

Scripture

THE BIBLE THE VERY WORD OF GOD

We believe the Bible to be--not merely to contain, but actually to be--the very Word of God. In the words of B. B. Warfield, we "look upon the Bible as an oracular book--as the Word of God in such a sense that whatever it says God says--not a book, then, in which one may by searching find some word of God, but a book which may be frankly appealed to at any point with the assurance that whatever it may be found to say, that is the Word of God."

This is no more than the Bible teaches about itself. It claims divine inspiration: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:16-17).

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself constantly appealed to Scripture. He stamped its history, its miracles, and its canon (i.e., the books that properly should be included in it) with His personal authority. Therefore, for example, we cannot reject the historical reality of Adam and Eve without repudiating the authority of Christ (Matt. 19:4, 5). We cannot deny the Scriptures without denying Christ.

OUR SOLE AND SUFFICIENT AUTHORITY

These Scriptures are our authority in all matters of faith and practice. Jesus said, "The scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). Again: "One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. 5:18). Thus in settling any point of doctrine the question we have to ask is, "What saith the Scripture?"

Holding the authority of Scripture as a revealed truth, we necessarily believe the sufficiency of Scripture. We need no other authority for faith and practice. This is not to say that the Bible deals exhaustively with all subjects. Clearly it does not, but we accept nothing as true that stands in opposition or contradiction to the Bible. We do not need or accept any additional authority, whether it be the claimed traditions or teaching authority of the Church of Rome, or the visions and voices of the self-styled Charismatic movement.

HOW SHOULD WE TREAT THE WORD OF GOD?

This is more than a theoretical position. It is a life-governing conviction. Hence we read the Bible, we study it, we preach it, we seek to obey it, and we spread its message. We are not impressed by a doctrine or a practice merely because it is currently popular. Nor for that matter are we more likely to accept it just because it is "old-fashioned." If it accords with Scripture, that is what commends it to us, whatever the current state of opinion in church or state may be.

What an unspeakable blessing it is to have the Word of God in our own language! Queen Victoria is reputed to have called the Bible the secret of England's greatness. It remains the secret and foundation of any church that aspires to do a work for God. We unhesitatingly embrace it as our chart and compass.