

The Infallible Word

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THE question of infallibility is one that is receiving a great deal of attention at the present time. As a matter of fact, everybody believes that there is such a thing as infallibility somewhere; the question to be decided, is, Where is it?

Many will deny that there is any such thing as infallibility, but it will be found that those who the most loudly deny its existence, are the ones who most complacently trust in themselves, and think that their own reason is infallible.

Religion Requires Infallibility

Infallibility is one of the great essentials of religion. In a matter concerning our eternal destiny we cannot afford to rest on uncertainties. We must know. Now the Gospel provides a certainty. We are told that we may “rest in the Lord” (*Psalms* 37:7), and are exhorted to know the truth for ourselves.

John 8

³² And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

2 Timothy 2

¹⁵ Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Men Are Not Infallible

But the church is not infallible, for it is composed of men, and there is nothing infallible in any man on earth.

Proverbs 28

²⁶ He that trusts in his own heart is a fool...

...because...

Jeremiah 17

⁹ The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.

This is true of the human heart without exception. It is just as true of the Pope of Rome as it is of the savages in Africa.

Here is something that the Bible says about trusting in human power and wisdom.

Psalms 146

³ Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.

⁴ His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

Jeremiah 17

⁵ Thus says the Lord, Cursed be the man that trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm, and whose heart departs from the Lord.

⁶ For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good comes; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.

This is not an arbitrary decree, but the statement of a natural consequence. Man is as the grass. At his best state he is “altogether vanity.” *Psalms* 39:5. He who puts his trust in man, no matter who the man may be, is trusting in nothing; and He who trusts in nothing, must come to nothing.

Look now at the other side:

Jeremiah 17

⁷ Blessed is the man that trusts in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.

⁸ For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreads out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat comes, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

Psalms 146

⁵ Happy is he that has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God:

⁶ Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is.

The One who made the heavens and the earth is infallible, for we read:

Hebrews 1

¹⁰ You, Lord, in the beginning have laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Your hands:

¹¹ They shall perish; but You remain; and they all shall wax old as does a garment;

¹² And as a vesture shall You fold them up, and they shall be changed; but You are the same, and Your years shall not fail.

Ephesians 1

¹¹ [He] works all things after the counsel of His own will.

Ecclesiastes 3

¹⁴ Whatsoever God does, it shall be forever; nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it; and God does it, that men should fear before Him.

Controversy Over the Bible

There is, however, no direct controversy about the infallibility of God. Few openly deny it, although one really denies it when he trusts in himself instead of in God. But the controversy in these days is over the Bible.

The discussion is not between avowed infidels and Chris-

tians, but among those who profess to be Christians. There was a time when the Bible was held to be the word of God by all who professed to be Christians; but in these days the infidel's occupation is gone, since a portion of the church is acting his part.

The above is strong language, but it is true. At the recent meeting of the *Congregational Union*, in London, the minister read a paper in which the position was taken that:

A man who affirmed the absolute inerrancy of the Bible laid himself open to one or other of the three following charges: Either that:

- (1) he did not know the facts with which he professed to deal;
or
- (2) he was unable, owing to the influence of some kind of intellectual *strabismus* [a cross-eyed condition], to see their true bearing and the conclusion to which they inevitably pointed; or
- (3) he had not the manliness and courage to admit the unwelcome truth which he perceived.

Another minister, of another denomination, recently pleaded most pathetically with a congregation, not to lead souls to ruin by teaching them that the Bible is absolutely true. Said he, to the few souls who still hold that the Bible is true, and who are simple-minded enough to expect others to believe it:

You are safe—safe not because you believe in an absolutely inerrant Bible,—I hope you have a better foundation than that,—you are safe because you believe in an inerrant Saviour.

From the report of another sermon, we take the following:

In the course of his argument, the preacher said that to claim infallibility for the Bible was to contend for more than itself claimed. Nor was infallibility to be found in the Church;

and no man living within sound of a railway whistle claimed infallibility for a church creed. Infallibility could not be in a book, but must be in a person who was sinless. Therefore Jesus Christ the sinless One was the only possible seat of infallibility.

In these references no names have been used, because our object is not to call any man in question, but simply to give a few specimens of a sentiment that is becoming alarmingly prevalent. Some may think that the last two quotations are not very bad, since, although they do set the Bible aside very summarily, they uphold the infallibility of Christ. But this is just what, as a matter of fact, *they do not do*. Speaking of this discussion about the Bible, a religious journal recently said:

We greatly fear that some of those who are trying to break up what they call “book worship,” and thereby magnify the Christ will soon practically get rid of Him also.

That is just what they have already done, as we shall show; and that is why we raise our voice in earnest protest and warning.

The Claim of the Bible

It is said that the Bible does not claim to be infallible. Let us see. It does claim to be the word of God, spoken through men. Read the prophecies of *Isaiah*, *Jeremiah*, *Ezekiel*, and the rest, and on almost every page you find the words:

“Thus says the Lord;”

“The word of the Lord that came,..”

“The word which the Lord spoke.”

To Jeremiah the Lord said:

Jeremiah 1

⁹ Behold, I have put My words in your mouth.

We read:

Ezekiel 1

³ The word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest.

And the Lord said to Him:

Ezekiel 2

⁷ You shall to speak with My words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.

And thus it is throughout the book. It claims to be the word of God; if it could be shown that it is not what it claims to be, then the whole thing would be a monstrous forgery, and unworthy of the slightest regard.

But let us read further as to what the Bible claims for itself. Take the following texts:

Hebrews 1

¹ God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

² Has in these last days spoken unto us by His Son.

2 Peter 1 [RV]

²⁰ No prophecy of Scripture is a private interpretation.

²¹ For no prophecy ever came by the will of man; but men spoke from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost.

2 Timothy 3

¹⁶ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

Acts 3

²⁰ And He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

²¹ Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

1 Thessalonians 2

¹³ For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when you received the word of God which you heard of us,

you received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually works also in you that believe.

1 Corinthians 14

³⁷ If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of God.

Many more texts might be added, but these are sufficient. They show plainly that the Bible claims to be the word of God. It is not that *it contains* the word of God, but *it is* the word of God. In the words of the Bible, the Holy Spirit testifies. See *Hebrews* 10:15-16; *1 Corinthians* 2:13. It was the Spirit of Christ that was speaking through the prophets. This is what the Bible claims, and there are many who know of a surety that it is true. They are not Bible critics, however, but Bible believers.

John 7

¹⁷ If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

Psalms 25

¹⁴ The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant.

God and His Word Are Infallible

From the texts that have been quoted it is evident that whoever brings a charge against the Bible is bringing a charge against God. To say that the Bible is fallible, is to say that God and Christ and the Holy Spirit are fallible. For if the word of God be not infallible, then God is not infallible. But God is infallible, and so is His word.

Psalms 18

³⁰ As for God, His way is perfect; the word of the Lord is tried; He is a buckler to all those who trust in Him.

Psalm 12

⁶ The words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.

Psalm 119

⁸⁹ Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven.

Jesus said to the Jews:

John 5

⁴⁶ Had you believed Moses, you would have believed Me; for he wrote of Me.

⁴⁷ But if you believe not His writings, how shall you believe My words?

And so it is that in rejecting the Bible, either as a whole or in part, men not only are in *danger of* rejecting Christ, but are *actually* rejecting Him. We write for the purpose of warning honest souls who may be confused by the show of learning made by Bible critics. Let them remember that...

Job 28

²⁸ ...the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.

Psalm 111

¹⁰ A good understanding have all they that do His commandments.

When people who decry the Bible profess to believe in an infallible Christ, it is enough to ask them how they can know anything about Him, if it is not from His word, which they treat so lightly.

The Opinions and Interpretations of Men

But some will say,

Even though we admit the Bible to be infallible, every man's opinion and interpretation thereof is not infallible.

Very true. We go further, and say that no man's opinion or interpretation of the Bible is infallible. Further still, we will

say that there is not a man on earth, whose opinion or interpretation of the Bible is worth any more than the paper on which it is written.

It is not what men think about the Lord but what the Lord thinks about men, that we are concerned with.

*The Bible is not to be interpreted,
but read, studied, and believed.*

The most learned man in the Scriptures can do no more than to lead others to the place whence he derived his knowledge and let them drink from the same fountain for themselves.

Truth Revealed to Babes

There are in the Bible many “deep things” (*1 Corinthians* 2:10) and “things hard to be understood.” *2 Peter* 3:16. But

God is His own interpreter.
And He will make it plain.

He gives the Holy Spirit freely to everyone who will receive it, as a Guide into all truth. *John* 16:13. The Spirit makes known to us the things that are freely given to us of God,

1 Corinthians 2

¹⁰ ...for the Spirit searches all things, yea the deep things of God.

Learning is not to be despised, but rather desired; but the humblest person who truly fears God, may understand the Bible far better than the most learned Doctor who trusts in his own wisdom. The truth of God is hidden from the wise and prudent,—wise in their own wisdom,—and is revealed unto babes, who are willing to receive the wisdom that comes from God.

Depend upon it that souls will never be saved by preaching

which throws the least discredit upon the Bible. The man who feels constrained to apologize for the Bible, may have crowds to listen to his smooth eloquence, but he will not have them crying out,

Acts 16

³⁰ What must I do to be saved?

The men through whom God worked in the past, were men who believed the Bible without reserve. There were things that they did not understand, but instead of parading their ignorance as wisdom, they took it to the Lord, and waited for Him to show them wisdom.

And God is as able and willing to do mighty things through human agency today as He ever was. He says:

Isaiah 66

² To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembles at My word.

When we see the humble acceptance of the word of God, we shall see the demonstration of the statement that it works effectually in all that believe.