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## THE PROOF OF THE SCRIPTURES

THE CHIEF EVIDENCE FOR THE BIBLE'S BEING THE WORD OF GOD IS THE INTERNAL testimony of the Holy Spirit to that truth. Without such testimony the truthfulness of Scripture will never impress itself adequately upon a reader. But that does not mean that there are no rational supports for one's conviction. The rational arguments should be known by the mature Christian as well as by anyone who is just beginning to consider the claims of Christianity.

What are these arguments? Some have already been suggested. First, there are the claims of the Scriptures themselves. The books of the Bible claim to be the Word of God, and, while this in itself does not prove that they are, nevertheless it is a fact to be accounted for. We must ask how books that seem to be right in so many other respects could yet be in error at the crucial point of their self-awareness. Second, there is the testimony of Jesus. His testimony is the greatest argument of all. For even if Jesus were only a great teacher, his regard for the Bible as the ultimate authority in life could hardly be disregarded. Third, there is the doctrinal and ethical superiority of the Bible to all other books. The Bible's superiority has often been acknowledged even by unbelievers and is denied by few who have actually read and studied its pages. Fourth, there is the power of the Bible to affect us as we read it. What produces such results if the Bible is not divine both in its source and its operation upon human lives?

Thomas Watson, one of the great English Puritans, wrote:

I wonder whence the Scriptures should come, if not from God. Bad men

could not be the authors of it. Would their minds be employed in inditing such holy lines? Would they declare so fiercely against sin? Good men could not be the authors of it. Could they write in such a strain? or could it stand with their grace to counterfeit God's name, and put, *Thus saith the Lord*, to a book of their own devising?<sup>1</sup>

Here are four good reasons for regarding the Bible as the revealed Word of God, plus a fifth arising out of Watson's argument: the biblical writers would not have claimed divine origin for a book they knew to be purely their own. What follows are five more supports for the same conclusion.

### The Unity in Diversity

A sixth reason for regarding the Bible as the revealed Word of God is the extraordinary unity of the book. This is an old argument, but it is a good one nonetheless. It is one that grows in force the more one studies the documents. The Bible is composed of sixty-six parts, or books, written over a period of approximately fifteen hundred years (from about 1450 B.C. to about A.D. 90) by over forty different people. These people were not alike. They came from various levels of society and from diverse backgrounds. Some were kings. Others were statesmen, priests, prophets, a tax collector, a physician, a tentmaker, fishermen. If asked about any subject at all, they would have had views as diverse as the opinions of people living today. Yet together they produced a volume that is a marvelous unity in its doctrine, historical viewpoints, ethics and expectations. It is, in short, a single story of divine redemption begun in Israel, centered in Jesus Christ and culminating at the end of history. The nature of this unity is important. To begin with, as R. A. Torrey notes,

It is not a superficial unity, but a profound unity. On the surface, we often find apparent discrepancy and disagreement, but, as we study, the apparent discrepancy and disagreement disappear, and the deep underlying unity appears. The more deeply we study, the more complete do we find the unity to be. The unity is also an organic one—that is, it is not the unity of a dead thing, like a stone, but of a living thing, like a plant. In the early books of the Bible we have the germinant thought; as we go on we have the plant, and further on the bud, and then the blossom, and then the ripened fruit. In Revelation we find the ripened fruit of Genesis.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Thomas Watson, *A Body of Divinity: Contained in Sermons upon the Westminster Assembly's Catechism* (1692; reprint ed., London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1970), p. 26.

<sup>2</sup>R. A. Torrey, *The Bible and Its Christ* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1904-6), p. 26.