.

Only mail your answers sheets, not other materials.

All sent answers are handled confidentially.

Label the envelope's lower left with: student ID, course, and lesson numbers.



Three months are allotted for course completion.

Extensions may be granted upon request.



Your answer sheets are returned to you after review.

Keep all materials and returned answers together for future reference.

THE DIVINELY INSPIRED WORD, PART TWO

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THE DIVINELY INSPIRED WORD

PART TWO

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God.”

—2 Timothy 3:16

*“That thou mightiest know the certainty of those things,
wherein thou has been instructed.”*

—Luke 1:4

7. Its Unique Writing

A. Historical Parts

We are in the midst of presenting more than thirty arguments for the divine inspiration of the Scriptures. Let us proceed to the eleventh argument¹ for the Bible being of divine origin: *Its historical parts*.

Much of the Bible consists of historical narratives, yet both their contents and the style in which they are written at once distinguish them from all others. They cover a period of no less than 4,000 years! The Old Testament contains the oldest records of the world, dating far before the chronicles of men, before the dimmest traditions of all nations, except Israel. Therefore the Scriptures of the Old Testament are many centuries older than any other historical records. Herodotus, who has been styled “the Father of History,” was born a thousand years after Moses, the penman employed by God in writing the Pentateuch! They not only give information that none of the writings of antiquity contain, but are in striking contrast with the legendary fables of early Greece and Rome. The Bible alone supplies us with any knowledge of the affairs of this world during its first fifteen centuries. Predating all human historians, God Himself has made known to us how the earth came into existence, how the nations originated, and has giv-

¹ The first ten arguments were discussed in Part One, course DW1.

en a brief but succinct account of the era that terminated in the Flood—all of which matters are entirely beyond our imagination.

1. *Its contents*

The opening verses of Genesis stand in a class entirely by themselves. Their teaching upon the creation of the universe out of nothing is quite peculiar to Holy Writ. Such an idea is not to be found in the most rational and refined systems of secular writers. Even where an intelligent architect was conceived of, as in the speculations of Plato and Aristotle,² yet he was portrayed as working upon existing material. The concept favoured by the earlier Egyptians and Babylonians was that everything, including the stars and this earth, has developed from the inherent power of the sun. For profoundness of theme and yet simplicity of language, for comprehensiveness of scope and yet brevity of description, for scientific exactness and yet the absence of technical terms, nothing can be found in all literature that for a moment compares with the opening chapter of the Bible. Its divine revelation stands out in marked separation, not only from the meaningless theories of the ancients and the senseless mythologies of the heathen, but equally from the laborious jargon of our moderns who essay to write upon the origin of things, which are out of date almost as soon as published.

Again, the historical portions of the Bible, alone, supply us with a satisfactory explanation of the present state of the world. As was pointed out earlier, the earth exhibits numerous marks of intelligence and kindness, yet they are neither of unvaried orderliness nor of unmixed benevolence. If on the one hand we behold the fertile fields and beauties of nature, on the other there are icy wastes, vast deserts, death-dealing volcanoes. It is apparent that this earth has experienced some fearful convulsion by which its original structure has been deranged; it is still subject to earthquakes, devastating tornadoes, and tidal waves. Man and this earth are clearly adapted to each other—yet there are many examples of discrepancy. Why is this? Certainly not because of any imperfection in the Creator. Then why? The Bible alone accounts for these abnormalities, and it does so in a way without the wisdom and power of the Creator being negated. It reveals that, as the result of sin, God is now dealing in justice and holiness with His wayward subjects, as well as in goodness and mercy with the creatures of His hand.

Most of the Old Testament is a history of the nation of Israel, and it, too, is written in a manner quite different from all others, for as one has well said, “It is recorded by the unerring hand of truth.” No effort is made to magnify the virtues of Israel, nor is there the least attempt to hide their vices. Had those records been composed by uninspired Jews, then obviously they would have laboured to present the most attractive picture possible of their own people, and therefore no reference would have been made to their

² **Aristotle** (384-322 BC) – Greek philosopher and mathematician, pupil of Plato, tutor of Alexander the Great.

ingratitude and hard-heartedness. Particularly would a forgery have sought to impress other nations with the might, valour, and military genius of the Jews. But so far from that, their faint-heartedness and defeats are frequently recorded. The capture of Jericho and the conquest of Canaan are not attributed to the brilliance of Joshua and the bravery of his men, but to the Lord's showing Himself strong in their behalf. Nor did the victories granted them proceed from partiality or whim, for only while they walked in obedience to God's Law did He crown their efforts with success. It is noteworthy that the sacred history of the Old Testament ends at the point where credible secular history begins, for the occupation of Palestine by the Persians, Greeks, and Romans is recorded by Xenophon³ and his successors.

2. *Its style*

The uniqueness of Scripture history appears not only in the disclosures made, but also in its *style* and *omissions*. Its method of chronicling events is radically different from all other histories. It only just touches upon, and often entirely ignores, matters that would be of most interest to men of the world, whereas it frequently treats at length of things that they consider of no importance. How amazingly brief is the account given the creating and furnishing of this earth! Man never would have restricted *that* to a single chapter and then devote more than ten others to the Tabernacle and its erection. No indeed; the wisdom of this world would have regarded the grand edifice of the universe as worthy of a much fuller description than that of a religious tent! Nothing is told us of the "seven wonders" of the ancient world. Men of renown are passed by in silence, while the pastoral lives of insignificant individuals are narrated. The great empires of antiquity are scarcely mentioned, and then only as they touch the interests of Israel. The selection is such as no secular historians would have chosen. The events singled out are set down as a plain record of facts, without any attempt of the writers to mingle their own reflections with them.

3. *Its design*

The *design* of sacred history is entirely different from that of all others. Its aim is not simply to preserve the memory of certain events, but to teach us the knowledge of God and His salvation, and to show us our deep need of the same. Its purpose is not merely to narrate bare facts, but rather impart important moral instruction. It does very much more than convey to us a knowledge of events that is nowhere else obtainable—the agency of *God* in connection with those events is constantly brought out. That which uninspired historians either overlook or deliberately ignore is made prominent: namely, the divine displeasure against sin. The historical portions of Scripture display to us the excellence of the divine character throughout, and set before us His governing of this world. Sacred history is very much more

³ **Xenophon** (c.430-354 BC) – Greek historian, soldier, and student of Socrates.

than an authentic record of human affairs: it exhibits the perversity and folly, the instability and unbelief of human nature, and reveals the springs from which our actions proceed. In its narratives the thoughts and secret motives of men are discovered, and that in a manner and to an extent which none but the great Searcher of hearts was capable of doing. The real character of man is unveiled as in no other writings.

The Bible describes the perfections of Jehovah in action as fully as the declarations of His longsuffering and great mercy in forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin. It describes the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of the heart as forcibly and distinctly as the announcements of the prophets, when they speak aloud and spare not (Robert Haldane).

It emphasizes the providential intervention of God in human affairs and His ways with men. Therein we are shown what a mad and bitter thing it is for either an individual or a nation to forsake the living God—and, in contrast, what blessings attend those who walk in subjection and fellowship with Him. Consequently its narratives are of great practical value: not only in a general way by showing how God punishes sin and rewards righteousness, but by specific and personal illustrations of the same. Vital ethical and spiritual lessons are thereby learned, and from the lives of different individuals we are taught what examples are worthy of our following, and what evils and dangers it will be our wisdom and profit to avoid. Thus those sacred narratives afford us scope for constant learning. Into the inspired history is most wondrously interwoven all the doctrines and duties proclaimed by Christ and His apostles.

4. *Redemption*

But the grand design of the Old Testament is to reveal the need for, the nature of, and the various preparations made for, the redemptive work of Christ. Everything else is secondary to an anticipation of the all-important birth of God's Son into this world and the beginning of the Christian era. As there is one central object in the heavens that far surpasses in glory all other planets, so the Person and mission of the Lord Jesus Christ is accorded first place in the Scriptures. *That* was what regulated the principle of selection as to what should or should not be recorded in the Bible. Hence it is that the history of Adam and his posterity during the first 2,000 years is condensed into but eleven chapters, and very little indeed is said about them—special attention is directed to only those individuals from whom the promised Messiah would come. For the same reason, from Genesis 12 onwards, we are occupied almost entirely with the history of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their descendants. Their lives are described in much more detail, so that we may perceive the sovereignty and grace of God in His choice of and dealings with them; and that we may obtain a better view of the stock from which Christ would come, according to His humanity.

B. Its Typical Teachings

1. *Introduction to types*

Now we come to our twelfth argument for the divine inspiration of the Scriptures: *Its typical⁴ teachings*. Since the incarnation of His Son, with the attendant blessings of redemption, was the grand object of God from the dawn of human history, He ordered everything in the early ages of the world to pave the way for it, particularly in the educating of His people concerning it. It pleased God to first preach the gospel to them by means of symbolic instruction and by typical occurrences that foreshadowed the Person and work of the future Redeemer. Therein lies the key that opens many a chapter of the Old Testament, without which it appears not only of little interest but unworthy of a place in a divine revelation. But once their scope and significance be recognized, we perceive in those ancient institutions and religious rites such a wondrous anticipation of and perfect correspondence with what is set forth more openly in the New Testament as no human wisdom could have devised. There is a pre-arranged harmony between type⁵ and anti-type⁶ as no mortal could invent; there is a prophetic meaning in them that only God could have given. The fitness of the types and the agreement of the antitypes lie not so much in their external resemblances as in the essential oneness of the ideas they embody and express, and their relations to each other.

Types are visible signs appointed by God to portray spiritual objects. They were so constructed and arranged as to express in symbolic form the great truths and principles that are common in all ages, such as the holiness of God and its requirements, the sinfulness of sin and its polluting effects, the necessity for a Mediator.⁷ Under the Levitical ceremonies there was set forth an actual exhibition of sin and salvation, the purification of the heart, and the dedication of the person and life unto God. His method of revelation was first to portray heavenly things by means of earthly, to make known eternal realities through temporal events, to exhibit to the physical senses what was later presented more directly to the mind. Thereby was indicated on a lower plane what was to be accomplished on a far higher one. Visible things were made to reflect and prepare the way for the disclosure of the more spiritual mysteries of Christ's kingdom. In that way, the earlier order

⁴ **typical** – representing something greater that has similar characteristics.

⁵ **type** – visible symbol or sign appointed by God to portray a spiritual object.

⁶ **antitype** – person or thing foreshadowed by a previous symbol or type.

⁷ **Mediator** – a go-between; “It pleased God in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus His only begotten Son, according to the covenant made between them both, to be the Mediator between God and Man; the Prophet, Priest and King; Head and Savior of His Church, the heir of all things, and judge of the world: Unto Whom He did from all eternity give a people to be His seed, and to be by Him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.” (1689 *London Baptist Confession* 8.1; see also “Christ the Mediator,” *Free Grace Broadcaster* 183; both available from CHAPEL LIBRARY)

of things served to set the stage for things to come. God so modeled the institutions of Israel's worship as to set before their eyes the essential doctrines of Christianity, the first being a stepping-stone to the latter. During the immaturity of God's family, celestial things were more easily grasped when set forth in a physical form than by abstract statements about them.

The events recorded in the Old Testament were actual occurrences, yet they also pictured the more excellent things that were promised. Divine providence molded human history to make, in many instances, a typical representation of the work of redemption.

2. *Old Testament types*

This was set forth, in its broad outlines, in the days of *Noah*. The fearful flood, that God sent upon the world of the ungodly, made known His intense hatred of sin and the punishment that it requires. Yet before that judgment fell, merciful warning was made and time given for repentance—yet the wicked repented not. In the ark we behold the gracious provision that God made for those who feared Him. Noah and his family sought refuge therein, and accordingly they were preserved from the overflowing destruction. That ark was the *only* place of deliverance. It was therefore a prophetic sign of Christ as the sole Saviour of sinners, and the security of those who sheltered therein shadowed forth the deliverance from the wrath to come of those who flee to Christ. There was room in the ark for all who availed themselves of it, and the Redeemer has promised to receive all, and cast out none, who come to Him. The dove sent forth by Noah was an emblem of the Holy Spirit, and her return to the ark with an olive leaf in her mouth spoke of the assurance which believers have that God is now at peace with them.

The *older history of Israel* was a typical one, and was made to faintly resemble the experience of God's people in the days of their unregeneracy, the provisions made by God for their deliverance, and the complete salvation that He effects for them. The cruel bondage suffered by the Hebrews in Egypt under the merciless oppression of Pharaoh supplies a vivid picture of our natural servitude unto sin and Satan. Their crying in the brick kilns and their groaning under the whips of their taskmasters speaks of those smitings of conscience and sorrows of heart when God convicts us of our rebellion against Him, when He makes sin to become exceedingly burdensome and bitter to our souls. The utter inability of those Israelite slaves to free themselves from the burdensome yoke of their masters portrays the helplessness of the natural man, his complete powerlessness to deliver himself from the reign of sin. The sovereign grace of God in raising up a deliverer in the person of Moses, points forward to the Redeemer setting His people free. The appointment of the lamb and the efficacy of its sprinkled blood to shelter from the angel of death on the Passover night, reveals yet more clearly what is now proclaimed by the gospel. The destruction of Pharaoh and his hosts at the Red Sea, and Israel's sight of the "Egyptians dead upon the sea shore"

(Exo 14:30), tells of the completeness of the Christian's salvation—the putting away of his sins from before the face of God.

The *subsequent history of Israel* after their miraculous exodus from Egypt while on their way to Canaan foreshadowed, in a remarkable and unmistakable manner, the experiences of Christians from the time they are born again until their entrance into heaven. Israel's long journey across the wilderness supplies a graphic picture of the believer's passage through this world. Once the heart has been really captivated and won by the loveliness of Christ, the things of time and sense lose their charm and this world becomes a dreary desert to him. As the wilderness, with its sterile sands and waterless wastes, was a place of trials to the Hebrews, so this world is made the place of testing to the graces of the saints. But as God ministered to Israel of old, so He has made full provision to meet *our* every need. They had the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night to direct their course, and we have the Word of God as a lamp unto our feet and the Holy Spirit to interpret it for us. As God furnished them with manna from on high, so He has given us "exceeding great and precious promises" to feed upon (2Pe 1:4). As He caused water to flow from the smitten rock for Israel, so He now revives the souls of the contrite. As He enabled them to overcome Amalek (1Sa 15:20), so His grace is sufficient for us.

The remarkable feature of the Old Testament Scriptures that we are now dealing with is a very comprehensive one, and a large volume might readily be written thereon. The whole of the *Mosaic ritual* possessed a typical and spiritual significance. The Tabernacle in which they worshipped was a symbolic representation of Christ and His Church. God's giving more than a dozen chapters to an account of its structure, its furniture, and its setting up, while only a single chapter to the creating and peopling of this earth, tells us that in the divine estimation, the latter is of infinitely more importance than the former. The world was made *for* Christ (Col 1:16) and His people (2Co 4:15), as a platform upon which divine truths "might be known [through] the church, the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph 3:10). The Tabernacle was God's dwelling-place in the midst of Israel. Its holy courts, its sacred vessels, the priesthood that ministered there, the sacrifices they offered, were, to their smallest detail, so many object lessons brought down to our limited capacity, setting forth the grand truths of divine revelation, without which we could not as fully understand what is set forth in the New Testament.

Many of the outstanding characters of the Old Testament foreshadowed *Christ* in the varied relations He sustained. Adam pictures His federal headship (Rom 5:14), Moses His prophetic office (Deu 18:18), Melchizedek His priestly (Psa 110:4), David His kingly (Rev 5:5). The checkered experiences through which Joseph passed foreshadowed Christ both in His humiliation and His exaltation. Joshua typified Him as the Securer of the inheritance. The miraculous birth of Isaac prefigured the supernatural incarnation; the

murder of Abel, His death; the budding of Aaron's rod, His resurrection. Every perfection of Christ's character, each office that He sustained, all the aspects of His redemptive work—Godwards, manwards, and sinward—were indicated by or through one and another of the historical persons of the Patriarchal⁸ and Mosaic eras.

3. Summary

That so very much in the Jewish Scriptures should be adapted to image the Person and history of the Saviour cannot be accounted for on any other hypothesis than that God Himself is the Author of them. The spiritual instruction conveyed by the Old Testament narratives, their deeper and hidden meanings, the great number and variety of the types, their anticipations of and perfect agreement with what is taught in the New Testament, clearly demonstrate that Judaism and Christianity—so dissimilar in their externals, so opposite in their incidentals, yet uniting in their essentials—both belong to the same Lord.

Study Questions Lesson 7 ***Its Unique Writing***

Very Important Note: *We ask you to always get your answer from the text, but use your own words in your answer. Please do not merely quote the text for your answer. Rather, read what the text says, think about the meaning of what it says, and summarize the meaning of the text in your own words for your answer. In this way, you will learn much more than simply a “search/find/quote” method for answering the questions.*

First, please read the reading text for Lesson 7. Please answer the questions below from the information in this chapter. Please read slowly enough so you understand what you read. Please also pray before each lesson asking the LORD for wisdom to apply what you learn to your life, and to enable you to love Him with all your mind, heart, soul, and strength, for this is the greatest commandment (Mar 12:30).

Historical parts (A)

1. a. What periods of history does the Bible cover?

⁸ **Patriarchal** –pertaining to the period and persons from Abraham up to Moses, when the family of Abraham was the beginning of what would become the nation of Israel.

- b. What events are included in the Bible that predate all human histories?
- c. What does this tell us about the origin of the Scriptures? Why?

Its contents (A.1)

- 2. In what way does the opening chapter of Genesis demonstrate the divine inspiration of the Scriptures?
- 3. a. Why is there such disorder amidst the beauty of creation?
- b. What does this tell us about the origin of the Scriptures? Why?

Its style (A.2)

- 4. How do the style and omissions of Scripture history tell us about its divine origin?

Its design (A.3)

- 5. a. What are some characteristics of the design of sacred history?
- b. What do these tell us about the origin of the Scriptures?

Redemption (A.4)

- 6. a. What is the grand design of the Old Testament?
- b. Why are some individuals barely mentioned, and others are emphasized at some length?
- c. How does this speak to the divine inspiration of the Scriptures?

Its typical teachings (B)

Introduction to types (B.1)

- 7. How was the gospel first preached to the people of the Old Testament?
- 8. What is a “type”?

Old Testament types (B.2)

- 9. How does the history of Noah and the flood typify Christ and redemption?
- 10. How is the older history of Israel typical of the experience of God’s people?
- 11. How is the subsequent history of Israel while on the way to Canaan typical?
- 12. How is the Mosaic ritual typical?
- 13. How are many of the outstanding characters of the Old Testament typical?
- 14. How do Old Testament types show us the divine origin of the Scriptures?

8. Its Way of Salvation

A. The Beautiful Gospel

The uniqueness of the Bible appears most conspicuously in the way of salvation, as anyone may discover for himself by comparing the teaching of the so-called “sacred books” of all human religions. The difference between what is revealed in the Scripture of truth and the systems of men about the attainment of holiness and eternal happiness is like unto that between light and darkness. At no other point does the divine nature of the Bible shine forth more unmistakably than in the plan of redemption that is made known therein. The good news that it proclaims to ruined and lost sinners is such as was undiscoverable by the light of nature, yet is authenticated by its own internal excellence. The gospel that is published in the Bible certifies itself by virtue of its matchless merits. It discovers its divine origin by a proclamation of truth that is self-evident. There is no need for an appeal to be made to any external testimony, because a true perception of the gospel demonstrates its divine nature. The gospel itself far surpasses all the inventions of the human mind.

The gospel itself is light, for its central object is “the light of the world” (Joh 8:12). The advent of Jesus Christ to this earth was predicted as the rising of “the Sun of righteousness” (Mal 4:2), and the universal spread of His gospel is represented under the figure of the sun shining over every part of the earth (Psa 19:1-5; cf. Rom 10:17-18). Now, light necessarily *proves itself*, for it is self-evident, needing nothing to reveal it. It serves to discover other objects, but requires nothing to discover itself. “Whatsoever doth make manifest⁹ *is light*” (Eph 5:13), and the gospel displays the perfections of God, setting forth an open discovery of them before our minds beyond any other of His wondrous works. Therefore is this divine revelation, this message of glad tidings unto condemned criminals, designated “the glorious gospel of the blessed God” (1Ti 1:11) because His indescribable glories are there so brightly displayed. The supreme wisdom of God is evidenced far more perfectly in the work of redemption than in any of His marvels in creation or providence, so that none but the blind can be unconvinced thereby.

B. The Problem of Sin

1. *The problem described*

The gospel shows its divinity by the solution that it offers to a problem for which the combined wisdom of all mankind can furnish no adequate solution. That problem is succinctly stated thus: “How, then, can man be

⁹ **manifest** – apparent; visible to the understanding; revealed.

justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?” (Job 25:4). The problem is twofold: 1) legal, man’s relation to the divine Law, and 2) moral, respecting his fitness for heaven.

Man is a transgressor of the divine Law. Every member of the human race is such. Anything short of perfect and continual obedience to the divine commandments in thought, word, and deed makes someone a transgressor. Measured by such a standard, each of us must plead guilty because we come far short of it. The Law condemns us; how, then, can we be acquitted? On what possible ground can the righteous Judge declare us to be considered innocent? But more: we are fallen and sinful creatures, and as such are unfit to dwell in the direct presence of the perfectly holy God. How shall we get rid of our defilement? How do we obtain that perfect purity to make us fit for heaven?

2. *The problem explained*

Let us briefly explain the several elements that enter into the problem.

a. *The requirements of God’s Law.* They are founded upon the perfections of its Framer, and therefore nothing less than spotless holiness is demanded of us. Negatively, it prohibits not only wrong deeds and corrupt counsels of the heart, but—as no human legislation ever did—it also prohibits evil desires and tendencies, so that all immoral imaginations are forbidden, such as discontent, envy, revenge—anything that is contrary to the perfections of God Himself. Positively, the divine Law demands from us an entire, unreserved, and uninterrupted yielding of soul and body, with all their faculties and powers, to God and His service. It requires not only that we love Him with all our heart and strength, constantly, but that love to Him must actuate and regulate all our actions all the time. Nor is that unreasonable, for we are all God’s creatures, made for His glory, and originally created without sin in His own image and likeness.

b. *The charge brought against us:* “there is none righteous, no, not one” (Rom 3:10). Not a single member of our fallen race measures up to the holy standard that our Maker and Governor has set before us; there is not one who meets the just requirements of His Law. Nor is there one who has made a genuine, wholehearted, and sustained effort to do so. So far from subordinating all his interests to the will of God, the natural man follows the desires and devices of his *own* heart, giving place to God only when it benefits himself. Though he owes his very life to God’s daily care, yet he has no concern for His glory. He is ungrateful, unruly, ungodly, abusing God’s mercies, despising His reproofs, trampling under foot His commandments. And therefore “all the world stands guilty before God” (Rom 3:19).

c. *The sentence of the Law.* This is clearly stated in the divine Word: “Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them” (Gal 3:10). Whoever violates a single precept of that Law exposes himself to the displeasure of God, and to His just pun-

ishment as the expression of that displeasure. No allowance is made for ignorance, no distinction is made between persons, no relaxation of its strictness is possible. “The soul that sinneth it shall die,” is its unyielding pronouncement. No exception is made whether the transgressor be young or old, rich or poor, Jew or Gentile: the wages of sin is death, for “the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men” (Rom 1:18).

d. *The Judge Himself is inflexibly just*, Who “will by no means clear the guilty” (Exo 34:7). In the high court of divine justice, the Lord interprets the Law in its sternest aspect and judges rigidly according to the strictness of its letter. “He is a holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions and your sins” (Jos 24:19). God is completely righteous, and will not show any partiality either to the Law or to its violator. “But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things...who will render to every man according to his deeds” (Rom 2:2, 6). He has determined that His Law shall be faithfully upheld and its penalties strictly enforced.

e. *The sinner is unquestionably guilty*. It is not merely that he has weaknesses, or that he has done his very best yet failed to attain unto absolute perfection. He has discarded God’s authority, and has proved a proud rebel rather than a loyal subject. He has gone his own way and gratified himself, without any concern for the divine honour. Morally respectable he may be in the sight of his fellows, but a criminal he definitely is before the divine tribunal. It is impossible for any man to clear himself of the solemn charge: he can neither disprove nor defend himself against the accusations that the Law brings against him.

3. *The problem summarized*

Here, then, is how the case stands. The Law demands flawless and continuous obedience to its precepts in heart and in act, in motive and performance. God charges us with having failed to meet those just requirements and declares us guilty. The Law then pronounces sentence of condemnation, and demands the infliction of the death penalty. The One before whose tribunal we stand is omniscient and cannot be imposed upon; He is inflexibly just and swayed by no sentimental considerations. We are unable to refute the charges of the Law, unable to defend our sinful conduct, unable to offer any reparation or atonement for our crimes. Truly our case is desperate to the highest degree.

Here, then, is the problem: How can God justify the willful transgressor of His Law and still be holy, pure, and just? How can He receive him into His favour without accepting a rebel? How can God deliver him from the penalty of His broken Law without going back upon the word that He “will by no means clear the guilty” (Exo 34:7), thus breaking His own Law in order to uphold His Law? How can life be granted to the culprit without repealing

the sentence: “the soul that sinneth it shall die” (Eze 18:20)? How can mercy be shown to the sinner without justice being broken? That is a problem which none of the jurists of this earth could solve, one which must forever have baffled every finite intelligence.

C. God’s Solution

1. *The transaction*

Blessed be His name, God has, in His consummate wisdom, devised a way whereby the chief of sinners can be dealt with by Him as though he were entirely innocent—nay, more: He pronounces him righteous, up to the required standard of the Law, and therefore entitled to its reward of eternal life. The gospel provides a plain, satisfactory, and glorious solution to that problem, and therein evidences its divinity. To that solution we now direct the reader’s attention.

That solution may be summed up in one word: namely, *substitution*, though a million words could not express all the stupendous wonders attending the same. God decreed that salvation should be provided for transgressors and, in order that His righteousness might not be compromised, determined that Another should take their place, and in their place make a full satisfaction to the divine Law by keeping a flawless obedience to it.

2. *Requirements for the substitute*

But where was to be found one suitable for this task, for, first, he must be a *sinless* being? There was not a single candidate among the sons of men, for the whole human race was guilty. From where, then, could a suitable substitute be found? Suitable, we say, for not only must he be without sin, but his obedience to the Law must possess such *perfect worth* as to pay the debts not of one sinner, but of *all* sinners for whom it was performed. His obedience must possess more value than their total guilt and punishment. That necessarily excluded all the angels, for as creatures of God they themselves were obligated to render perfect obedience to Him, and in so doing merely performed their duty; consequently no merit attached to the same, and so there was no excess for others.

Further, none would be suitable save one who could *act in his own absolute right*, one who in himself was neither a subject nor a servant, otherwise he could merit nothing for others: he that has nothing that is absolutely his own cannot pay any price to redeem others. He must be a person possessed of *infinite dignity* and worthiness, so that he might be capable of meriting infinite blessing. He must have *infinite power* and wisdom to qualify him for such a stupendous undertaking. He must be one of *unchanging integrity* and faithfulness, or he could not be depended upon for such a momentous task. He must be one of *matchless mercy* and love to willingly serve as the substitute and die in the place of fallen and depraved

men. It is also required that he should be a person *infinitely dear* unto God the Father, in order to give an infinite value to his transaction in God's estimation. Now, my reader, where was such a one to be found? Had that question been propounded to the ablest of men, yea, to a multitude of angels, it had remained unanswered forever.

3. *The problem in accomplishing it*

But "the things which are impossible with men are possible with God" (Luk 18:27). That problem, which was far above the compass of all creatures, was solved by Omniscience. The surpassing goodness and infinite wisdom of God selected *His own Son* for the undertaking, for He was in every way fit, possessing in Himself all the required qualifications.

But here another problem, no less than the former, presented itself. The Son was absolute Sovereign in Himself: how then could He serve? He was infinitely above all law: how then could He perform obedience to law? He was the Lord of Glory, worshipped by all the heavenly hosts: how then could He be substituted in the place of worms of the dust? Moreover, as their Substitute, He must not only fulfil all the commanded requirements of the Law, but He must also take upon Him their sins and pay the penalty for their guilt; He must suffer the Law's condemnation, endure its penalty, receive the awful wages of sin. But how could God Himself, of such infinite dignity, enter such depths of humiliation? How could the perfectly Holy One be judicially "made sin" for them? How could the Blessed One be made a curse? How could the Lord of Life die?

As another has said, "If God had declared who the person is that should do this work and had gone no further, no creature could have thought which way this person could have performed the work. If God had told them that His own Son must be the Redeemer, and that He alone was a fit person for the work, and that He was a person every way sufficient for it, but had left it *for them* to figure out how this fit and sufficient Person should succeed, we must conclude that all created understandings would have been utterly at a loss." Yet the gospel makes known the wondrous and glorious solution to that problem, a solution that had never entered the mind of man to conceive, and in the revelation made of that salvation the gospel bears unmistakably the impression of divine wisdom, and carries its own evidence of its divine inspiration.

4. *The amazing solution*

The manifold wisdom of God determined that His Son should become the representative of sinners and so be substituted in their place. But who else would have thought of such a thing: that the Son should occupy the place of rebels and become the Object of divine wrath! And in order for the Son to be the sinner's representative, He must render satisfaction to the Law in man's own nature! What created intelligence had deemed such a thing

possible: that a divine Person should become *incarnate* and be both God and man in one Person!

Moreover, had God made known such a marvel, what finite intelligence could have devised a way whereby the Son should become flesh *without* partaking of the pollution of fallen human nature? Not only that the infinite should become finite, the Ancient of Days an *infant*, but that He should be born of a woman without being tainted by the virus of sin! No angel had ever dreamed of the miracle of the virgin birth, whereby an immaculate human nature was produced in Mary's womb by the operation of the Holy Spirit, so that "a holy thing" (Luk 1:35), spotless and incapable of sin, was born by her! But that was no mystery to divine wisdom. The Son of God became the Son of man.

And so we might continue, paragraph after paragraph, pointing out that the circumstances of Christ's birth, the details of His life, the reception that He met with from the world, the character of His mission, the nature of His death, His triumphant resurrection from the tomb, His ascension into heaven, His there being crowned with honour and glory, seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, now reigning as King of kings and Lord of lords—each and all of which transcend the powers of human imagination.

5. *Application to His people*

But a word requires to be added about the *application* of Christ's work to His people. How shall they partake of the benefits of His redemption without robbing Him of His glory? By what means shall their enmity be subdued and their wills be brought into subjection to Him? That was a further problem that no man could have solved. The solution is this: the Holy Spirit communicates to them a new nature, making them sensible of their wretchedness and need, and causing them to stretch forth the beggar's hand and receive eternal life as a *free gift*. Though indwelling sin be not removed in this life, Christ's love has so won their hearts that it is now their fervent desire and sincere effort to live daily so as to please and glorify Him.

6. *Summary*

Now we submit to the critical reader that the gospel is stamped with divine glory, that the wisdom of God appears clearly in the way of salvation that it exhibits. In its unique arrangements, its accomplished designs, its glorious ends, its blessed fruits, its wonder in transforming lawless rebels into loving and loyal subjects, we have that which is worthy of Omniscience. Never had it entered into the heart of man to conceive not only of hell-deserving sinners being saved in a way suited to all the divine perfections, but which also provides for their being personally conformed unto the image of God's Son, made "like Him" in holiness and happiness, made "joint heirs" with Him and eternal sharers of His glory. When impartially examined, it is self-evident that the gospel is not of human origin. Certainly the Jews did not invent it, for they were its bitterest enemies. Nor the Gentiles,

for they knew nothing about it until the apostles preached it to them. Nor did the apostles themselves, for at first they were offended at it (Mat 16:21-22). The gospel is of God—thanks be unto Him for His unspeakable gift (2Co 9:15)!

7. *Our response*

In what way shall depraved and guilty creatures be delivered from wickedness and punishment, and restored to holiness and happiness, is the most difficult as well as important question which can engage the mind. Such an inquiry is of no interest to a pleasure-loving trifler, but is of vast importance to the sin-convicted soul. He knows that God is justly displeased with him, but how He shall become reconciled and receive him into His favour, passes his comprehension. A sense of guilt makes him afraid of God: how shall the cause of that fear be removed? Those are difficulties that *human religions* do not resolve and before which *reason* is silent. No amount of present repentance and reformation can cleanse the blotted pages of the past. When brought face to face with the dread realities of death, judgment, and eternity, the soul is horror-stricken and overwhelmed. A vague hope in the general mercy of God suffices not, for that leaves His justice unsatisfied. The gospel alone provides a satisfactory solution to these problems and peace for the burdened conscience.

Neither sorrowing nor amendment of conduct can right the wrongs of which the sinner is guilty before God, nor can he by any self-effort change himself for the better, still less fit himself for heaven. A sinner may be filled with bitter remorse for his wicked excesses, but tears will not heal his diseased body or deliver him from an early grave. The gambler will condemn himself for his folly, but no self-recriminations will recover his lost estate or save him from spending his remaining years in poverty. Thus it is evident that when it comes to the blotting out of his sins before God, and the obtaining of a new nature that renders him fit for the divine presence, man must look outside himself. But where is he to look for deliverance *from himself*, for sin has made fallen man opposed to fellowship with the Holy One? How then shall he desire, seek after, delight in that which is repellent to him?

The glorious answer is this: he is bidden to look unto One Who is “mighty to save” (Isa 63:1). The gospel presents a divine Physician Who can heal the moral leper, yea, give eternal life to one who is spiritually dead. The Lord Jesus is “able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by him” (Heb 7:25). His salvation is an all-sufficient and everlasting one, freely offered “without money and without price” (Isa 55:1). Such a Saviour, such a salvation, is beyond human invention; therefore, the Book that makes them known *must be divine*.

It may be asked, If the gospel be self-evident, why do not all men believe it? The answer is, “This is the condemnation, that light is come into the

world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (Joh 3:19). The great majority deliberately close their eyes and firmly set their hearts against its appeal, because the gospel appeal clashes with their corruptions and worldly interests. Not until men solemnly think about the character of God, their relation to Him as the subjects of His government, and their utter unpreparedness for His awful court of judgment, will they seriously consider the claims of His gospel. As food is relished most by the famished, as health is valued highest by those who have suffered a painful and protracted illness, so the gospel is only welcomed by those who realize they are under the curse of a sin-hating God, stricken with a moral disease that no human remedy can cure, hastening to hopeless eternity. Nevertheless, he who believes not shall be damned: his sins remain on his own shoulders (Joh 3:18).

Study Questions Lesson 8

Its Way of Salvation

Please read Lesson 8 before answering these questions. Always use your own words, in order to indicate your understanding of what you have read.

The beautiful gospel (A)

1. a. How does the gospel “certify itself”?
- b. Explain using the figure of light.

The problem of sin (B)

The problem described (B.1)

2. Describe man’s legal problem as it relates to God’s Law.
3. Describe man’s problem respecting his fitness for heaven.

The problem explained (B.2)

4. Briefly explain each of the following parts of the problem.
 - a. The requirements of God’s Law
 - b. The charge brought against us
 - c. The sentence of the Law
 - d. The Judge Himself is inflexibly just
 - e. The sinner is unquestionably guilty

The problem summarized (B.3)

5. Restate the problem in terms of justice.

God’s solution (C)

The transaction (C.1)

6. What is the solution God has provided?

Requirements for the substitute (C.2)

7. What are some of the requirements for the substitute?

The problem in accomplishing it (C.3)

8. What were some of the problems in having God the Son serve as the substitute to pay the penalty for man's sins?

The amazing solution (C.4)

9. What is the solution to how God the Son should become the substitute?

Application to His people (C.5)

10. How do God's people partake of the benefits of Christ's redemption?

Summary (C.6)

11. How does the gospel message show the divine inspiration of the Scriptures?

Our response (7)

12.
 - a. Where must a man look to have his sins blotted out before God?
 - b. Why?
13.
 - a. Where must a man look for deliverance from himself?
 - b. Why?
 - c. How does this show the divine inspiration of the Scriptures?
14.
 - a. Why do not all men believe the gospel?
 - b. What must change before they will consider the gospel?
 - c. *Making It Personal* Where do you stand in relation to the gospel?

9. Its Fulfilled Prophecies

A. Introduction

If the Bible is a human invention, it ought not to require very much insight to discover and demonstrate its fraud. The Scriptures claim to be of divine inspiration, but if that claim is an empty and unfounded one, then it should be no hard matter to prove it is so. The Bible not only treats considerably of history and moral instruction, but it contains not a little prophecy, and that not in dark and doubtful language, like that of the pretended Sibylline Oracles,¹⁰ such as that ambiguous answer made to the inquiry of Croesus when he was about to engage the Persians in war: "Croesus, having passed the river Hilys, shall overturn a great empire"—which had to be verified whether he meant his own kingdom or that of the Persians. Radically

¹⁰ **Sibylline Oracles** – collection of verbal utterances written in Greek hexameters ascribed to prophetesses who uttered divine revelations in a frenzied state. Fourteen books and eight fragments survive from between the 2nd and 6th centuries AD. In their existing form, they are a chaotic medley of various authorship, date, and religious conception; many of the books are merely arbitrary groupings of unrelated fragments.

different are the predictions of Holy Writ. They are clear and definite, enter into specific details, and in many instances are too plain to be misunderstood. Thus, the dispute between the Christian and non-Christian may be reduced to a short and simple issue: if Scripture be divinely inspired, then its prophecies will be accomplished; if it be illegitimate, they will not be.

Since the words “prophecy” and “prediction” are frequently used in a loose and general sense in the present-day, it is necessary that we should carefully define our term. By a “prophecy” we mean the proclamation of some future event that could not have been foreknown by natural means or arrived at by logical deduction from present data. Such are scores of predictions recorded in the Bible hundreds of years ago, and which have been accurately verified by history. They are entirely different from weather forecasts, which are more often wrong than right, and merely announce estimates of climatic conditions a few days ahead. To bear any resemblance to the prophecies of Scripture, they would have to predict the specific temperature, the direction of the wind, the precise rainfall upon a certain city or country on a given day, 500 years hence! The reader will readily perceive that all of the scientists and astronomers in the world possess no such prevision as that. Yet the Bible abounds with forecasts far more incredible.

It requires no prophetic spirit to declare that, life permitting, a certain male infant will develop into a child and then into a man; but it would do so to announce from his cradle whether he will be a fool or a wise man, a failure or success; and still more so to predict the exact span of his life, and where and how he will die. A well-informed politician may foretell how soon there will be a general election, and which party will win the same; but he is quite incapable of foreseeing the political, social, economic and religious condition of his country 100 years from now. And likewise, it would be completely beyond his powers to give the name and describe the character of its ruler in that day. An experienced statesman may indeed discern the speedy breakup of his state, and from the temper of its subjects deduce that it is likely to collapse under a fearful revolution, but he could not predict and describe the successive changes of empires centuries in advance—changes that depend upon countless unknown incidents. Yet the Bible does that very thing!

Speculation is very different from Scripture prediction. Prophecy is, as one has well defined it, “the eyes of the omniscient God reading the predestinated future, and revealing the secret to His servants, the prophets.” It is demonstrated to be such by the actual accomplishment of its predictions as testified to by the records of history. And it is highly significant that sacred history ends where secular history—that part of it, at least, which is commonly regarded as reliable—begins, so that the great changes in world affairs which the divinely appointed prophets foretold, are confirmed by *secular* recorders of events, thereby effectually closing the mouths of skeptics. Thus the remarkable predictions of Daniel concerning the rise, the ca-

reer, and the character of the great Gentile powers that occupied the world stage during the last six centuries before the advent of Christ, may be fully checked from the chronicles of heathen historians, who, entirely unacquainted with the Old Testament (which then existed only in the Hebrew language), were quite unaware that they were narrating the fulfillment of biblical prophecy.

B. Secular Kingdoms

The book of Daniel contains prophetic visions that describe one momentous event after another which have come before the observance of the whole world—events so unlikely, so startling, and so far-reaching, that no wisdom could possibly have foreseen the same—least of all, so far in advance. It was therein revealed that four successive world kingdoms should arise, to be followed by a spiritual and everlasting kingdom set up by God Himself. Those four empires are viewed under the figure of wild beasts, to denote their strength, ferocity, and agility. It was therein foretold that they should come forth from “the great sea” (Dan 7:2-3), which in Scripture always has reference to the Mediterranean Sea, thereby defining the center of their territorial origin. By that limitation of four, God made it known that after the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman empires there should never again be another kingdom commensurate with those. Charlemagne, Napoleon, the Kaiser, Hitler, in their insatiable greed, coveted and strove to form one, but in vain. Equally so will prove the ambitions of Moscow.¹¹

It is an undeniable fact that no unbeliever has ever dared to deny the great body of Scripture prophecy, nor seriously attempted a reply to the many books written thereon, which call attention to their accomplishment. Either they are silently ignored, or dismissed with some abusive remark that the Scripture prophecies are “a book of falsehoods,” as Tom Paine’s accusation in his blasphemous *Age of Reason* (Part 2, pages 44, 47).

Let the reader judge for himself from the following. Almost 100 years before the event, the Lord announced through Isaiah that Babylon should be destroyed by the Medes and Persians. “Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them...And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah...Go up, O Elam [the ancient name of Persia]; besiege, O Media...Babylon is fallen” (Isa 13:17, 19; 21:2, 9). Utterly unlikely as such a catastrophe then appeared, nevertheless, Herodotus¹² and Xenophon record its literal fulfillment!

¹¹ The author wrote this series in 1948 at the beginning of the USA-USSR “cold war.”

¹² **Herodotus** (c.484-425 BC) – Greek historian; contemporary of Socrates; widely referred to as “The Father of History.”

Again, Daniel, more than 200 years before the event, foretold the overthrow of the Medo-Persian empire by the arms of Greece under the direction of Alexander the Great, depicting the government of the latter under the symbol of a he-goat with a notable horn between his eyes. That prophecy, in figurative language, is found in Daniel 8:3-7, and then its meaning is explained in plain terms: “the ram which thou sawest having two horns, are the kings of Media and Persia. And the rough goat is the king of Grecia, and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king” (vv. 20-21). Ask the historians of those times, Diodorus and Plutarch, if that were a falsehood! In his *Antiquities* (Jud. 11:8), Josephus tells of Alexander’s journey to Jerusalem for the purpose of dealing severely with the Jews, and how that when he was shown by the high priest a copy of the prophecy of Daniel announcing that a *Grecian* monarch should overthrow Persia, was so deeply impressed that, contrary to his invariable course, he showed remarkable favour to the Jews.

The same Daniel went on to announce that, upon the death of Alexander, his vast empire should be divided between four of his principal generals, each of whom should have an extensive dominion (8:8, 22), which, as secular historians record, is precisely what took place. But more: he also predicted that out of one of those four branches of the Grecian empire would arise one who, at first weak and obscure, should become “exceeding great,” bold, and non-religious, and that he would meet with no ordinary end (8:9, 12, 23-25). Therein was accurately described the infamous career of Antiochus Epiphanies, king of Syria. In that remarkable prophecy, it was plainly intimated that that monster should, by means of flattery and treachery, accomplish his evil designs; and because of the degeneracy of the Jews would be permitted for a time to ravish their country, desecrate their Temple, and put many of them to death; and that at the height of his career he should be cut off by a sudden visitation from heaven. All of which was fulfilled to the letter!

Daniel also went on to herald the rise of yet a fourth kingdom. As he foretold that the Babylonian empire should be succeeded by the Medo-Persian, and it by the Grecian, so in turn would this be vanquished by another yet more powerful. It is described as being “strong as iron: for as much as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all” (2:40); and as “diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful,” and which “shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down and break it in pieces” (7:19, 23). Therein was given, more than 500 years beforehand, a delineation of the Roman empire, as differing from the others in its democratic form of government, in the irresistible might of its military power, and in its worldwide dominion (compare Luke 2:1). Finally, Daniel announced that “in the days of these kings” (2:44) shall “the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed” (2:44; 7:13-14). And it was in the days of the Caesars of Rome that the Son of God became incarnate and established His spiritual kingdom, which, despite all the efforts of Satan (and those he influences) to

overthrow it, continues to this very hour. What proofs of divine inspiration are these!

C. The Jews

But let us now come to historical events that fall more directly before our own observation, namely, *the Jews*. To the man of affairs the Jews present an interesting yet perplexing problem, for they are the greatest paradox¹³ of the ages. No other nation was so highly favoured by God, yet none has ever been so severely chastised by Him. They are the only people to whom God ever gave a land, yet the only one which for so many centuries have been without one. They are the only nation to whom God ever gave a king directly, yet for 2,000 years they have been without a ruler or head. They are the outstanding miracle of history. Scattered throughout the earth, they are yet a unit; dispersed among the Gentiles, yet unassimilated by them. They are not wanted anywhere, yet because of their financial strength, are needed everywhere. Taxed and plundered as no others have ever been, yet the wealthiest of all people. Persecuted and slaughtered as no other nation, yet miraculously preserved from annihilation.

The Bible alone supplies the key to their history. Not only so: the Bible described, in numerous particulars, their history long in advance. We will now single out but a few from the many scores of fulfilled prophecies. Two thousand years before the event, their conquest by the Romans and the terrors of the siege of Jerusalem were graphically depicted: see Deuteronomy 28:49-57—the passage is too lengthy to quote here, but let the reader be sure to consult it. The worldwide dispersion of the Jews was foretold centuries in advance: “And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, and from the one end of the earth even unto the other” (Deu 28:64). The restless migrating of the Jews was made known ages before their actual dispersion: “And among those nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind” (Deu 28:65). So literally has that been fulfilled that “the *wandering Jew*” has become a proverbial expression adopted by all modern nations!

The taunts universally passed upon them were prophetically declared: “thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all nations whither the LORD shall lead thee” (Deu 28:37). Who has not heard the expression, “as greedy as a Jew”! When one man gets the better of another by means of tricky dealings, it has become the custom throughout the English-speaking world of the 1800s and 1900s to say “he Jew’d me”—literally has he become a “proverb and a byword.” Their survival, despite all

¹³ **paradox** – in this context, something appearing self-contradictory or impossible but which in reality is not. Some have used the word “paradox” to mean real contradiction. Such a view is incompatible with the biblical doctrine of the infallibility of Scripture (Joh 10:35).

the efforts of men to exterminate them, was made known: “when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not...destroy them utterly” (Lev 26:44). The preservation of their national distinctness was expressly predicted: “lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations” (Num 23:9). Though scattered throughout the whole earth, they still subsist as a distinct people, unassimilated by the Gentiles! And so we might go on. Let the reader carefully bear in mind that all of those fore-announcements were made upwards of 3,000 years ago! Such forecasts clearly show fraud to be out of the question: they must have been God-breathed.

D. The Messiah

We now call attention to that which is central in prophecy, namely, the amazing description supplied of the Messiah many centuries before He came to this earth. A full portrait of Him was drawn in advance: one inspired prophet after another adding fresh details, until the picture was complete. The prophets, with one consent, gave witness to the Lord Jesus Christ, so that nothing remarkable happened to Him and nothing great was done by Him that they did not foretell. Those prophecies were in the hands of the Jews, and translated into the Greek, generations before His birth, and were so well known that the apostle Paul could say to king Agrippa that he taught no things other “than those which the prophets and Moses did say *should come*: that Christ should suffer and that he should be the first that should rise from he dead” (Act 26:22-23). Thus did the fulfillment exactly correspond to the predictions made long before, for it pleased God to supply such an exact description of the Messiah that His identity should be established without doubt when He appeared among men—and thus the Jews were condemned by their prophets for rejecting Him.

The supernatural character of our Lord’s humanity was declared when it was said that He should be the *woman’s* “seed” (Gen 3:15), unbegotten by a man, conceived and born of a “virgin” (Isa 7:14). In Genesis 9:25-28, it was made known through which of the three sons of Noah the Messiah should issue: namely, Shem, for God would “dwell” in *his* “tents.” Later, it was revealed that Christ, according to his physical lineage, should be of the Abrahamic stock (Gen 22:18, cf. Mat 1:1). Still further was the compass narrowed, for of the twelve sons of Abraham’s grandson, Judah was chosen (Gen 49:10). Out of all the families of Judah, He would spring from the house of Jesse (Isa 11:1). The place of His birth was specified (Mic 5:2). The very time of His advent was mentioned (Dan 9:24-26). So definite were the Old Testament prophecies concerning Christ that the hope of Israel became the Messianic hope: all their expectations centered in His appearing. It is therefore the more remarkable that their sacred Scriptures contained another set of prophecies, telling of His being despised by His own nation and put to a shameful death (Isaiah 53 among others).

Though Christ would preach good tidings to the meek, bind up the brokenhearted, and proclaim liberty to the captives of sin and Satan (Isa 61:1), and though He should open the eyes of the blind, unstop the ears of the deaf, and make the lame leap as a deer (Isa 35:5-6); yet utterly incredible as it appeared, He would be “despised and rejected of men” (Isa 53:3). His back would be smitten, the hair plucked out of His cheeks, and His face covered with the vile spittle of those who hated Him (Isa 1:6). He would be sold for “thirty pieces of silver” (Zec 11:13), brought as a lamb to the slaughter, taken from prison and judgment, “cut off out of the land of the living” (Isa 53:8). His death by crucifixion was revealed a thousand years beforehand (Psa 22:1). So, too, His being crucified with criminals (Isa 53:12), His being derided upon the cross (Psa 22:7-8), His being offered vinegar to drink (Psa 69:21), as well as the soldiers gambling for His garments (Psa 22:18)—were all described. It was also foretold that He should rise from the dead (Psa 16:1-2) and ascend into heaven (Psa 68:18).

But perhaps the most remarkable feature about the prophecies concerning Christ is their paradoxical character. He was to be the seed of David, which should proceed out of his bowels (2Sa 7:12), and at the same time be David’s “Lord” (Psa 110:1). He was to be both “the Son of man” (Dan 7:13) and “the mighty God” (Isa 9:6); “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief” (Isa 53:3), yet “anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows” (Psa 45:7). He was to be One in whom Jehovah’s “soul delighteth” (Isa 42:1), yet “smitten of God and afflicted” (Isa 53:4). In one passage it was foreannounced, “Thou art fairer than the children of men” (Psa 45:2), in another, “His visage was so marred more than any man” (Isa 52:14). It was said that, “Messiah shall be cut off” (Dan 9:26), yet “of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end” (Isa 9:7). He would “make his grave with the wicked” (Isa 53:9), yet would be made “higher than the kings of the earth” (Psa 89:27). The fulfillment in New Testament times of those apparently glaring contradictions showed there was perfect harmony between them; yet is it not evident that such seeming inconsistencies as those would never be inserted into an imposture?¹⁴

Now we submit to the skeptical reader that the fulfillment of all these prophecies demonstrates the divine origin of the Book that contains them. They were given not in the form of a vague generalization, but with a precision and detail that no human discernment could possibly have supplied. Again and again have men attempted to foretell the future, but only to meet with failure; the anticipations of the most far-seeing are repeatedly mocked by the irony of events. Man stands before such an impenetrable veil that he knows not what a day may bring forth (Pro 27:1). How then shall we explain the hundreds of detailed prophecies recorded in the Scriptures that were fulfilled to the letter centuries after they were given? Only one explanation is

¹⁴ **imposture** – something that pretends to be what it is not.

rational, adequate, and satisfactory: they were revealed by God Himself. It is the prerogative of God alone to declare the end from the beginning (Isa 46:10), and the numerous, varied, and detailed predictions recorded in the Bible demonstrate beyond a doubt that that Book is His own inspired and infallible Word. The prophecies of Scripture are supernatural: nothing in the remotest degree resembling or even aiming to do so is to be found in any of the religions of the world. Prophecy is as truly the product of Omniscience as miracles are of Omnipotence.

Study Questions Lesson 9

Its Fulfilled Prophecies

Please read Lesson 9 before answering these questions. Always use your own words, in order to indicate your understanding of what you have read.

Introduction (A)

1. How is biblical prophecy different from secular predictions?
2. What is the “short and simple issue” that summarizes the dispute between the Christian and non-Christian?
3. Define “prophecy.”
4. How is biblical prophecy different from weather forecasts?
5. Why is it significant that the recorded history of the Bible ends where secular history begins?

Secular kingdoms (B)

6. How do the prophecies of Daniel prove that the Bible is divinely inspired?

The Jews (C)

7. How does the retention of Jewish identity as a distinct people, even though they have been dispersed worldwide among the Gentiles, confirm the divine inspiration of the Scriptures?

The Messiah (D)

8. How do the detailed prophecies of the Messiah show the divine inspiration of the Scriptures?
9. *Making it Personal* Of all the prophecies about the Messiah that are fulfilled in Jesus Christ, which stand out to you as the most important? Why? *Mention the prophecy and Scripture reference in your answer.*

10. Its Unique Contents

A. Its Doctrine

1. Introduction

Probably “its doctrine” would make more sense to most of our readers had we employed the plural number: “its doctrines.” As a matter of fact, it is at this very point that its uniqueness first appears. Error is diverse and multifarious, but truth is harmonious and one. Scripture speaks of “the doctrines of demons” (1Ti 4:1) and “the doctrines of men” (Col 2:22), which are “diverse and strange doctrines” (Heb 13:9), but whenever it refers to that which is divine, the *singular* number is always used. Thus “the doctrine” (Joh 7:17; 1Ti 4:16), “the apostles’ doctrine” (Act 2:42), “sound doctrine” (1Ti 4:1), “good doctrine” (1Ti 4:6), “the name of God and his doctrine” (1Ti 6:3). Yet, like a single diamond with its many facets or the rainbow combining all the colours, the doctrine of God has numerous and distinct aspects, which to our finite minds are best understood singly. Nevertheless, they are not like so many separate pearls on a string, but rather resemble branches growing out of a single tree. What we term “the doctrines of grace”¹⁵ are only so many parts or phases of the revealed favour of God unto His people.

2. Doctrinal examples

The more time one devotes to a prayerful and diligent study of “the doctrine of Christ” (2Jo 1:9), the more will he perceive not only the spiritual excellence of each of its parts, but also their perfect harmony, their intimate relation to one another, and the mutual furtherance of all unto the same end. It is ignorance of the whole that lies behind the supposition that any one part conflicts with another. It is designated “the doctrine which is according to godliness” (1Ti 6:3), for when truly believed it produces and promotes holiness. It is a mold into which the mind is cast and from which it receives its character (Rom 6:17). An observing eye will easily perceive that a distinct spirit attends different religions and different systems of the same religion that, over and above natural temperament, stamps their respective followers. Thus it was at the beginning: those who received “another gospel” received with it “another spirit” (2Co 11:4), and hence we read of “the spirit of truth and the spirit of error” (1Jo 4:6). Scripture doctrine produces holiness of character and conduct because it proceeds from the Holy One.

It would require a whole volume to do justice to this argument and illustrate it at length. The doctrine of *the Godhead* is unique. That God must

¹⁵ **doctrines of grace** – name given to the theology that sprang out of the Reformation, which emphasizes that salvation is all of grace by the merit of Christ alone, absolutely without any addition from the works of man. See *The Doctrines of Grace in the Gospel of John*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

be one is a principle of sound reason, for there could not be a plurality of *supreme* beings. But that God should be one in His essence or nature, yet three in His Persons, is something that mere reason could never have discovered. That God is Triune, a trinity in unity, transcends finite intelligence, and therefore never originated therefrom. That it is clearly set forth in the Bible shows the Bible's truthfulness.

The doctrine of *federal headship* is peculiar to divine revelation. That one should legally represent the many, that the many should be dealt with judicially according to the conduct of the one, is a truth that has no place at all in any human religion. Yet the Bible teaches explicitly that the guilt of Adam's transgression is reckoned to the account of all his natural descendants, so that because of it they stand condemned before God—a thing far too uncomfortable for human invention. The merits of the obedience of the last Adam is reckoned to the account of all His spiritual seed, so that they are all accounted righteous before God (2Co 5:21)—something far too wonderful to be conceived by man.

The doctrine of divine *grace* is equally unique. It is a truth peculiar to divine revelation, a concept to which the unaided powers of man's mind could never have risen. Proof of this is seen in the fact that where the Bible has not gone, grace is quite unknown. Not the slightest trace of it is to be found in any of the religions of heathendom, and when missionaries undertake to translate the Scriptures into the native languages, they can find no word that in any wise corresponds to the Bible word *grace*. Grace is something to which none has any rightful claim, something that is deserved by none; being mere charity, a sovereign favour, a free gift. Divine grace is the favour of God bestowing inconceivable blessings upon those who do not deserve it and from whom no compensation is demanded. Nay, more: grace is exercised unto those who are full sin and deserve nothing by punishment. How completely grace sets aside all thought of worth in its subject appears from that declaration, "being justified freely by his grace" (Rom 3:24): the word *freely* signifies "without a cause," and is so translated in John 15:25: justified gratuitously, for nothing!

Grace is a divine provision for those who are so corrupt that they cannot better their evil natures; so opposed to God they will not turn unto Him; so blind they perceive not His excellence; so deaf they hear Him not speaking unto them; so dead spiritually that He must breathe life into them in order for them to be saved. Grace implies that its object's condition is desperate to the last degree: that God might justly leave him to perish—yea, that it is a wonder of wonders He has not already cast him into hell. That grace is told-out in the gospel, which is not a message of good *advice*, but of *good news*. It is a proclamation of mercy, sent not to the good, but to the bad. It offers a free, perfect, and everlasting salvation, "without money and without price," and that to the chief of sinners. To the convicted conscience, salvation by grace alone seems too good to be true. Grace is God acting irre-

spective of the sinner's character, not as a Demander but as a Giver to the ill-deserving and hell-deserving—who have done nothing to procure His favour, but everything to provoke His wrath.

There are other portions of doctrine taught in the Scriptures that, by virtue of their very transcendence,¹⁶ indicate their divine source, as, for example, that of the *sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man*. It is a dictate of sound reason that if God be God—God in fact as well as in name—then He must have full control of all His creatures and regulate their every action in subservience to His own glory. It is equally self-evident that if man be created a moral agent, he must be endowed with the power of choice, and as such, be answerable unto God for all his decisions. So teaches the Bible: on the one hand that God is working all things after the counsel of His own will, not only in heaven but also “among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand” (Dan 4:35); and on the other that “every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Rom 14:12). Yet no human intellect is able to explain how the responsibility of man consists with the fact that God has eternally determined beforehand his every action and directs the same without error, while preserving the man's own will.

The same seeming paradox appears in the doctrine of *man's spiritual impotence and accountability*: that the fallen creature is in such complete bondage to sin that he is incapable of performing a spiritual act, yea, of originating a spiritual desire or thought, and yet is justly held blameworthy for all his immorality and irreverence—that none can come to Christ except they be drawn (Joh 6:44), yet are condemned for not coming to Him (Joh 3:18). So, too, the doctrine of *particular redemption*: that Christ made atonement for the sins of God's elect only; yet that the gospel makes a free offer of salvation in good faith unto all who hear it. In like manner, the complementary doctrines of the *saints' preservation* by God and the imperative necessity of their own perseverance in faith and holiness—that no child of God can perish eternally, yet that he is in real danger of so doing as long as he is left in this world.

Such things appear to be utterly inconsistent to human reason, which is sure evidence that no impostors would have placed so much in the Bible that is foolishness to the natural man.

3. Other aspects of doctrine

Another unmistakable hallmark of the genuineness of the several branches of the doctrine of Holy Writ is the *manner* in which they are set forth therein. They are not presented as so many expressly defined articles of faith or items of a creed. There is no formal statement of the doctrine of regeneration or of sanctification: rather are there many brief references to each scattered throughout the whole of the sacred writings. They are intro-

¹⁶ **transcendence** – above the material universe; surpassing, superior, supreme.

duced more incidentally than systematically. Instead of being drawn up as so many propositions, they are illustrated and exemplified in the practical history of individuals—so different from man’s method, yet characteristic of the ways of God! Man reduces botany to a system, but the Creator has not set out the flowers and trees in separate beds and fields according to their species, but has distributed them over the earth in beautiful variety. In like manner, He has not gathered into one chapter the whole of any one truth, but requires us to search and collate the numerous references to it, which are mingled with exhortations, warnings, and promises. God’s Word is addressed not only to our understanding but to our conscience, and no doctrinal statement is made without some practical end being answered.

Another striking feature of biblical doctrine is its *orderly presentation*. As in the processes of nature, so there is a gradual unfolding of each particular doctrine. The diligent student will find that every vital truth made known in Scripture is seen first in the blade, then in the ear, and then in the full corn in the ear. Thus, for example, with the Messianic prophecies: the initial and simple announcement in Genesis 3:15, the fuller revelation in Isaiah 53, the complete fulfillment in the New Testament. So with God’s justifying of a sinner: briefly hinted at in Genesis 15:6, more plainly disclosed in Psalm 32:1-2, fully expounded in Romans 4. The Bible is more than a book: it is a living organism in which growth marks all its parts.

All through Scripture, there is seen a systematic advance in the communication of truth. In Genesis, the basic doctrine repeatedly exemplified is that of election; in Exodus, redemption by blood and power; in Leviticus, the chosen and redeemed are brought nigh to God as worshippers. Then the complementary side of things is set before us: in Numbers, our passage through this wilderness-world; in Deuteronomy, the enforcing of responsibility; while in Joshua we behold the people of God entering into and enjoying their heritage. What unmistakable progress is there! The same feature marks the New Testament: in the Gospels, Christ accomplishing the work of salvation; in Acts, the proclamation thereof; in the Epistles, salvation experienced by the members of His Church; in Revelation, the saved in glory around the Lamb. Such progress demonstrates both the unity of Scripture and continuity of its inspiration. Behind all the varied penmen is one Author working according to a definite plan.

B. Its Precepts

1. Contrast with the world

This is another aspect of our many-sided subject that deserves as many separate chapters as space requires us to condense into paragraphs. At no other point does the heavenly origin of the Bible appear more plainly than the exalted standard it sets forth and the conduct it requires from us. Therein it is in marked contrast with the writings of all who oppose the Bible.

Secular humanists and atheists have no ethical standard; yea, their code is utterly subversive of all morality. So, too, the Bible differs radically from the teaching of the best of the ancient moralists and philosophers. The precepts of the Bible far surpass the most celebrated principles of the “wise men” and religionists, and immeasurably transcend the best statutes of all human legislation. The divine precepts embrace every relation and duty, and not only prohibit all evil, but promote all virtue. They reject practices that all other systems approve or tolerate, and require duties others omit. The laws of man reach no farther than human action, but those of God reach to the fountain from which all actions proceed: heart motivations and attitudes! If the laws of God were universally obeyed, this earth would be a scene of universal peace and good will.

The world approves of ambition, the eager pursuit of wealth, fondness of pleasure, and in many instances applauds pride, attempts to impress others, contempt of others, and even the spirit of revenge—whereas the precepts of Scripture condemn all of those in every form and degree. They require us to renounce the world as a source of happiness and to set our affection upon things above (Col 3:2). They reject the spirit of greed: “having food and raiment, let us be therewith content” (1Ti 6:8). “Labour not to be rich” (Pro 23:4); “lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth” (Mat 6:19); and warn that “the love of money is the root of all evil” (1Ti 6:10). They bid us “lean not unto thine own understanding...be not wise in thine own eyes” (Pro 3:5, 7), and prohibit all self-confidence: “he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool” (Pro 28:26). Not only do they condemn the spirit of revenge (Rom 12:19; 1Pe 3:9), but they command us to “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use and persecute you” (Mat 5:44). Such precepts as those never originated in any human mind, my reader.

2. *Morality*

In these precepts, morality and duty are advanced to their highest degree. “All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them” (Mat 7:12). Many of them are entirely against the bent of nature: as “rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth” (Pro 24:17); “If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat” (Pro 25:21); “In honour preferring one another” (Rom 12:10); “let each esteem each other better than themselves” (Phi 2:3). There are no others so “holy, just and good” (Rom 7:12). Such statements as the following were never devised by man: “When thou doest thine alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: that thine alms may be in secret” (Mat 6:3-4). “Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1Co 10:31); “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another” (Eph 4:31-

32). “Giving thanks always for all things unto God” (Eph 5:20); “Rejoice evermore” (1Th 5:16). “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Mat 5:48).

The only objection that a non-Christian can bring against the precepts of Scripture is that such an exalted standard of conduct as they uphold is manifestly unattainable by imperfect creatures. That is readily admitted, yet so far from being against the Scriptures, it only serves to exhibit the more clearly the design and wisdom of their divine Author. In requiring from fallen creatures that which they cannot perform in their own strength, God does but maintain His own rights, for our having lost our original power does not release us from rendering to God that loyalty and honour which is His due. Moreover, biblical precepts are admirably designed to humble us, for our unsuccessful attempts to meet their demands make us the more conscious of our infirmities, and thereby pride is lessened. They are intended to awaken within us a personal sense of dependence upon divine aid. Where there is a genuine desire and attempt to obey those statutes, they will be turned into earnest prayer for help—nor will assistance be denied the seeking soul. Thus, the seeming foolishness of God is seen to surpass the supposed wisdom of man.

3. *Motives*

One other remarkable feature about the precepts of the Bible calls for a brief notice: namely, the *motives* by which they are enforced. No appeal is made to vanity, selfishness, or any of the corrupt tendencies of our nature. Obedience to them is urged by no consideration of what our fellows will think or say of us, nor how we shall further our own interests in this world. Rather are the motives drawn from respect to God’s will, hope of His approval, concern for His glory, gratitude for His mercies, the example that Christ has left us, and the claims that His sacrifice has upon us. Christians are bidden to forgive one another because God has for Christ’s sake forgiven them (Eph 4:32). Wives are called on to submit themselves unto their own husbands, just as the Church is subject to Christ; and husbands to love their wives, “even as Christ also loved the church” (Eph 5). Servants are required to be obedient unto their masters in singleness of heart “as unto Christ” (Eph 6:5), while their employers are to act toward their servants in the knowledge that they also “have a master in heaven” (Col 4:1). Christ’s commandments are to be kept out of love to Him (Joh 14:15). How radically different are such motives as those from urging that which will win the esteem of our fellows! Not that which will promote our own interests, but what “is right” (Eph 6:1) is that which the Holy Spirit presses upon us.

A final word to the preacher. The solemn fact is that every unsaved hearer is “*dead* in trespasses and sins” (Eph 2:1), devoid of any spiritual perception or sensibility, incapable of any spiritual action: such as evangelical repentance and saving belief of the gospel. Nothing short of a miracle of

grace can bring a lost soul from death unto life, and nothing but the almighty and invincible power of God can accomplish the same (Eph 1:19). It therefore follows that neither your faithfulness nor your earnestness can, of itself, save a single sinner: you will simply be “beating the air,” unless the Holy Spirit is pleased to graciously accompany the Word with power and apply it to the heart of your hearer. None but the blessed Spirit can effectually convince of sin and bring an unsaved person to realize his desperate condition and dire need. Even the Word itself only becomes “the sword of the Spirit” as He wields it (Eph 6:17), and we cannot legitimately expect Him to do so if we grieve Him by using fleshly means and worldly methods. It is unbelief in the imperative necessity of the Spirit’s operations that has caused so many churches to descend to the level of the circus and evangelists to conduct themselves like showmen. You must humbly seek His presence and blessing, and trustfully count upon the same.

C. Its Promises

1. Introduction

The Bible’s promises hold out the highest happiness of which man is capable. There is a natural instinct in the human heart after happiness, yea, after eternal happiness; yet instead of looking unto God for the same, those who are not truly born-again try to find it in the creature. They fondly imagine that satisfaction is to be obtained in material things, that it is to be found through the medium of the senses. But in vain do they gratify their bodily lusts: material things cannot satisfy the longings of an immaterial spirit. The springs of the earth are unable to quench the thirst of the soul. Wealth does not, for the millionaire is still a stranger to contentment. The honours of the world are but empty baubles, as their recipients quickly enough discover. The eager devotees of pleasure find there is no lasting happiness in any form of amusement. Serious souls are at a loss to know where to look for that which will reward their quest. “There are many that say, Who will show us any good?” (Psa 4:6): they neither know what it consists of, nor where it is to be found.

Hence it is that the Lord says unto them, “Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear and come unto me: hear and your soul shall live” (Isa 55:2-3). God *has* “shown” what substantial and lasting “good” consists of, and where it is to be obtained. He has made known the same unto us in the wondrous and blessed *promises* of His Word: “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit” (1Co 2:9-10). This is yet another of the many excellencies of the Bible: that its promises set forth the greatest hap-

piness of which we are capable of enjoying. The One Who gave us being is alone capable of putting real gladness into the human heart. That gladness comes to us not through the delights of sense, but consists in communion with God Himself, Who is the sum of excellence.

The promises of Scripture are the assurances which God has given us that He will bestow the best of blessings, for this life and also for the life to come, on those who seek them in the right spirit and comply with their terms. From the many hundreds that are scattered throughout the Bible, we can single out but a few specimens. The sum of them is that the soul of man shall delight itself in God Himself as its everlasting portion. But that is impossible until the guilty conscience has been set at peace, and that can only be through the knowledge of His forgiveness of sin.

2. Unto sinners

Therefore we begin with the evangelical promises that are addressed unto sinners. “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon” (Isa 55:7). “Come unto me [Christ] all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mat 11:28)—peace of conscience, rest of soul, joy of heart. What precious promises are those! They are the promises of Him that cannot lie.

God has solemnly pledged Himself to bestow a free, full, and eternal salvation upon every repentant sinner who comes to Him as a beggar and relies upon His Word—not only to blot out all his iniquities, but to clothe him with the robe of Christ’s righteousness, to receive him as a son, and to henceforth supply his every need. He has promised to be “a sun and shield” unto all such, to “give grace and glory,” and that “no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly” (Psa 84:11).

3. Unto believers

The promises of Satan are every one of them lies, those of man unreliable, but every one of God’s is infallibly *sure*. The writer can testify that after forty years of Christian experience, in his travels around this earth, he has never met with a single person who trusted God and found that His promises mocked him. At the close of his long life Joshua said unto Israel, “ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you: all are come to pass unto you” (23:14). So, too, acknowledged Solomon: “Blessed be the Lord that hath given rest unto his people Israel according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word” (1Ki 8:56).

“Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee” (Psa 50:15). That is a promise which every person may test for himself. We can personally bear emphatic witness that many times have we put that word to the proof and never found it lacking. Many, many others also can bear witness that the liv-

ing God is a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God—that is an argument, a well-attested one, that no unbeliever can answer. There is no gainsaying the fact that thousands of men and women have called upon God in the day of their trouble, and were miraculously and gloriously delivered by Him. What a monument to God’s faithfulness in honouring His promises was raised by George Mueller¹⁷ of Bristol, whose 2,000 orphans were daily fed and clothed in answer to believing prayer! In like manner shall everyone who puts his trust in the divine promises yet receive fulfillment of that most amazing word; “when he [Christ] shall appear, we shall be like him” (1Jo 3:2): perfectly conformed to His holy image! The divine promises unmistakably show their Author to be none other than “the God of all grace” (1Pe 5:10).

Study Questions Lesson 10

Its Unique Contents

Please read Lesson 10 before answering these questions. Always use your own words, in order to indicate your understanding of what you have read.

Its doctrine (A)

Introduction (A.1)

1. What is the significance of Scripture speaking of its “doctrine” in the singular instead of plural?

Doctrinal examples (A.2)

2. Why do some believe there are conflicts between the Bible’s doctrines?
3. Define “grace.”
4. How do the doctrines of a) the Godhead, b) federal headship, c) grace, d) the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man, and e) man’s spiritual impotence and accountability show that the Bible is divinely inspired?

Other aspects of doctrine (A.3)

5. How do a) the manner of setting forth doctrine and b) the orderly presentation of doctrine, demonstrate the divine inspiration of Scripture?

Its precepts (B)

Contrast with the world (B.1)

6. a. How do the inner attitudes approved in the Bible differ from those approved in the world?
b. What does this tell us about the origin of the Scriptures?

¹⁷ **George Mueller** (1805-1898) – Prussian/English evangelist; a man of great faith and prayer, established orphanages in Bristol, England, which grew to care for over 100,000 orphans during his lifetime; born in Kroppenstedt, Prussia.

Morality (B.2)

7. a. What objection can non-Christians raise against biblical standards of morality?
b. How does God use this for His purposes?

Motives (B.3)

8. How do the motives approved in the Bible differ from those approved in the world?

Its promises (C)

Introduction (C.1)

9. a. Where do non-Christians look for happiness?
b. Why does this not satisfy?
10. a. What has God shown to us in His promises?
b. Where does real gladness come from?
11. Define “promises.”

Unto sinners (C.2)

12. What has God promised to sinners?

Unto believers (C.3)

13. How can we know that God’s promises are sure?
14. How do fulfilled promises show the divine inspiration of the Scriptures?

11. Its Unique Scope and Style

D. Its Depth

There are books in the writer’s library that he read with pleasure and profit thirty years ago. Some of them he has recently re-read—with mingled disappointment and thankfulness. In the past they were helpful to him, but today they are too elementary to be of service to him. As he outgrew the clothes of childhood, so every minister of the gospel who continues diligently to pursue his studies will advance beyond the primers of his theological youth. Yet no matter how intensely nor for how many years he may study God’s Word, he will never advance beyond it, either spiritually or intellectually. What a laborious and thankless task would it be to read through the ablest human production twenty times! Yet many who have read through the Bible scores of times have testified that it was more attractive and instructive to them than ever. The deeper any regenerate soul digs into the wondrous contents of the Bible, the more will he discover that it contains a boundless and fathomless ocean of truth, and an inexhaustible mine of precious treasure.

The Bible treats of the most exalted subjects that can engage the mind of man. It rises above the merely human and worldly, and occupies its readers with God, the unseen world, eternity. Everything is shown to be related to Him Whose throne is eternal in the heavens. Human conduct is viewed not so much as it appears unto their performers and fellows, but rather as it appears in the eyes of the Holy One and in the light of the final Day of Judgment. There are many things in Scripture that are above the capacity of man to have devised, such as a Trinity of Persons in the Godhead, the divine incarnation and virgin birth of Christ, the union of the human nature to a divine Person, the manner in which the Holy Spirit operates upon souls. A description of fallen nature is given such as neither philosophy nor medical science could furnish; the secret workings of the heart are exposed in a manner in which no analysis of psychiatrists could supply. Parts of human history are chronicled not for the purpose of magnifying man, but to show how far the human race has departed from God, and what obstacles stand in the way of recovery to holiness and happiness. Heaven and the everlasting bliss of the redeemed are portrayed not in a manner to gratify curiosity, still less to appeal unto the corruptions of the natural man, but as that place into which nothing that defiles can enter.

The depth of its teaching appears throughout its pages. The origin of sin, the fall of man, the federal relation of Adam to his posterity, the transmission of his own nature to all his descendants, the consistency of man's freedom with God's sovereignty, his total depravity with his accountability, the justification of a believing sinner by the imputed righteousness of Christ, his union to Him as a member of His mystical body—admit of no philosophical explanation. They defy intellectual analysis and cannot be mapped out so as to show their precise points of contact or mode of union with each other. They are not reducible to a system of "common sense," but rather are presented as awesome and insoluble mysteries. They possess depths that no man can sound and heights which none can scale. Yet so far from stumbling the reverent student of the Bible, those very mysteries are just what he expects to find in a book written by the Most High. They are designed to humble the arrogance of man, by a demonstration of his intellectual limitations, and should cause him to exclaim, "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out!" (Rom 11:33).

E. Its Simplicity

Here is a remarkable phenomenon: that combined with real depth there is the utmost simplicity. Here again we find the same thing characterizing the Word of God as appears in His works of creation: while there is much that is mysterious, yet there is much more that is plain and obvious. Though there be hidden prophecies and difficult doctrines, yet on all practical matters and points of duty the Scriptures are so clear that they may be under-

stood by the most uneducated minds. What is more clear than the precepts? “The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple” (Psa 19:7). Though there be things in the Bible that are sufficient to confound the proudest efforts of human reason, yet it does not, as to its general tenor, require either genius or scholarship to grasp its terms, but is adapted to the level of the unsophisticated. Since its contents are of universal concern, they are presented in language suited to the capacity of all. That which concerns man’s temporal well-being and everlasting happiness is written so distinctly that the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein. Though there be depths that no leviathan can swim, yet the babe in Christ may safely wade in its refreshing streams.

Though the Bible is full of majesty, yet the naked truth itself is presented in a manner suited to the most common capacity. God graciously accommodates Himself to our limitations, setting forth His mighty power under such a figure as the baring of His arm, and representing heaven to His people as “the Father’s house” in which are many mansions (Joh 14:2). Its very unaffectedness is perfectly suited to the dignity of its Author. Its penmen employed not the “enticing words of man’s wisdom,” but wrote “in demonstration of the Spirit and of power” (1Co 2:4). The Bible is not written in the style of the “classics”: there is an entire absence of any appearance of art. Take the four Gospels: their obvious design is to magnify the Redeemer, yet they never resort to the usual method of elaborate praise. There is a plain statement of His virtuous life, yet no high praise of His perfections. His most gracious works are plainly recorded, with no attempt to heighten their effect. His wondrous miracles are chronicled as matters of fact, to speak for themselves—no comment being passed upon them, no note of admiration affixed to them. They are sufficient to suitably impress our minds, without any remarks from the narrators. In all of this the candid mind will perceive the signature of truth, an unadorned account of events that actually took place.

F. Its Impartiality

To fully appreciate this striking feature of the Bible, the reader needs to cast his mind back to the conditions prevailing in society during the centuries when it was written. Women were then the mere property of men, slavery was extensively practiced and with the utmost rigor, while kings reigned with the most despotic sway. Yet the teachings of Holy Writ are without the least bias, requiring obedience to their imperial edicts from all classes alike. So far from being written to keep the oppressed in awe and subjection, rulers and ruled are the subjects of its authoritative commands. Kings and subjects are bound by the same laws, liable to the same punishments, encouraged by the same promises. God’s Word declares, “there is no difference, for *all* have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:22, 23); while it also announces, “*Whosoever* shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Rom 10:13). Such declarations as those were entirely foreign to the

spirit and opinions that universally prevailed in the day of God's prophets and apostles.

The gospel of Christ is designed for no privileged class, but is to be preached to "every creature" (Mar 16:15). It does not prescribe one way of salvation for the rich and another for the poor: rather does it affirm on the one hand, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" (Mar 10:23), and on the other, "God hath chosen the poor of the world" (Jam 2:5). There is no flattery to the scholar or "wise": "Thou has hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes" (Mat 11:25). Husbands are bidden to "love their wives as their own bodies" (Eph 5:28), and masters are enjoined to treat their servants in manner that agrees with the fact that they, too, have a Master in heaven with Whom "there is no respect of persons" (Eph 6:9). No such declaration as the following was ever coined by an impostor: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are *all one* in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28).

G. Its Comprehensiveness

God's Word is a complete rule of life, so that we may be thoroughly "furnished unto all good works" (2Ti 3:17). Every truth in it is designed to influence our character and conduct. It contains full and explicit instructions for all our relative duties. No case has ever occurred, or ever will, for which adequate provision has not been made in its invaluable treasury. Here are directions suited to any situation in which we may find ourselves. Whether its reader be young or old, male or female, rich or poor, illiterate or learned, he may find that which will supply all his need. That any should read it without receiving any benefit therefrom is due alone to his own vanity or resistance. His duty and his danger are plainly marked out as though it had been written for him alone! Its very fullness proclaims its Author: it is a revelation and communication from the Infinite One. Its contents have supplied material for thousands of books and matter for millions of sermons.

The Bible is more than a book: it is a library. Its history covers a period of 4,000 years. Its prophecies extend to literally dozens of nations. Its teachings respect good and evil, God and man, time and eternity. It makes known how He is to be worshipped acceptably. It informs us how His blessing may be secured upon the home. It reveals its secrets of health and longevity. Here is milk for babes, meat for the strong, medicine for the sick, relief for the weary, consolation for the dying. The particular experience of every believer is so vividly described therein that whoever reads it aright may discover, by His grace, his precise state and degree of progress. In the Bible is stored up more true wisdom, which has endured the trials of the centuries, than the sum total of thinking done by men since the day of human history down to the present hour. Of all the books in the world, the Bible alone can rightly be said to be comprehensive and complete. It needs no addendum. It

has been truly affirmed, “If every book but the Bible were destroyed, not a single spiritual truth would be lost” (R. A. Torrey, 1856-1928). The comprehensiveness and fullness of the Scriptures is yet another of the innumerable evidences that demonstrate their divine inspiration.

H. Its Conciseness

Here is yet another remarkable feature that distinguishes the Bible from other books: though it be the most comprehensive of all, yet it is the most compact. Though it contains a complete library, having no less than sixty-six books within its covers, yet a small-print copy may be carried in one’s pocket. Though there is here an amazing fullness, yet there is no excessive length. There is an abundance of matter wrapped up in a few words. A summary of the heavens and earth, an account of the forming of this world into an habitable globe, the creation of all creatures, the making of man, the formation of woman, their state in Paradise, a description of the garden of Eden—are all condensed into two chapters that require but two pages! A vivid description of the fall of our first parents, how it was brought about, with the effects thereof; to which is subjoined the appearing of the Lord, their arraignment by Him, with their trial, sentence, and expulsion from the garden, are all given within the space of only twenty-four verses! So briefly narrated, yet all-sufficient to answer every purpose for which the revelation of the same is made to us.

Within the space of seven chapters we have the creation and furnishing of the world, the apostasy of our first parents, the birth of Abel and Cain, an account of their worship of God, the murder of the former, and a listing of seven generations of the latter—with a description of ten of the ancestors of Christ. In addition, we find in them an account of the wickedness of men; the announcement of God that He purposed to destroy the earth and the human race; His detailed instructions to Noah for the building of an ark, in which were to be preserved himself, his family, and representatives of all living creatures. Then we have described the coming of the flood, the destruction of the old world, and the salvation of all within the ark! All the wisdom of men could not have expressed and compressed subjects of such vast importance and interests within so brief a compass. Moses himself could not, unless he had been inspired by the Holy Spirit. No book besides the Bible contains so much in so short a space. The brevity of Scripture is beyond imitation. The wisdom of God is most gloriously displayed in revealing so much in language so simple and so succinct. There is nothing within the wide range of human literature that in the least resembles this striking yet little-noticed feature.

The unique brevity of Holy Writ only becomes really apparent when we compare the biographies and systems of religion that men have written. The Jews have joined to the Scriptures their Talmud, to which they affix equal authority—the one followed by most of their rabbis consists of twelve vol-

umes; while the Romanists receive with the same respect the writings of “the Fathers,” the decisions of the “councils,” the vast accumulations of synod edicts and papal decrees and bulls, and a mass of “traditions” respecting both faith and morals. Who among uninspired historians and narrators would or could have recorded the birth, life, ministry, miracles, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ in less than 1,200 lines (Luke)? Who among them could have related the history of Christianity during the first thirty of its most memorable years within the space of thirty pages (Acts)? For fullness and brevity, dramatic description yet terseness of language, for outlines of sermons, details of miraculous conversions, intervention of angels, all pictured with a few brief touches, there is nothing comparable to the Acts of the Apostles. What but the divine Mind could have comprehended in so small a book as the Bible such an immense store of information and instruction?

I. Its Reserve

Had the Bible been of human origin—a fraud passed upon the world—it would have been exactly the opposite of “reserved.” When human writers take up matters of extraordinary interest, they deal with them dramatically rather than reservedly, and in a manner that will appeal to lovers of the sensational. But there is nothing like that in the Scriptures; instead, a holy constraint rests upon its scribes. When secular writers arouse curiosity, they attempt to satisfy it, whereas the sacred penmen lift not a finger to remove the veil from off the mysteries of which they treat. They never draw upon the imagination, nor indulge in speculation, which is so prominent in the authors and disciples of all heathen religions. This can only be accounted for on the ground that the Holy Spirit suppressed their natural tendencies. The divine inspiration of the Bible appears not only in what is said, but equally in what is not said. Its silences are as eloquent as its speech. No explanation is given of the methods of operation among the three Persons in the Godhead—in marked contrast to the presumptuous reasonings of not a few theologians who sought to be wise above what is written.

How scanty the information furnished on many things upon which the human heart craves light! In the historical portions, men and nations appear abruptly, stepping to the front of the stage for a brief moment, and then disappearing into the unknown. It is full of gaps that human authors would have filled in. How often we wish the Evangelists had been more communicative. Had they been left to their own wisdom, the Gospels had been much fuller and lengthier! No description is given of the bodily appearance of Christ: they say not a word about His stature, complexion, or features. What is yet more remarkable, except for one brief statement concerning Him as a boy of twelve, the first 30 years of our Lord’s life are passed over in complete silence, which is very different from the fabled accounts of

the apocryphal¹⁸ writers! There is not the least gratifying of idle curiosity in the Bible, but a noticeable repressing of the same. Nothing is told us of the experiences of the soul—either redeemed or reprobate—immediately after death, and little about the eternal state. The Scriptures are not for entertainment, but are given for practical and spiritual ends.

While Holy Writ makes known many facts unto us, it does so no further than they contribute to the design of the Holy Spirit, and are for our moral instruction. Very little information is furnished, and sometimes none at all, concerning the actual penmen of Scripture—we do not even know who wrote the books of Ruth and Esther. No account is given of the closing hours of Peter, Paul, and John. It is not thus with uninspired historians and biographers! How natural for the apostle John to have spoken of our Lord's mother in terms of excessive praise, yet not a word does he utter that affords the least support to the sentimentality and blasphemous idolatry of the Popish Mariolatry. Only once is she mentioned after Christ's ascension, and then at a prayer meeting: not as the person requested of, but taking her place among brethren and sisters as a requestor (Act 1:14)! Frequent mention is made in the Gospels of "the devils" or "demons," yet nowhere are we told anything about who or what they are. There are many matters of which we should welcome information, but the Bible is silent thereon, because such knowledge would not help us in our duty nor promote personal reverence. An account is given of how the human race became infected with the virus of sin, but not a word on the origin of evil. However, nothing concerning our well-being is omitted.

J. Its Frankness

Had the historical portions of the Old Testament been a fraudulent production, how vastly different had been their contents! Each of the books was written by a son of Abraham, yet nowhere do we find his posterity flattered. So far from extolling the virtues of the *Jewish nation*, it is uniformly portrayed as an ungrateful, rebellious, and sinful people. There is scarcely a book in the Old Testament that does not relate what is most unfavourable and highly disgraceful to them. Nowhere do we find their bravery praised, and never are their victories ascribed either to their valour or military genius: success is always attributed unto Jehovah, their God. In like manner, their defeats are referred unto Him as withholding His power because their evil conduct had justly displeased Him. Their defeats are accounted for neither by misfortune nor bad generalship, but to their own wickedness restraining a holy God from showing Himself strong in their behalf. Time after time Israel's subjugation by heathen nations is faithfully recorded. Now, such a God is not the creation of the human mind, nor are such historians actuated by the common principles of human nature.

¹⁸ **apocryphal** – of doubtful authorship or authenticity; false; spurious.

The Jewish historians have also impartially recorded the numerous backslidings and spiritual declines of *their own people*. One of the outstanding truths of the Old Testament is the unity of God: that beside Him there is none else, that all others are false gods, and that the paying of any worship to them is the sin of all sins. Yet the idolatry of Israel is frankly and repeatedly recorded. The guilt of some of their leading men is mentioned, as that of Aaron and Solomon. Nor is there the slightest attempt made to excuse such appalling wickedness: instead, it is openly censured and roundly condemned. Nor do the writers spare *themselves* or omit that which is to their discredit. Moses concealed not the reflection cast upon his own tribe (Gen 34:30; 49:5), nor the incest of his parents (Exo 6:20), or the rebellion of his sister (Num 12:1). He failed not to set down his own faults and failings, but frankly tells us of his reluctance to respond to Jehovah's call (Exo 4:10-14), his murmuring against God (Num 11:11-14), his lack of faith after so many divine interventions on his behalf (Num 10:12), and the Lord's displeasure against him because of his disobedience (Num 27:12-14). Such unsparing faithfulness is found not in those who are left free to follow the bent of their own hearts.

The same unusual feature is found in the *New Testament*. John the Baptist is presented as a most eminent personage: miraculously born, the Lord's forerunner, accorded the high honour of baptizing Him. Where had human wisdom and sentiment placed him among the Saviour's followers? Surely, as the most distinguished and favoured of His attendants, set at His right hand. However, he actually was granted no familiar conversation with Him, but was treated with apparent neglect, suffered to be cast into prison through no fault of his own, and left there unvisited. See him harassed with unbelief, doubting whether or not Christ was the true Messiah; had his character been the invention of fraud, nothing had been said of his lapse of faith. The same shocking unbelief is recorded of the apostles, who not only basely deserted Christ in the hour of His crisis, but had no expectation of His rising from the dead—nay, when informed that He had done so, were full of skepticism. A spurious history would have omitted such glaring blemishes. But the Bible characters are painted in the colours of truth and nature, and in the unrivalled honesty of its penmen we have yet another evidence that they wrote by divine inspiration and not by natural impulse.

K. Its Majestic Tone

If God is the Author of the Bible, we should naturally expect to find in it a loftiness of tone and majesty of diction that surpasses all human productions. And such is indeed the case, especially in those portions of it that more especially treat of the divine perfections. Amidst great plainness of speech and homeliness of expression, adapted to the most common ability of men, there is often an elevation of spirit and grandeur of language that not only command attention but fill with reverent awe. Thus, "Hear O heavens,

and give ear O earth, for the LORD hath spoken” (Isa 1:2). “The LORD reigneth, let the people tremble” (Psa 99:1). It would be the height of presumption for any creature to speak thus, yet perfectly fitting for the Almighty to do so. When the Son of God became incarnate, the people who heard Him declared that, “He taught with authority, and not as the scribes” (Mat 7:29), and the very officers sent to arrest Him testified, “never man spake like this man” (Joh 7:46). The same qualities mark God’s written Word. It possesses a sovereign majesty that is unrivalled and unequalled.

Though the contents of the Bible are not presented pompously or bombastically, but calmly and with becoming dignity, there is yet an unmistakable elevation of style and a solemnity of diction that is without parallel. God speaks therein and reveals the glory of His excellence. His supremacy, His omniscience, His holiness, His immutability, His faithfulness, His goodness and grace, are set forth in a manner worthy of Himself, yet at the same time admirably suited to our weakness. The most laborious efforts of scholars are insipid in comparison with those passages which are particularly designed to convey to us due understandings of the One with Whom we have to do. “He sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in” (Isa 40:22). Yet, “He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young” (Isa 40:11).

We offer but one other example:

“O LORD my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty. Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain: Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind: Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire: Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed forever. Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains. At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away” (Psa 104:1-7).

Where shall we find in human compositions anything as chaste, so elevated, so sublime!

Study Questions Lesson 11

Its Unique Scope and Style

Please read Lesson 11 before answering these questions. Always use your own words, in order to indicate your understanding of what you have read.

Its depth (D)

1. a. What does the Bible's depth tell us about the origin of the Scriptures?
b. Why?
2. What has God designed the mysteries of the Bible to do?

Its simplicity (E)

3. Though it contains mysteries, why is the Bible yet written in simple terms?
4. a. How are the descriptions of Christ's praiseworthy life written?
b. How does this tell us about the origin of the Scriptures?

Its impartiality (F)

5. a. In what way is the Bible impartial?
b. How does this tell us about the divine inspiration of the Scriptures?

Its comprehensiveness (G)

6. In what ways is the Bible comprehensive?
7. What does this tell us about the divine inspiration of the Scriptures?

Its conciseness (H)

8. a. How are the Scriptures different from other books in length?
b. What does this tell us about the divine inspiration of the Scriptures?

Its reserve (I)

9. a. How are the Scriptures different from secular books in reserve?
b. What does this tell us about their origin?

Its frankness (J)

10. a. In what ways are the Scriptures frank?
b. What does this tell us about their origin?

Its majestic tone (K)

11. Describe the majestic tone of the Scriptures.
b. What does this tell us about their origin?

12. Its Unique Perspective

L. Its Undesigned Coincidences

1. Introduction

Challengers of the Scriptures have shown some industry and ingenuity in gathering together apparent contradictions between different statements in the Bible. But such alleged contradictions are only apparent, and betray

the ignorance and misapprehension of those who urge them. The men who present them are merely retailing old trivial objections, which have been refuted again and again. On the other hand, those who undertake the defense of the Bible may appeal to innumerable proofs not only of its general harmony, but also of its detailed consistency and verbal precision. The truth of Holy Writ is demonstrated by hundreds of *undesigned coincidences* in them, or the uncollaborated agreement of one part with another. Though the Bible has in it 66 books, written by 40 penmen, covering 1,600 years and so many generations of the world, relating to widely different states of society, containing such a variety of matter upon so many different subjects, and abounding in supernatural incidents, yet it agrees in all its parts, which becomes increasingly evident the more closely it is examined. Their consistency without collusion is too uniform to be accidental, and too incidental to have been mutually planned.

That which gives greater force to this argument is its self-evident feature that the perfect agreement of all its writers is *undesigned* on their part. The closer their productions be scanned, it is clearer that their perfect unity was not studied but casual. This line of argument was developed at considerable length by Paley (1743-1805) and later by J. J. Blunt (1794-1855), who fully showed the detailed agreement and yet un-premeditated consistency of one writer with another. The value of such evidence cannot be overestimated. As Professor Blunt pointed out, "It does not require many circumstantial coincidences to determine the mind of a jury as to the credibility of a witness in our courts, even when the life of a fellow creature is at stake." When independent narrators describe an incident in detail and there is no discrepancy but perfect accord between their several accounts, we logically conclude that they have related actual occurrences—the more so when there is no indication of conference, collaboration, or contrivance. We shall now condense a number of examples from those authors.

2. Old Testament examples

After Joseph's brethren had cast him into the pit, we are told that, "they lifted up their eyes and looked, and behold a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead, with their camels bearing *spicery and balm and myrrh*, going to carry it down to Egypt" (Gen 37:25). Now this, by no means an obvious incident to have suggested itself, does appear to be a very natural one to have occurred. But what is more to our point, it tallies exactly with what we read of elsewhere, yet in a passage that has no reference whatever to the one just cited, namely, "Joseph commanded the physicians to *embalm* his father...and the Egyptians mourned three score and ten days" (Gen 50:2-3). It was the practice of the Egyptians to embalm their dead, and hence the Ishmeelites would find a ready market in Egypt for their spices!

Again, when during the famine Joseph possessed himself on the king's account of all the land of Egypt, "he did not buy the land of the priests" (Gen

47:22)—as a specially favoured class, they were exempted. In perfect accord is the fact that the final mark of the king’s regard for Joseph was his giving him to wife, “the daughter of Potipherah the *priest*” (Gen 41:45)—showing that the priests were held in peculiar esteem by their monarch.

“Moses gave...two wagons and four oxen unto the sons of Gershon, according to their service; and four wagons and eight oxen to the sons of Merari” (Num 7:7-8). Why twice as many to the one as to the other? No reason is expressly stated; yet if we turn to an earlier chapter, separated by sundry details on other matters, we discover for ourselves a satisfactory explanation: the sons of Gershon carried the *lighter* part of the Tabernacle furniture (Num 4:25), those of Merari the heavier (Num 4:32-33). Does cunning contrivance or truth lie behind that?

“But he [Israel’s king] shall not multiply horses to himself” (Deu 7:16). The governors of Israel rode on “white asses” (Jdg 5:10, cf. Jos 15:18; 1Sa 25:23), and it was the asses and not the horses of Kish which were lost (1Sa 9:3). News of Absalom’s death was brought to David by runners *on foot* (2Sa 18:21-23). Thus it appears quite incidentally in the history of Israel that for several centuries they had no horses—a coincidence of reality that would never occur in a fiction.

When praising the Lord for deliverance from their enemies, Deborah mentioned there was not “a shield or spear” among the Israelites (Jdg 5:8). Strange though that be, it fully accords with several other details found in that book. Ehud “*made him* a dagger” (3:16); Shamgar slew the Philistines “with an ox goad” (3:31); Jael had to improvise and use a tent pen (4:21); Samson searched in vain for a weapon till he “found a new jawbone of an ass” (15:15). Yet more remarkable was Gideon’s victory over the Midianites with trumpets and broken pitchers, with their satirical cry of faith: “the *sword* of the Lord and of Gideon” (7:15-22). No explanation is furnished by the writer of Judges, nor does he link together those incidents. But when we turn to 1 Samuel 13:19-22, they are fully accounted for, for there we are told that when the Philistines subdued Israel, they suffered “no smith throughout the land”! Those who are qualified to weigh evidence will perceive in such “undesigned coincidences” the marks of truth—the more convincing since our attention is not directly called to them.

“Goliath of Gath” (1Sa 17: 4): let us mark the value of that casual mention of the giant’s town—a detail of such little importance that its insertion or omission apparently mattered nothing. In Numbers 13:32-33, we are informed that “the sons of Anak were men of great stature.” Later, that Joshua “cut off the Anakim from the mountains and utterly destroyed their cities,” but a few remained “in Gaza, in *Gath*, and in Ashdod” (Jos 11:22). Thus 1 Samuel 17:4 is found to square with those independent statements in Numbers and Joshua—in the mouth of those three witnesses the truth of history being established!

In 1 Samuel 22:3-4, David trusted his father and mother to the protection of the Moabites. Why he made such a strange and dangerous choice we are not told. Had not the book of Ruth come down to us, the mystery had been left unexplained, but there we learn that the grandmother of David's father was "a Moabitess" (Ru 4:17), and thus the propriety of his selection of their place of refuge appears—yet only by comparing the two books together is the circumstance accounted for.

3. *New Testament examples*

The undesignedness of many passages in the Gospels is overlooked in our familiar acquaintance with them. For instance, why were the sick brought to Jesus "when the even was come" (Mat 8:16)? From the parallel passages (Mar 1:21; Luk 4:31), we learn that the transaction took place on the Sabbath, which ended at *sunset* (Lev 23:32). Then from Matthew 12:10, an entirely independent passage, we discover there was a superstition among the Jews that, "it was not lawful to heal on the Sabbath day." No explanation is given in Matthew 8:16, and had it not been for the accounts of Mark and Luke we had not known it *was* "the Sabbath"!

How came it to pass that Peter, a stranger, who had entered the house in the night, and under circumstances of some disorder, was identified by the maid in *the porch* (Mat 26:71)? John 18:16 tells us: he had stood there with John until "her that kept the door" admitted them—one Gospel confirming the other in this detail.

4. *Summary*

The Bible, my reader, consists of no cunningly devised fables, but authentic records of momentous events. They invite examination and will sustain the most diligent review, evidencing themselves to be extremely trustworthy and faithful accounts of actual happenings. While they relay much that is extraordinary, miracles many and mighty, yet confidence in the historicity is established by the numerous marks of reality, consistency, and accuracy that the ordinary matters of fact combined with them constantly exhibit. The exact agreement between incidental statements in widely separated parts of the Bible argues the truthfulness of each of them. The closer we check one narrative with another, the more does the truthful accuracy of the writers appear. Thus, when I find Paul affirming that from "a child" Timothy had "known the Scripture" (2Ti 3:15)—which necessarily implies at least one *Jewish* parent—and then discover his mother *was* "a Jewess" (Act 16:1), I am compelled by the very indirectness of such a statement to accept it as inerrant.

M. Its Dispassionate Attitude

In all the historical narratives of Old and New Testaments alike, there is a most noticeable absence of any expression of feeling on the part of those

who penned them. One and all maintain candor and calmness when chronicling the saddest or the most awful incidents. There is no trace anywhere of *their own* delight or anger—not a single outburst of that personal bitterness and ill-will which so often mar the writings of uninspired men. Instead, we see a mild calm and quiet dignity breathing throughout the sacred pages. Thus, when the fall of our first parents, with all its disastrous consequences, is recorded, it is without any reflections of the scribe added to it. The murder of Abel is related, but no recriminations are cast upon Cain. Even when informing us there was “no room in the inn” for Joseph and Mary, and that the newly born Saviour had to be laid in a manger with animals, the evangelist indulges in no criticisms of those who so grievously insulted the Son of God.

When another evangelist records the ferocious and wicked attempt of Herod upon the life of the infant Saviour by ordering all the children in Bethlehem under the age of two to be slain, he voices no horrified denunciation at such brutality; and when he relates how the legal parents of Christ had to flee into Egypt in order to escape from the murderous designs of that king, he pronounces no railing accusation upon him, such as an ordinary writer would have deemed fit. Another of them tells us of the Galilean ruler vilely yielding to the demand of a dancing girl that the head of John the Baptist be brought to her on a platter, but refrains from all denunciation of the woman’s crudity, and the weakness and wickedness of his consenting to the murder of our Lord’s forerunner—and with unparalleled honesty states that, “the king was exceeding sorry” (Mar 6:26). It was not that the evangelists were devoid of feeling, but that they were so completely under the control of the One Who moved them to write, that their natural passions were wholly subdued.

Still more remarkable is the entire absence of any reproaches from the evangelists upon the glaring injustice of the judges of the Redeemer, the horrid indignities to which He was subjected during His last hours, and the blasphemous taunts hurled at Him as He hung upon the tree. Their self-controlled description of Christ’s trial and crucifixion is without parallel. Instead of indignantly chastening Caiaphas and Pilate, instead of hot curses upon the hypocritical priests and Pharisees, instead of strong denunciations of the brutal soldiers—there is nothing but the calm discharge of their task as sacred historians. How entirely different from the temper and tone of the ordinary biographer when recounting the injuries of those he loves or highly esteems! So, too, in the accounts of our Lord’s resurrection: what an opportunity did that unique event afford the evangelists to break forth in accents of admiration! What an occasion was it for extolling the powers of their triumphant Redeemer! Instead, there is only a brief account of the bare facts of the case. Surely it is clear that such moderation and sobriety can only be accounted for on the ground that the Holy Spirit fully controlled them, that as the penmen of God they wrote not by natural impulse, but by divine inspiration!

N. Its Amazing Anticipations

A few words need to be said upon the *scientific* reliability of the Bible. First, there is not a word which clashes with any known fact discovered since it was written. Therein it differs radically from the Shafter of the Hindus (which affirms the moon to be 50,000 leagues higher than the sun!), the Koran of Mahomet (which teaches the mountains were created “to prevent the earth from moving”!), the statement of Pope Zanchary (which denied the antipodes¹⁹), or the blunders that each generation of scientists find in the writings of their direct predecessors. Second, the Bible makes known “secrets of nature” of which all contemporary writings were totally ignorant. Space permits of but few illustrations to show that the Bible has always been far in advance of “science.”

There is not a little recorded in Holy Writ of which the ancients knew nothing, but which was verified long afterwards. For example, “Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, Pleiades, and the chambers of the *south*” (Job 9:9): centuries after that was said, the southern hemisphere was unknown!

“He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing” (Job 26:7): sustaining it in space without any material support, kept in position by the center of gravity. As Dr. Leathers (King’s College London) pointed out, “Job, more than 3,000 years ago, described in the language of scientific accuracy the condition of our globe.”

“Or ever the silver cord [the spinal column] be loosed, or the golden bowl [the skull] be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel be broken in the cistern” (Ecc 12:6). The lungs take in and pour out air as a pitcher does water. The heart is “the wheel” on which the pitcher is brought up from the cistern: one of its lobes receives blood from the veins, the other lobe casts it out again, pulsing it through the arteries. Therein *the circulation of the blood* was figuratively described long before Hervey discovered it!

Any good encyclopedia will inform its readers that in the 17th century A.D., Sir Isaac Newton discovered the “law” of the circular motion of the wind; yet long before, Solomon had declared, “The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again to his *circuits*” (Ecc 1:6). It will likewise attribute to Newton the discovery of “the law of evaporation,” yet the Bible had previously made known, “He causeth *vapours to ascend* from the ends of the earth” (Psa 135:7). One would think from man’s writings that the scientists had invented these things! But many centuries before coal was first mined, Job declared, “As for the earth, out of it cometh bread, and *under it* is turned up as it were fire” (28:5): combustible material that provides the most suitable fuel for the furnace. Millenniums before Henry Ford was born, Nahum (2:4)

¹⁹ **antipodes** – places diametrically opposite each other on the face of the earth.

foretold, “The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall justle one against another in the broad ways: they shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings”!

In Genesis 15:5, God said to Abraham, “Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them,” while in Jeremiah 33:22, we read, “the host of heaven cannot be numbered.” When those verses were penned, none on earth had the least idea there was a countless number of stars. Ptolemy made a catalogue of the whole sphere of the heavens and made them to be but three thousand and fifty! But when Galileo turned his telescope on the heavens, he discovered there were many more than had been seen by the naked eye; when Lord Rousse used his great reflector, he found they were to be numbered by the millions; and when Herschel examined the “milky way,” he learned it was composed of countless myriads!²⁰ How came it that Moses and Jeremiah used expressions so far in advance of the knowledge of their day, unless guided by Omniscience?

“Thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man shall be revealed: in that *day*...he that is in the field...in that *night* there shall be two in bed, the one shall be taken and the other left” (Luk 17:30-35). How strikingly accurate: day on one side of the earth, night on the other!—a fact quite unknown in Luke’s time!

O. Its Indescribable Purity

This appears relatively by comparing the Bible with other writings, for Scripture far excels all human codes of law in its injunctions, prohibitions, and motives, as the light of a sunny day exceeds that of a foggy one. In the same way, it equally shows, as no other book, the horrid nature of sin as “that abominable thing” which God hates (Jer 44:4), and which we are to detest and shun. It never gives the least allowance to sin, nor do any of its teachings lead to excusing sin. It sternly condemns sin in all its forms, and makes known the awful curse and wrath of God that are its due. It not only reproves sin in the outward lives of men, but discovers the secret faults of the heart, which is sin’s chief seat. It warns against its first motions, and legislates for the regulating of our spirits, requiring us to keep clean the inner fountain from which springs the issues of life (Pro 4:23). Its promises are made unto holiness, and its blessings bestowed upon the pure in heart. The indescribable and exalted holiness of the Bible is its chief and peculiar excellence—as it is also the principal reason why it is disliked by the majority of the unregenerate.

²⁰ Scientists in 2015 estimate there are 10 billion galaxies in the universe we can see. They estimate 100 billion stars per galaxy, or a total of one billion trillion stars. But this is only those we can see in 2015, out to a limit of 13.7 billion light years from earth. (*Materials Research Laboratory, University of California Santa Barbara, <http://scienceline.ucsb.edu/getkey.php?key=3775>*)

The Bible forbids all impure desires, and unjust thoughts and deeds. It prohibits envy (Pro 23:17) and all forms of selfishness (Rom 15:1). It requires us to “cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, to perfect holiness in the fear of God” (2Co 7:1), and bids us “abstain from all appearance of evil” (1Th 5:22)—injunctions that are quite foreign to the “moralists” of the ancients! Heavenly doctrine is to be matched with heavenly character and conduct.

Its requirements penetrate into the innermost recesses of the soul, exposing and censuring all the corruptions found there. The law of man goes no farther than “thou shalt not steal,” but that of God: “thou shalt not covet” (Exo 20:17). The law of man prohibits the act of adultery, that of God forbids looking upon a woman to lust after her (Mat 5:28). The law of man says, “thou shalt not murder,” that of God forbids all ill-will, malice, or hatred (1Jo 3:15). It strikes directly at that which fallen nature most cherishes and craves: “Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you” (Luk 6:26)—a denunciation of no human invention! It prohibits the spirit of revenge, enjoins the forgiveness of injuries, and, contrary to the self-righteousness of our hearts, imparts *humility*.

P. Conclusion

Though we have now set forth more than thirty separate lines of evidence for the divine authorship of the Scriptures, we are far from having exhausted the subject. We might have shown that the divine inspiration of the Bible is attested by its miraculous preservation through the centuries, its unrivalled influence upon humanity, its perennial freshness, its inexhaustible fullness, its marvelous unity, its verification in Christian experience—but we have previously written thereon. Separate sections could have been devoted to the setting forth of its detailed accuracy, its pride-breaking contents, its encouragement of giving to the poor, its power to search the conscience, its intense realism (dealing not with theorizings and idealizings, but the actualities of life), its utter unworldliness, its sanctifying tendency, its teaching on providence—but we hesitate lest the reader be wearied, and because disciples should now be able to work them out for themselves!

May the Lord encourage you to read the divinely inspired Scriptures as the very words of God—to you personally—so that you might apply their truths to your heart and know the blessings of the Lord. ✨

Study Questions Lesson 12 ***Its Unique Perspective***

Please read Lesson 12 before answering these questions. Always use your own words, in order to indicate your understanding of what you have read.

Its undersigned coincidences (L)

Introduction (L.1)

1. What is meant by “undesigned coincidences”?
2.
 - a. In writing the Bible, what worked against its consistency?
 - b. Why do the testimonies of multiple witnesses, who do not know each other and yet who agree, cause us to conclude that their testimonies are true?

Old Testament examples (L.2)

3.
 - a. Of all the Old Testament examples of undersigned coincidences, which one stands out to you as most convincing?
 - b. Why?

Summary (L.4)

4. What does the Bible’s consistent agreement, in all its incidents among all its varied authors, tell us about its origin?

Its dispassionate attitude (M)

5. How are the authors of Scripture different from others in their expression of feeling?
6.
 - a. How is the portrayal of Christ’s suffering, death, and resurrection remarkable?
 - b. How is this different from the tone of the ordinary biographer?
 - c. What does this tell us about the divine origin of the Scriptures?

Its amazing anticipations (N)

7. Although it is not a science text book, how reliable have the Bible’s statements about science proven to be?
8. “The Bible makes known ‘secrets of nature’ of which all contemporary writings were totally ignorant.” What does this tell us about the origin of the Scriptures?

Its indescribable purity (O)

9. Regarding purity and holiness, how is the Bible different from other writings,
 - a. In its limitations on unhelpful behaviors
 - b. In dealing with sin
 - c. In dealing with impure desires and unjust thoughts

Conclusion (P)

10. Making It Personal

- a. What are you encouraged to do?
- b. Will you do this?
- c. How has your understanding of the Scriptures changed as a result of studying this course?

11. a. What are the main lessons you have learned during this course?
- b. What value is this to you?

*Thank you for taking this course.
Please write now for your next course
to continue your studies of God's Word.*

*Now begins the daily practical application of the
principles God has revealed during your time in these materials.
To aid in the transition from "head knowledge" to walking with
Christ, we suggest reviewing the key points daily for one
week after completion (trying to be mindful of them
throughout the day), and then reviewing weekly
for the next four weeks thereafter.*