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Christ's Testimony  
to the  
Scriptures

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# CHRIST'S TESTIMONY TO THE SCRIPTURES.

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THE Bible is God's word written. All Christians acknowledge the Bible as the word of God. With one consent the Church has, in all ages, so received the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. In the early centuries some heretics rejected some books which were hostile to their peculiar tenets. But during the last century a determined opposition was set on foot by deists and infidels; more especially against the books of the Old Testament; and more recently some nominal Christians have subjected these ancient writings to a course of criticism destructive of all faith in their veracity, much less in their divine authority and inspiration; while yet in their creed acknowledging them as the word of God.

Though these criticisms are directed against the genuineness and authenticity of the writings, they are animated by a spirit of hostility to the supernatural facts revealed in the Bible. It professes to describe things out of the course

of nature, which its writers never saw, such as the creation of the earth and the heavens ; to foretell the eternal destinies of all mankind ; to describe the fates and fortunes of those who have departed to that bourne from whence no traveller returns ; and it depicts to us the character of the Hebrew Jehovah as it appeared to the prophets of remote ages. On the strength of our faith in these statements, it demands that we regulate our lives according to its commands, even at great inconvenience and loss. Now, how can we know that its statements are true, and that these extraordinary claims are of divine authority ?

The evidences of the divine inspiration of the Scriptures are too numerous to be even enumerated now ; volumes sufficient to fill libraries have been published on the subject. We name five or six sources of proof. The Bible history has been corroborated by the records of Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon, recently discovered. The ruins of empires manifest the fulfilment of its prophecies, and attest the supremacy of God's law over the greatest nations of the earth. The most powerful and prosperous nations of the modern world, including our own great Republic, base their high civilization on the religion of the Bible. The greatest intellects have borne testimony to the superior character of the morality of the Bible as a rule for the conduct of men, and have reverently bowed in homage before the majesty and holiness of the God who commanded it.

The practical influence of the Bible in enlightening the minds of ignorant savages, such as were our own ancestors ; in turning them from the love of sin and from lives of

drunkenness, lust and murder, and converting them into civilized Christians, proves the divine origin of these truths. Every man may have an undeniable proof of the divine power of the Bible in his own experience, if he will believe and obey it. By believing on Jesus, he will receive the Holy Spirit to enable him to become a new man; he will think pure thoughts; he will control his tongue to words of truth and peace and love; he will be helped to conquer his bad habits, and be saved from his sins; his mind will be filled with peace, and joy, and hope; and this sunshine, he knows, comes from heaven.

All these are valuable and powerful proofs of the divine origin and heavenly influence of the truths contained in the Bible; but they do not enable us to know whether everything it contains is of divine origin, nor whether there may not be chaff as well as wheat in the granary. Many learned men say there is; and have set themselves to winnow out the chaff, and to give us the pure wheat of God's word.

#### BUT THEY CANNOT AGREE

in their criticisms. Some of them think the records of the miracles are all legends and fables, and so would purge the Bible of them, or only read them as allegories. Thus, the narrative of Jonah, swallowed and preserved by the whale, would be merely a lesson of God's care over his servants in their extremity. Others would treat all the history recorded in the Old Testament as mythical, and to be read as we read the Pilgrim's Progress—as a religious allegory or series of fables. Another set would like to purge it of sun-

dry old Hebrew notions about the guilt of sin ; the justice of God, and his wrath against sinners ; and especially of the terrible doctrine of hell. Others would reduce the bulk of the Bible by omitting all but what they think the genuine writings of Moses from the Old Testament ; and some of them will only allow that he wrote the ten commandments ; while others would throw overboard the Old Testament entirely, and of the New Testament would receive only the words of our Lord Jesus himself ; and of these some would only receive as genuine the Sermon on the Mount and the Parables. It would be hard to find any three of these critics agreed on any positive selection of Scripture. Others cut the knot by allowing that the writers of Scripture were inspired by God—Moses and Jesus, just as were Shakespeare, and Longfellow, and Newton.

Now, in this contradiction and confusion of critics and scholars, how is a plain man who has to mind his business, and rear his family, and serve God, and save his soul—I say, how is such a man to settle the question whether his Bible is truth, or only a religious novel like the “Book of Mormon” ? or whether it is part truth and part lies ? or whether it is all true, and so, as it asserts itself, divine ? in a word, whether it is the word of man, or the word of God ? He cannot settle the matter by his own learning ; for he has neither time, nor money, nor teachers fit for the research into the original documents and manuscripts. And if he had gone to college, even then he must take somebody’s word for all he learned. As it is, he must take somebody’s word about the Bible. Now, is there any person he can

trust, wise enough to discover the truth, and honest enough to tell us the whole truth about the Bible?

Suppose a merchant in San Francisco receives a large order from a firm in Liverpool for several cargoes of wheat. He goes to the Merchants' Intelligence Office, and satisfies himself that the Liverpool house is perfectly solvent. But he has never had any correspondence with that house before, and so does not certainly know that the signature is genuine, and is in doubt. Just then one of his neighbors, whom he knows to be a true man, and who has recently returned from England, steps in with a strange gentleman, and introduces him as the son of the senior partner, and himself a member of the firm. The San Francisco merchant shows the letter to the young Englishman. "Yes," he says, "that is all right. That is my father's signature." Then he proceeds to explain the letter. There is no longer any doubt or delay in filling the order. Now, can we authenticate the Bible in any such way?

We can authenticate the Bible in this very way. The Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, has visited our world, as the word of God on this very business, to declare God's word to us. He has read the Bible carefully, as much of it as was then written; and he has directed the writing of the remainder. He has given us his opinion of it repeatedly, in direct statements; has quoted many passages from it, and explained them; and exposed and reprobated the additions which the Scribes and Pharisees would have made to the Bible by their traditions. We can trust the testimony of Jesus unhesitatingly. All Christians acknowledge him as

the Truth, and no infidel has dared to charge him with falsehood. Let us, then, inquire :

#### WHAT IS THE TESTIMONY OF CHRIST

to the Bible? Did he acknowledge the Scriptures as the work of men, or as the word of God? Our Lord's testimony to the New Testament as the word of God is very emphatic. If any prophet might have been trusted to expound God's truth in his own words, surely our Lord was that prophet. But he repeatedly asserts that his words were not of his own selection, but were divinely inspired. Thus in John xii. 47 : "And if any man hear my words and believe not, I judge him not, for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him. The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself, but the Father which sent me. He gave me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is everlasting life. Whatsoever I speak, therefore, even as the Father said unto me so I speak." Our Lord, then, simply repeated to us the words his Father said to him. These words of God he gave to his Apostles, as he tells us (John xvii. 8) : "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me." These divine words and this divine inspiration he conveyed to his Apostles (John xx. 21) : "Then said Jesus to them again, 'Peace be unto you. As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.' And when he had so said, he breathed on them, and said, 'Re-

ceive ye the Holy Ghost.'” And the Apostles accordingly used not their own wisdom, or learning, or ignorance, or Jewish prejudices in conveying divine truth to us. Paul declares (1 Cor. ii. 12): “Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God, that we might know the things which are freely given us of God; which things we speak not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth.” Thus was the promise of our Lord fulfilled, to send the Holy Ghost to supply his place as a divine teacher (John xiv. 25): “These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you.” These words of our Lord, then, communicated through the Apostles, are to be received as of the same divine authority as the words of Christ himself. And so Paul concludes (1 Cor. xiv. 37): “If any man think himself a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.” Our Lord’s testimony, then, to the inspiration and divine authority of the New Testament is positive and conclusive.

We inquire next what he thought of the Old Testament Scriptures.

First of all, we would desire to know Christ’s own private valuation of the Scriptures. Did he regard them as tolerably well adapted for children and for the childhood of the Church, containing amusing and even instructive fables capa-

ble of conveying good moral and religious lessons ; and did he suppose that his business was, as some modern religious teachers propose, to raise his Bible-class above the belief of the literal truth of the Bible to the higher plane of its allegorical meaning? Or did he really believe its literal truth, and trust his own soul's salvation upon it?

It is exceedingly interesting to turn over the leaves of Christ's pocket Bible, to mark where it opens of itself to his favorite passages, to see where his tears have fallen on the page, to notice the text he has underlined for his own soul's nourishment, and to follow his course of reading and marking all over the Book from Genesis to Malachi. But time permits only a single reference ; let it be to our Lord's use of the Bible for the defence of his own soul when assailed by Satan in the wilderness. It is worthy of our especial notice and imitation that he defeated the tempter, not by concessions, admitting the good in things evil, nor by arguments founded on reason, but by the overbearing authority of the word of God and especially of the law of Moses, and of that part of it, too, which narrates the miracles : taking his citations, moreover, from Deuteronomy, which some modern critics allege to be a late compilation.

Our Lord had fasted forty days, and was afterward a-hungered. The tempter came to him, saying, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." Our Lord unhesitatingly replied by drawing the sword of the Spirit, and citing a passage from Deuteronomy; the conclusion of the following passage (vii. 2-3) : "And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these

forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee and prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments, or no. And he humbled thee and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna (which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know), that he might make thee to know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." By citing the last clause of this passage, our Lord attests the truth of the whole narrative, for the whole force of the quotation depends on the truth of the statement that God fed the Israelites with manna for forty years. Thus our Lord risked his own soul upon the truth of one of the most marvellous narratives of the Bible.

#### WAS HE MISTAKEN

as to the fact? It is impossible to conceive a stronger proof that our Lord believed the Bible history and miracles to be literally true, than that he risked his own soul upon them.

The tempter, however, returned to the assault, and this time with a text of Scripture as his bait: but it is a garbled quotation; the text, truly quoted, would not have answered his purpose. But our Lord defeats the devil again by another quotation from the Bible, and again from Deuteronomy (vi. 16): "Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God as ye tempted him in Massah"—where they had demanded a sign, saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?" Thus our Lord again attested the truth of the narrative. Satan has never forgiven Deuteronomy these two defeats; but to this

day, through Kuenen and Robertson Smith, barks against its genuineness, as the wolf snaps at the spear wherewith the shepherd transfixes him in the fold.

A third time assailed by the tempter, with the most powerful temptation to pride, covetousness, and ambition, our Lord a third time overpowered the devil, and all the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, by the third citation from the Bible. Again the command he cites is based upon the assertion of the supernatural character of the Exodus; that divine interposition being assigned as the reason of God's exclusive claim to their homage. Deut. vi. 12: "Beware lest thou forget the Lord which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt fear the Lord, and serve him, and swear by his name." It is this connection which enables us to see the force of our Lord's translation: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

Verily, it was not without design that our tempted representative threw his soul's defence upon the word of God. Had Satan's historical criticism been able to invalidate the genuineness and authenticity of the books of Moses, we may be sure he would have tried it. Let every tempted Christian now follow our Lord's example, draw the sword of the Spirit, and fear not to risk his soul, as Jesus did, upon the written word of God.

As our Lord trusted his own soul's salvation upon the Scriptures, so he repeatedly commended them to his brethren as the best and only sure guide to salvation. He said to the people (John v. 39, 46, 47): "Search the Scriptures, for

in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." He was sure that belief in the Bible would produce faith in him. "If ye had believed Moses ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" When on one occasion one of the damned desired to stir up a sedition in heaven, and supersede God's way of salvation by the Bible preached and read, by the ghosts and spirit-rappings and mediums of that day, beseeching Abraham to send Lazarus from heaven to warn his five brethren away from that place of torment, our Lord tells us Abraham's reply: "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them."

But Dives insisted that was not enough. "Nay, Father Abraham, but if one rose from the dead, they will repent."

But Abraham replied, and Christ approved his reply: "If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe though one rose from the dead" (Luke xvi. 27). Our Lord then leaves his solemn testimony to the Bible as conveying God's most powerful truths for the conversion and salvation of men.

The great doctrines of all religion he did not establish by reasoning, but proved them from Holy Scriptures. This was notably the case with regard to the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body; a doctrine which many skeptics cannot find in the Old Testament, but which shone out plainly to our Lord's eye on every page, though then, as now, opposed by influential infidels.

The leading doctrine of

MODERN MATERIALISM

is precisely that of the Sadducees of our Lord's day, who said that matter was the only substance in the world, and that there was neither angel, nor spirit, nor resurrection. Our Lord refuted them, not by any assertion of his own knowledge and experience, though he had large measure of both, but as though the testimony of Scripture ought to convince even a Sadducee, he cited the words of God to Moses, written in the chapter called from its subject, The Bush, saying: "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." And then he adds the self-evident statement, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matt. xxii. 30), from which he leaves them to draw the inevitable conclusion that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are alive with God. Thus he established this immortality by an inference from Scripture.

Our Lord testified to the Bible as a whole. He possessed the Scriptures of the Old Testament just as we have them, only they were bound in three volumes, called respectively: The Law, containing the five books of Moses; The Prophets, or the historical books, written by the prophets, as well as their predictions; and the Psalms included the other poetical books. By naming these three volumes, and by calling them emphatically, The Scriptures, he shows us that he regarded the books, and not merely some part of the narratives, or some of the doctrines they contained, as the word of God. In his last conversation

with his disciples, before his ascension, he took care to name these three volumes of the Old Testament, and to remind them that he had taught them that all things written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, must be fulfilled.

Our Lord's testimony to the truth of the Bible was not confined, however, to those parts immediately concerning himself. He foresaw the assaults which would be made upon its accounts of the miracles, and upon the whole practice of religion, by denying the doctrine of a special providence of God for his people, and the reality of his answering our prayers; and he took special pains to confirm our faith by giving his testimony to the principal events of the Bible history, including a number of the miracles now most strenuously opposed.

The greatest of all the miracles—

#### THE CREATION OF MAN

in the image of God, as recorded in the beginning of Genesis, which our modern infidels ridicule as utterly unscientific, our Lord endorsed by appealing to it in defence of the Christian doctrine of the marriage of one man to one woman, and the wickedness of frivolous divorce, saying (Matt. xix. 4): "Have ye not read that he which made them at the beginning, made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh? What, therefore, God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." Our Lord then endorsed the truth of the Bible

narrative of man, and based on that Bible fact the sacredness of the family.

Next in the order of the Bible history, we find him full of sympathy with the martyrs, as soon himself to be added to the noble army, reading the narrative written in "the blood of righteous Abel," and so confirming Moses' record of his martyrdom (Matt. xxiii. 35). The Bible account of the stupendous miracle of the deluge he confirms; and introduces it as an illustration of the state of the world at his coming to judgment (Matt. xxiv. 37). "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

He endorsed the Bible narrative of Abraham's faith in the promise that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed, and of his life of pilgrimage on that account, saying: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day. He saw it and was glad" (John viii. 56). More than once he reminded his hearers of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire from heaven; and he exhorts all half-hearted Christians to "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke xvii. 28, 32). He confirms the remainder of the history of the patriarchs in Genesis by recognizing them as inheritors of the kingdom, and declaring that, "Many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God."

He emphatically alleged the truth of the Bible narrative of the Exodus by citing texts from it for the defence of his own soul from Satan in the wilderness. And again and again he returned to that narrative, as intensely true and

practically valuable to his people to this day. John vi. 49 : "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die." In one of his first discourses he cited one of the most supernatural miracles of salvation performed by Moses, as an illustration of salvation by faith in him (John iii. 14) : "For as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up ; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Our Lord bore testimony not only to the Books of Moses, he endorsed also the historical books of the prophets commissioned to succeed him in completing the Bible. He endorsed the Book of the Prophets by citing, from 1 Samuel xx., the narrative of David eating the shew bread (Matt xii. 3), and by a series of citations from these books and from all the parts of their history.

Our Lord endorsed the Bible account of the cycle of miracles performed by Elijah and Elisha, as recorded in the Books of the Kings, by citing three of the most remarkable — that of the shutting up of the heaven for three years and six months ; the support of the prophet during the famine by a poor widow of Sarepta, a city of Sidon, whose handful of meal wasted not and whose cruse of oil did not fail till the Lord sent rain on the earth ; and the miracle of the cleansing of Naaman, the Syrian. These three miracles he quoted in his first sermon in his own town, Nazareth, in defence of his own method of selecting the unworthy as the objects of his mercy (Luke iv. 25–27).

The prophecies regarding Tyre and Sidon, by Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Joel, and Amos, and the doom denounced against them in these Scriptures, he holds up as a warning to all impenitent gospel hearers, declaring that "It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you" (Matt. xi. 22). His citations from the Book of Isaiah alone are too numerous to recite. He took the text of his first sermon from that book. He makes many references to Jeremiah and Ezekiel, from whom he takes several themes for his parables.

One of the most mysterious books of the Bible, is the

#### PROPHECY OF DANIEL.

It is also one of the greatest importance as fixing the appointed time of our Lord's first coming, and as giving the key to all the other historical prophecies. It has accordingly been assailed with great vehemence by Rationalistic interpreters. Our Lord, foreseeing this, took care to give that book such a special endorsement as would keep the attention of the church fastened upon it, as giving the sign of his second coming. "When ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet (whoso readeth let him understand) then let," etc. (Matt. xxiv. 16). And he takes the scenery of the judgment in Matt. xxv. 31, from the book of the same prophet (chap. vii.), from which chapter also he takes his familiar Messianic title, The Son of man.

#### THE BOOK OF JONAH

has long furnished an occasion for objection against the

Bible, and for the outpouring of profane scoffing even by some who profess and call themselves Christians, and who declare they will teach the words of Christ while they have breath. It should silence the scoffing of such persons to remember that our Lord emphatically endorsed both the miracles recorded in Jonah; the greater miracle of the conversion of Ninevah—an event as yet unparalleled in the history of revivals, all the men, women, and children of a city as large as Philadelphia putting on sackcloth, and crying to God for mercy—and the preliminary miracle which gave sanction to his message, as one divinely commissioned, and preserved to preach repentance, and which opened the people's hearts in so wonderful a manner; which he declares was a type of his own death and resurrection. "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt. xii. 40).

Our time does not permit the insertion of his quotations from the other prophets. His testimony is borne on to the very last of the prophets, Malachi, from whom he quotes and applies to John the Baptist the prediction in chapter iii: "Behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee" (Matt. xi. 10); and again he says, "If ye will receive it, this is Elias which was to come" (Matt. xi. 14), referring to the closing promise of the Old Testament.

#### THE PSALMS

were special favorites with the Son of David, and he quoted

them repeatedly. We can only select a few of his references to that book of the Bible. When he would silence the Scribes, and assert his own divinity, he did so by a single word from the Psalms (Mark xii. 35): "And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, How say the Scribes that Christ is the Son of David? For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool! David himself there calleth him Lord; whence is he then his son?" It is manifest and undeniable here that our Lord believed that the Holy Ghost directed David to use this word *Lord*, on which he based his argument; and so that he believed the very words of the Bible to be inspired.

The same conclusion follows from our Lord's use of another quotation from the Psalms (Psalms lxxx.) in John x. 34, 35, where the Holy Ghost addresses the judges and princes bearing commissions from God: "I said that ye are gods, and all of you sons of the Highest." Upon which our Lord argues his own right also, as bearing the highest commission from God, to call himself the Son of God, basing his argument on the single word *gods*, thus: "Is it not written in your law, I said that ye are gods? If he called them gods to whom the word of God came, *and the Scripture cannot be broken,*" etc. The impregnability of every word of Scripture was an undeniable article of faith with our Lord, and with the whole Church at that time. So far from doubting that every word of Scripture was inspired, they counted every word in the Bible, and marked the number and the middle word at the end of each book.

Our Lord not only bore testimony to the Bible in set speech; he attested its divine character even more eloquently by embodying it in all his public sermons and private conversations, and by framing his parables, and working his miracles, upon the models of those recorded in the Bible. Time forbids a review of all our Lord's sermons: let us, however, rapidly glance over the brief notes given by Matthew of the Sermon on the Mount, as illustrating our Lord's method of Bible preaching.

Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, like the giving of the Law from Sinai, may be regarded as the formal proclamation of the nature of that kingdom of heaven he came to set up, and of the conditions of citizenship in it. Our Lord found

#### THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM

in the Old Testament. He began to bless his people by quoting the Bible benedictions on the poor in spirit—Isaiah xvi. 2; on the mourner—Isaiah lxx. 2, 3; on the meek—Psalm xxxvii. 11; on those who hunger for righteousness—Isaiah lxx. 13, xxv. 6; on the merciful—Psalm xviii. 25; on the peace-makers—Psalm xxxiv. 14, 15; on the pure in heart—Psalm xxiv. 3, 4; and on the martyrs, adducing the history of all the prophets. Let us note, in these days of disparagement of the morality of the Old Testament, that, in this picture of perfect purity and holiness, our Lord discovered no new virtue, nor enforced virtue by any new motive. The holiness of the Old Testament is exhibited, and its motives are applied by One who understands them: and the world stands amazed. The people had assembled

around the Great Reformer with very vague, but with very great expectations that this prophet, like unto Moses would, as Moses did, reveal some new law, which would replace their old Bible. But our Lord had hardly well begun his sermon ere he emphatically disabused them of such a mistake. "Think not," says he, "that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets. I have not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily, I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." He never for one moment conceived the idea that any writings of the Lights of Asia, of Sakymana or Confucius, could be compared with the Scriptures.

Let us note particularly, that our Lord here asserts the everlasting truth, not only of the doctrine, and prophecies, and history of the Bible, but first and foremost of the writings which reveal those doctrines and truths to us. For when he says, "Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law," he refers to the words and letters with which the law was written: the jot being the smallest Hebrew letter, corresponding to our *i*, and the tittle only a part of a letter, like the stroke across our *t*. Thus most emphatically does our Lord assert the divine origin, and so the divine eternity, of every word of God in the Bible.

To put up an effectual barrier against any attempts, then or afterward, to lower the authority of Scripture to the level of the religious consciousness of the Church, our Lord took particular pains to expose and trample upon the traditions of the elders, exposing their misapplication of the retribu-

tions of the civil law to the relations of private life ; in their minced oaths ; in their abuse of divorces ; and in making void the supreme command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," by the diabolical addition, "Thou shalt hate thine enemy." He corrected their perversion of fasting by a reference to Isaiah lviii. ; reprov'd their trumpet-blowing in the language of Amos iv. 6 ; and assured his disciples that unless their righteousness exceeded that of the Scribes and Pharisees, they should in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. The Bible, then, our Lord insists, is the

ONLY RULE FOR LIFE AND SALVATION,

and all human traditions added to it he detests and despises.

Our time will not permit a full illustration of the Old Testament sources of our Lord's Sermon on the Mount. I recommend it as a fruitful theme for preachers. But its four grand characteristics—the spirituality of the law of God, the necessity of a holy life, the fatherly love of God, and the great commandment of love to our neighbors—are so avowedly taken from the Old Testament that one cannot but marvel at the blindness of those commentators who insist that the Mosaic law applied only to the outward life, that the law of love is a New Testament idea, and that Jesus came to reveal the fatherhood of God.

1. Our Lord asserts and illustrates the spirituality of the law. So far from being a new idea, first introduced by Jesus, that the law of God is spiritual, reaching the desires of the heart, it is proclaimed in the law itself. The Tenth

Commandment, "Thou shalt not covet," convinced Paul that the law is spiritual. The two great commandments, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," and "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," both demand spiritual religion. Our Lord refers to Job's covenant with his eyes, in his explanation of the Seventh Commandment. He expounds David's assertion, "If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me," when he commands us to leave the gift before the altar and first be reconciled to our brother, and then come and offer the gift. In a word, he shows that the spirituality of the law is the theme of all the prophets.

2. He announces the importance of a holy life, and the uselessness of profession of piety without the practice of morality, in the very figures of the Old Testament prophets. Isaiah's vineyard supplies him with : "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" "Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom," is plainly an echo of Isaiah xlvi. 1 : "Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which swear by the name of the Lord, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth nor in righteousness." The dreadful doom which he declares he will pronounce against such, he quotes from Psalm vi. 8, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity!"

3. The Golden Rule, and Christ's commandment of brotherly love and of universal benevolence, is another feature of the gospel selected by liberal Christians to contrast with the bigotry of the Old Testament. But our Lord

himself surely knew where he had learned this large love for all mankind. So far from announcing the Golden Rule as any new discovery, he gives it as the sum of the old Bible morality, and demands obedience to it expressly because the Scriptures command it. "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets." And the sublime command of love to our enemies he gives in the very words of Solomon: "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink" (Proverbs xxv. 21).

4. The fatherhood of God is another feature of the gospel selected by liberal Christians to contrast with the stern features of the Hebrew Jehovah; but how strange, if such be the character of the God of the Old Testament, that our Lord should have supposed the Jews so well acquainted with God's fatherly love that he never attempted to prove it, but took it for an admitted axiom, and so well known to his hearers that he based his reasoning upon it. Before the law was given from Sinai, he had said to Pharaoh (Ex. iv. 22): "Israel is my son, even my first-born; and I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me." And they had often heard this read in the synagogues. Perhaps on the previous Sabbath they had united in singing Psalm ciii. 12: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him; for he knoweth our frame; he remembereth we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field so he flourisheth; for the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. But the mercy of the Lord is unto them that

fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children." Our Lord, according to his custom, takes this beautiful and touching figure, and expands, and glorifies, and applies it to each one personally, as he points to the flowers growing on the hillside where they are seated, and to the birds flying around, saying: "Your heavenly Father feedeth them. Behold the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"

The text and the sermon, then, the illustrations and the proofs of our Lord's great, formal proclamation of the gospel, he takes from the Old Testament Scriptures. He plants himself squarely on their divine authority and on their

#### PLENARY INSPIRATION.

He quotes them; he illustrates them; he applies them. He declares that heaven and earth shall pass away before one jot or one tittle shall pass from the law till all be fulfilled.

Did our time permit, we should find every one of our Lord's sermons full of Scripture—a Bible reading of the most purely Scriptural character. But we must pass over the rest of his sermons, and glance merely at the Bible gems set in his parables and miracles and common conversation; for he could not open his mouth without speaking Bible truths and words.

His mind was so full of Scripture that his common con-

versation, as well as his public preaching, was full of it. The Gentile centurion's faith suggested the fulfilment of the promise of all nations blessed in Abraham. He justified his disciples in rubbing and eating the ears of corn on the Sabbath by an immediate reference to three texts justifying works of necessity and mercy in the Old Testament. His very invectives are taken from Scripture ; as when, referring to the account of the old serpent and his seed, in Genesis, he called the Pharisees a generation of vipers ; and, in the words of Isaiah (lvii. 3), " an adulterous generation." When he would reprove their hypocrisy, he simply quoted Isaiah, saying : " Ye hypocrites : well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people honoreth me with their mouth, but their heart is far from me." He described the brother delivering up his brother in the words of Micah. And he demanded a devotion to God stronger than the love of father and mother, in the very words and spirit of Moses.

His parables are almost all taken from the Bible. David's handful of corn, sown on the tops of the mountains, gave him the parable of the sower ; and that of the binding and burning of the tares was suggested by 2 Samuel xiii. 7. The growth of the mustard-seed is a more beautiful form of Ezekiel's twig (Exekiel xvii. 23) ; and the same old speaker of parables, in his vision of the many fishes along the river of the water of life (xlvii. 9), furnished him with several parables ; with the miraculous draught of fish, and with the characteristic description of the preachers of his gospel—" fishers of men." Psalm lxxx., combined with Isaiah v.,

supplied the idea of the parable of the vineyard. Every child who had chanted the twenty-third Psalm would instantly see the original of the Good Shepherd ; while the adults would remember Ezekiel xxxiv., contrasting the evil shepherds with himself, saying : "I will both search my sheep and seek them out." From which chapter, also, he draws the parable of the "Lost Sheep."

The fourteenth chapter of Hosea, full of fatherly yearnings, is the basis of

#### THE PRODIGAL SON.

The song of songs and the 45th Psalm are evidently the sources of the marriage of the king's son, and of the ten virgins. The name of Abraham's steward is given to Lazarus, who is carried to Abraham's bosom. The barren fig-tree is a second application of Isaiah's vineyard, with a further application to Jer. ii. 21, and Ezekiel xv. 2. The parables of importunity in prayer are illustrations of Psalms xl., lii., cxxx. Nebuchadnezzar's fate suggested the rich fool. The great supper is found in Proverbs ix. 1, 6, and Isaiah xxv. 6. The Pharisee and the Publican is an embodiment of Isaiah lxxv. 1, 5, and lxxvi. 1, 2. Thus our Lord repeats, explains, and illustrates in the parables what he had before spoken by the prophets, that all men may see the value of the Old Testament Scriptures.

Our Lord's miracles are in like manner conformed to the Bible precedents. The Shekinah descended on him at his baptism to mark him as the Dweller between the Cherubim. The angels ministered unto him in the wilderness as they

did to Elijah. He cured the servant of the centurion with a word as of old : " He sent his word and healed them."

He fed the five thousand as Moses fed the people in the wilderness, which miracle he endorsed three times in his discussion of that subject with the Jews (John vi). He confirmed the truth of the history of Jonah by citing it as the sign of his own death, burial, resurrection, and conversion of the world. When he healed the lepers, he sent them to show themselves to the priests, because so Moses commanded. In Psalm 8th the dominion over the fish of the sea is given to the Son of man, and he wrought the miracles of the tribute money and the miraculous draughts accordingly. The promise was made to Abraham and to his seed ; and he healed the woman bowed down because she was a daughter of Abraham and brought salvation to Zaccheus and his house because of the promise ; he stilled the tempest and ruled the sea of Galilee as of old ; he ruled the Red Sea ; he raised the ruler's daughter and widow's son, as Elisha had done ; and as he had read the hearts and counsels of the Kings of Syria, so our Lord read the heart of Herod. The widow's handful of meal and cruse of oil gave the model of the multiplication of the five loaves and two fishes. He made the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing, and gave the blind their sight, and raised the bowed down, because thus it was predicted of the Messiah in the Scriptures ; first forgiving their sins, and then healing their sickness, according to the Scripture order, Ps. ciii. 3. All his miracles were wrought in designed conformity to the Bible precedents, that he might honor the word of God.

His whole life was designedly conformed to the Scriptures. The very first recorded public act of our Lord's official conduct was an endorsement of the Bible. John came preaching the kingdom of heaven, and claiming to be the person predicted by Isaiah, as the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord" (Isaiah xl. 3). And Jesus, about to enter on his duties as

#### THE GREAT HIGH-PRIEST

of his Church, approved the prophecy of Isaiah, and the commission of John, by being baptized by him, and so consecrated according to the law to his priestly office; alleging to the reluctant minister the all-overpowering reason, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

All the subsequent parts of our Lord's life were in like manner conformed to the Scriptures. He selected his first field of labor, not in the great capital of the world, nor yet in Jerusalem, the centre of the Church, but in Galilee of the Gentiles, because thus it was written by the prophet Isaiah, ix. 1, 5; Matt. iv. 14. He began his miraculous works of healing that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet: "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses" (Matt. viii. 16, 17). For the same reason he forbade his disciples to trumpet his miraculous works, namely, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet Esaias, saying, 'Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth; I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall show judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets,

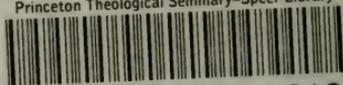






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