

THE BIBLE

A SERMON

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“The Scripture cannot be broken.” John 10:35

THE Holy Scriptures consist of the books commonly called the Old and the New Testament. We have in the Old Testament thirty-nine books; in the New Testament twenty-seven books: making a total of sixty-six books. There are in the Old Testament nine hundred and twenty-nine chapters; and in the New Testament two hundred and sixty chapters: making a total of one thousand one hundred and eighty-nine chapters. There are in the Old Testament twenty-three thousand two hundred and fourteen verses; and in the New Testament seven thousand nine hundred and fifty-nine verses: making the total number of verses to be thirty-one thousand one hundred and seventy-three.

Number of *words* in the Old Testament, five hundred and ninety-two thousand four hundred and ninety-three; in the New Testament there are one hundred and eighty-one thousand, two hundred and fifty-three words: making the total number of words to be seven hundred and seventy-three thousand seven hundred and forty-six.

The number of *letters* forming these words is, in the Old Testament, two million seven hundred and twenty-eight thousand one hundred. Number of letters in the New Testament, eight hundred and thirty-eight thousand three hundred and eighty: making the total number of letters in the Bible to be three million five hundred and sixty-six thousand four hundred and eighty.

Such is the compass of the letter of the Holy Scripture, consisting thus of sixty-six books, one thousand one hundred and eighty-nine chapters, thirty-one thousand one hundred and seventy-three verses, seven hundred and seventy-three thousand seven hundred and forty-six words, and three million five hundred and sixty-six thousand four hundred and eighty letters¹.

The Bible is the greatest treasure in the world. What would the world be without the Bible? We may go to the most savage and degraded condition of man, and take that as a sample of what the

¹ These numbers are taken from Haydn's "Dictionary of Dates," Art. "Bible"

world would be without the word of the Lord. And then if we come to individual character, we see what a wonderful revolution the Holy Scriptures work wherever they take a vital and a saving hold. Even apart from this, the very infidels and atheists of our land would not have the advantage, the knowledge, and a thousand other comforts which they now have, were it not for that very book which they affect to despise and pretend to disbelieve. So that in every way the Bible is to man an infinite advantage. I shall therefore this morning make a few remarks during the few moments we are together upon the Scriptures generally. And in so doing I will notice first, *their certainty*; for therein appears to me to be the infallible proof of their divinity, of their being divinely inspired. I will secondly notice *their general and special design*; thirdly, *their completeness*.

First, their certainty. We see their certainty in the predictions thereof. There is a great pleasure in going through the Bible and seeing how everything came to pass just as it was predicted, especially if we connect, which we must do, our own interests with those predictions; because the matter stands thus, that the Lord will not do anything but that he declares his secret unto his servants the prophets; and, indeed, whatever he is about to do, he will show unto all his people, so that they shall not be in anything taken by surprise. Let us therefore give a few instances of the same, to show the certainty and excellency of the Scriptures. First, take the Flood. Here is a flood to come upon the earth. Now who could foresee that? None but the Lord. He did foresee it, and there were a few that he was pleased to make known his truth to. We will take Noah as the representative of that few. Noah obtained grace in the eyes of the Lord. The flood was about to come, and the Lord saw the necessity of some way of escape for his servant Noah and those that walked with him, and the Lord therefore warned him. Noah, by the revelation the Lord made to him, saw that the flood should come. Then the Lord revealed to him the way of escape, as you know, and Noah went to work just as the Lord directed him; just as he directs us now to believe in Jesus Christ, and to look to Jesus Christ, and to fly to Jesus Christ, and to have our confidence in God by Jesus Christ. For the ark was no doubt a type, not of the person of Christ, but of Christ's official character as a Savior, the ark carrying them safe through the flood. Now the time arrived, and the flood did come. And it was that kind of judgment that could not come except by the power of God. We see, on the other hand, that Noah abode by the order and plan which the Lord revealed to him, and worked thereby. And to show how the Lord watched over him to bring him rightly to the end, it is said at the last that the Lord shut him in. The flood came, and the ark, floating on an ocean without a shore, brought them safely through. We do not read that death occurred to any creature that was in the ark; all were brought safely through. And the Lord reappeared to Noah, an offering was offered unto the Lord, and he smelled a savor of rest. Can we read this and doubt for one moment who is the author of such scriptures as these? Here, then, we see the Lord's care of his people on the earth at that time. He does not think anything too good for one, or too great, if he be only one; for every one of his people is dear to his heart, because his love has embraced every one. Then we go on a little further, and we read that the cities of the plain were to be destroyed with fire. The inhabitants of the cities did not see this any more than the antediluvians saw the coming flood; and therefore, did not escape. But the Lord revealed the coming destruction to Lot, and he escaped; though he, like the rest of us, rather lingered, and his wife looked back, and the flames overtook her and encrusted her, and there she stood, like a pillar of bituminous salt, as an expression of the awfulness of lingering about on ground, as it were, where wrath must break out. But Lot was saved. Here, again, we have the certainty of the Scriptures; it came to pass just as the Lord said it should. Then we go on further, passing by Abraham, though I shall have to refer to him again presently, as well as Isaac and Jacob, and we come to Joseph. Here were dreams given to Joseph, divine dreams, and

his brethren did not understand them; they despised them, and hated Joseph, and intended to kill him. Yet those dreams indicated that Joseph could not be killed, but that he should come to the end and the use which the Lord designed. And so, presently, just as the Lord revealed, so it was. Rough and mysterious was the path through which Joseph went to reach the glory to which he was to come. When we look at him as being in danger of his life, when we look at him cast into the pit, when we look at him under the accusations of the beautiful Mrs. Potiphar, when we look at him as cast into prison under the idea of the accusations being true, when we trace all that, it looks very mysterious. Yet the time does come when Joseph is delivered. He is needed; he alone can interpret the dream, and everything comes to pass just as the Lord designed and had predicted; so that Joseph might well say to his brethren, "You thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." Ah, then, how safely may we trust in the Lord! Let our troubles be whatever they may, let our state be what it may, if we have but faith in the certainty of God's truth in Christ Jesus, we may safely trust in him, for "the Scripture cannot be broken." If therefore Christ be my only refuge, if Christ be the way in which I look for the fulfilment of his promises to me as a poor needy sinner, needing his mercy, those promises must be fulfilled; however dark circumstances may be in the present, those promises must be fulfilled. Passing by this, we come to Egypt, and 430 years before the deliverance from Egypt, it was, as you see in the 15th of Genesis, revealed to Abraham, in that beautiful, that wonderfully instructive chapter. Here were the Israelites by degrees getting into slavery, and their state becoming worse and worse as the time drew near; so that we do see in their deliverance the truth of the common observation, that our extremity is God's opportunity. All at once, astounding to Pharaoh, and astounding to others, came Moses; wonders were wrought, the deliverance was achieved, and there they stood, 430 years after the first prediction, on the eastern shore of the Red Sea, and there sang of the triumphs and wonders of the Lord. Ah, then, see the certainty of the Scriptures.

"If he speak a promise once,
Eternal grace is Sure."

Then if we go on to the wilderness, we see that none fell there but those that believed not, those that had never known the Lord. They knew they came out of Egypt, but they knew not the God that brought them out; they did not understand the prediction, they did not understand, who the God was that had brought them out; for if they had they would, not have fallen. "It is a people that do err in their hearts, and they have not known my ways." Had they known them they would not have fallen. Come to the Christian now. The Christian, who knows that he is severed from the world, who knows the God that has severed him, who knows that his separation from the world is by the quickening power of the eternal Spirit, the eternal redemption of Jesus Christ, and by the previous eternal and settled purpose of the most high God, could you, Christian, change away this dear covenant God that has thus appeared to you for another god? Could you worship the golden calf, or any other creature? Could you submit to anything else? No; therefore, it is that those that believed lived. "You are alive every one of you unto this day." They passed through the wilderness, they gained the victory, they gained possession of the promised land, retained the land, and died in the land. See then, once more, what a precious thing faith is. Then, again, they're going to Babylon; see how true that was. There is the prophet Jeremiah, and without meaning anything unduly familiar, I only just say that when Jeremiah was speaking of gospel matters, we see what he was in those matters. If you read his 31st and 33rd chapters, as well as other parts, you will see what he was in gospel matters, that he was what we should call a very high doctrine man. And

then if you read his first chapter, you will see there what the Lord says concerning Jeremiah becoming a prophet; for the Lord ordained him, and he sanctified him before he was born. Now, then, those in that day that knew the truth believed in Jeremiah. Ah, they said, we are high doctrine, so is he; we can see that he is a man of God, and that he is taught of God. Here is the Babylonish captivity coming. They listened to Jeremiah, and escaped the sword of Nebuchadnezzar, they escaped the sword of the Babylonians. Here, then, they saved their lives, went to Babylon, settled down, built houses, bought farms, planted vineyards, cultivated gardens, and were ten times better off than when among a parcel of apostate Jews at Jerusalem. By-and-bye the time comes, they return, build the temple, build the walls, and settle down. Here, then, those who could discern the truth, and who consulted the man who preached the truth, and who listened to him, escaped. So that how certain the Scriptures were! destruction to the one, and escape to the other. Ah, then, look at the old world, and see the importance of being brought to understand God's truth, and to rely thereon. See the cities of the plain, and from them learn the same lesson. See the life of Joseph, and from it learn a similar lesson, a very encouraging lesson. And then they're going to Babylon, and the preservation they enjoyed. He is the same now; for the wonders that he wrought then are only samples of the wonders that he will work on behalf of his people down to the end of time. And then, passing by many things, let us come down to the birth of the Savior, to the life of the Savior, to his death, and to his resurrection. Why, the certainty of the Scriptures upon that subject is wonderful. Not only are the Scriptures general, but they are very definite. Just look at the definitions of prophecy. All the pretended prophecies of the heathen oracles were so ambiguous, that when the event took place the priests could turn the prediction about so as to make it appear to be fulfilled. But here, in the birth of Jesus Christ, the very village, the little town where he was to be born, is actually named eight hundred years before he is born. And was he born in Bethlehem? He was, just as it was predicted. Angels knew it would be so, and there was a midnight meeting of the angels and the shepherds at Bethlehem; and they went there and then, at midnight, to see that which was come to pass, the fulfilment of the Lord's blessed word, "You, Bethlehem-Ephrath, though you be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." And shall he be called out of Egypt? "Out of Egypt have I called my son." See the detail, the definition. Ah, he is to go into Egypt, and to be there, said the angel to Joseph and Mary, till I bring you word. And, so far from that overturning the Scriptures, it was essential to the fulfilling of the Scriptures. And was the Nazarene a type of Jesus Christ? and must he be a Nazarene, and even live in a place called Nazareth, in order to give a kind of literal as well as a spiritual fulfilment of the same? "When he [Joseph] heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there." They were obliged to go into the northern part of Canaan, and live at Nazareth, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene." Again, the destruction of the poor little infants by Herod, as you are aware, was predicted. Yes, time would fail to trace out the life of the dear and blest Redeemer; all the mockeries, all the cruelties, and all they should do to him, were definitely predicted, even the very piercing of his hands and feet. And what Christian does not admire the certainty of God's truth when he thinks of these two things: namely, what was done to Christ, and what was not done to Christ? First, what was done to Christ, I mean now in piercing his hands and his feet; then what was not done to Christ. Yet that that was not done in this department they intended to do. They came to break the legs of the two thieves, and of course they intended to treat the Savior the same. But "Pilate wondered that he was already dead;" and there was a scripture that said, "Not a bone of him shall be broken." Let us learn from this to trust our God in the least matter; to trust our God in particulars as well as in generalities; to

trust him with every hair of our heads, as it were; to trust him with every pain, with every care; to trust him with everything. He will never leave you, he will never forsake you, if you have a heart thus to serve and thus to honor him: for “the Scripture cannot be broken.” Nor is it right that I should pass by the next thing which they did do, and that which they could not do. They took him down from the cross, and they intended to put him into a malefactor’s grave, with of course the thieves. But no. Here comes prediction again. “He made his grave with the wicked,” by suffering himself to be crucified with the wicked; but “with the rich in his death.” He could not come to the malefactor’s grave. Here is a rich man, Joseph of Arimathea, goes in boldly unto Pilate and craves the body of Jesus, and laid it in his own new tomb, wherein man never lay. Therefore, while the Scriptures contain infinite mysteries, yet when we come to matters that pertain to our welfare, how definite they are! how close they are! And is Jesus Christ to rise after three days? See how it is fulfilled. Was he to reappear to his disciples? See how faithfully he did reappear. And was he to ascend to the right hand of God, as predicted in the 110th Psalm, as well as other scriptures of the Old Testament? See how it literally took place. And was the Holy Spirit to descend on the day of Pentecost? Did he not descend? Were thousands of Jews and of Gentiles to be brought to know the Lord? See how it was fulfilled. Read the Acts of the Apostles; there you will see the fulfilment of all these predictions, in relation on the one hand to the spread of the gospel, and on the other hand to the sufferings of the apostles and of Christians on behalf of the gospel. And did the Savior say, “Yes, the time comes, that whosoever kills you will think that he doe God service”? Oh, how all this came to pass! And then look for one moment at the fact that the Bible has been preserved to us, and will be preserved. It is the oldest book in the world, as well as the best book; the only book that can guide us safely in matters pertaining to our eternal welfare. And I am saying nothing now concerning the fulfilment of prediction in comparison of what might be said. For if I were to take nationalities, if I were to go back to the old empires, to Judea, and to the adjacent countries, I could easily show that they are at this very moment in the precise condition that God said they should be. And you will all think of the Jews, that they are scattered into all nations, just as Moses, 4,000 years ago, said they should be. Oh, how true is the Scripture! “The Scripture cannot be broken.” And do these same infallible records present us with anything in the shape of an eternal future? Oh, they do, they do! They present us with unmingled joy, that shall last to eternity, everlasting joy! Sorrow and sighing shall flee away. They present us with a resurrection of the body, and all that glory described in the 15th of 1st Corinthians. They present us with a kingdom that is everlasting, that cannot be moved. They reveal to us the great truth that our Creator, veiled in human nature, God incarnate, is to be our portion forever and forever. Ah, there is no disorder; Christ came into all our disorder, and has put that disorder away, and now we rejoice that while the heavens and the earth may pass away, yet the Holy Scriptures shall not pass away. I look back at the time when the Lord brought home the word to my soul, and though many clouds have come between my soul and that from that time yet the promise is still the same. “With everlasting kindness will I have mercy on you” that is mercy that lasts forever, “said Jehovah” that is a God that exists for ever, “said Jehovah, your redeemer,” and that redemption is eternal. Shall I come short of that? It is impossible, utterly impossible; there is no possibility of it, for “the Scripture cannot be broken.” The Lord said to Joshua, “As I was with Moses, so I will be with you.” Was the Lord with Moses to the end? Yes, say you, he was; and Moses natural force was not abated, neither was his eye dim, when the time came for him to depart. Was the Lord with Joshua to the end? Did Joshua ever apostatize? No; he was with him to the end. And so, as we have been reading, he will perfect that which concerns us. So much, then, though it is but little, for the certainty of the Scriptures.

I notice now, in the second place, *the general and special design of the Scriptures*. The general design of the Scriptures is the good of man. I speak now of its moral aspect, the good of man. Take the natural man. Is not that man the best member of society who takes the precepts of the Holy Scriptures for his guide? Is not that the happiest family where the Bible (supposing there is no grace in the hearts of the family, yet if there be a feeling of reverence for God and the Bible), where the Bible is revered and read, and somewhat thought of? Is not that the happiest nation where the Bible is revered? I believe it is. And before I enter into its design here, I will tell you one secret, one reason, why I am not so alarmed at Puseyism and Catholicism as some good people are. Indeed, I am scolded by some of my brethren; and they say, You have always manifested that callous sort of feeling, you do not seem at all alarmed. Well, I do not feel alarmed. Of course, I am as indignant against these systems as any man, for that matter; but there are reasons why I am not so alarmed for England as some are, and I will mention one or two of these reasons. One is because the Lord certainly has in this country a large number of people that would despise the thought of disbelieving in the Bible, and even that the Lord respects. And then another reason, too, is that he has in this country a larger number, I believe, of regenerated living souls, real Christians, than he has in any other country. "And then there is another thing which weighs considerably with me, and that is this, that not one country under the heavens that I am aware of, America has done something in that way, but no country under the heavens has done what England has in circulating the Holy Scriptures through the world, and in translating the Bible into one hundred and seventy, and, I believe, more than, that, languages. Now make me believe that here is a nation, the majority of whose people do revere the Bible; that here is a nation containing many thousands of real Christians; that here is a nation that was stirred up now more than sixty years ago, sixty-six years ago, because it was about the year 1801, I think, when the movement commenced, to carry the Bible to the heathen, and millions of Bibles have since then been circulated, and the work still goes on, make me believe that God is going to give such a nation as this up into the hands of a few contemptible Puseyites, of a few wretched Catholics! Why, it is the Protestants that make all the noise about Catholicism and Puseyism. Why, they go on, and dance their rounds, and wear their rags, and play their monkey tricks; you would never hear of them if you did not make a noise about them. But you can hardly take up a Protestant sermon or book now but it is full of allusions to the Puseyites and the Catholics. And what good does it do? If we could get at them and preach the truth to them, it would be a different thing. Let us go on, then, with the gospel, and not trouble ourselves about them. For these reasons, then, I am not so much concerned about old England in the shape of fear. Concerned I am in the way of prayer to God; but I do not believe that England has seen its best days yet. People go croaking and grunting about, why, if all were followers of Dr. Colenso, I should then indeed think our country was in a bad state, for there is not a greater infidel than that man is. He has been refuted over and over and over again. If all were such as that man is to set aside God's blessed word, I should fear for old England. But all the time the Bible is revered as it is, and all the time there are such a goodly number of Christians as there are, and all the time there is that love for the Scriptures, showing itself in the practical form of translating and circulating them in such vast numbers over the world, I believe old England is God's chosen land. May God bless the monarch, bless the royal family, bless the rulers, bless the people, and grant that the glorious gospel may yet abound more and more in our midst. Do not go croaking about and let the Puseyite rejoice that you are afraid of him. Are you afraid of a few frogs, a few worms, a few grasshoppers? Will God give up the nation? Never, until the nation becomes something very different from what it is. These are my reasons for confidence in God's mercy yet to continue

towards old England. Nevertheless, it is right we should be on the watch, and were they to attempt to touch our civil liberties, we would all then, as citizens of the country, rally round the throne in defense of those privileges.

But the special design of the Scriptures is the salvation of man. How long would it take to answer this question: suppose you were to take the Bible into a house where there had never been a Bible before, and you were to personify the Bible for a moment, and the man were to say to the Bible, What do you come here for? what do you come into my house for? It would take a long time to answer that question, taking the view of it that that Bible is designed by God's grace to be the means of that man's salvation. This Bible is come here, sir, to bring you forgiveness of all your sins. This Bible is come here, sir, to give you eternal life. This Bible is come here, sir, to bring you to God. This Bible is come here, sir, to pluck you from hell. This Bible is come here, sir, to deliver you from damnation. This Bible is come here, sir, to make you a son of the most high God; to make you an heir of eternal glory. This Bible is come here, sir, that you may read that your Father has willed for you an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fades not away; that he has willed for you an everlasting kingdom; that he has willed for you eternal glory; that he has willed for you unsearchable riches; that he has willed for you un-circumscribable freedom; that he has willed for you an infinity of joy, a glory and a blessedness beyond the power of human language to describe. And also that he has not only willed it for you, but he has described in this book how you are to come by it, that it is not by any money nor any price, it is not by any suffering, nor any merit, nor any desert, but simply by believing. And if you are led to believe what is here said concerning Jesus Christ, and the sweet promises of God by him, that faith will make you love the God that has given you such a faith, that has revealed to you such a prospect, that has willed you such a kingdom, that has shown you such mercy, that has manifested to you such favor, and will abide by you forever. And this book is to show you that all your afflictions and troubles, all your losses and your bereavements, shall, under his government, be a means of working out for you a far more exceeding and eternal freight of glory. Ah, who can understand or fully describe what was come to Zacchaeus when the Lord said unto him, "This day is salvation come to this house." Why, then, the Holy Spirit is come to this house; Christ is come to this house; God the Father is come to this house. Ah! what a happy day with us when this blessed book enlightened us, when salvation came to us! See, then, the glory of its design, the salvation of man, present salvation from this present evil world, present justification, present sanctification, present consecration to God, present communion with God, present walking with God, present glorifying God, and to be with him forever and forever. I look back, though that is no part of my salvation, and having mingled so many infirmities with my humble labors, I cannot in one sense take much comfort, yet I look back over the forty years that this has been my design. I can look back in the shades of night when no eye saw me but the Lord's, and say that this has been my object all through the forty years: the salvation of man, the salvation of the sinner, the salvation of the saint, to "endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." "The Scripture," upon this matter of salvation, "cannot be broken," for "they shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation, shall not be ashamed or confounded, world without end." And herein lies the glory of God. Some have said, I think the glory of God is the chief design. Now, friends, if I have not named that, I have named that by which the Lord is glorified. It is by showing forth the riches of his grace that he is glorified. It is by saving sinners that he is glorified. It is by showing mercy that he is glorified. It is by his people appreciating his mercy that he is glorified.

Therefore, it is that you cannot separate the glory of God from the welfare of the people, nor the welfare of the people from the glory of God.

But thirdly, the completeness of the Scriptures. And this settles Catholicism and Puseyism with me. "I testify unto every man," let him be great or small, rich or poor, every man "that hears the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book." So that the man is cursed that adds anything to the Scriptures. We own no authority but the Scriptures, God's own authority. "And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part" which he professes to have, it is only a profession, "out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." That denotes the completeness of the Scriptures. But is that the only scripture that speaks after that manner? I think not. If you go to the 4th chapter of Deuteronomy, Moses said, "You shall not add unto the word that I command you, neither shall you diminish ought from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God." "Add you not unto his words, lest he reprove you, and you be found" as you surely will be, "a liar." Now wherein lies the unlawfulness of keeping the Scriptures from the people? I mean, not merely the un-scripturalness of it, but the unlawfulness of it? It is a very mild term to use, because I would rather use soft words and hard arguments than I would use hard words and soft arguments. The unlawfulness of it stands thus. God comes to speak to men. One man steps out and says, God shall not speak to them, for he says some things not fit for them to hear. That is what they say of the Bible. He says some things they can't understand; he speaks in a way that will create, a great many sects and parties and diversities. Therefore, God shall not speak. I will speak in a more proper way than God can or than God will. I know what they can understand; God does not. I know what will reduce them to uniformity. Part of the Bible would not be fit for the common eye, and therefore God shall not speak to his creature, man; I will step in and add my traditions. What does the Savior say unto such? "Woe unto you! for you have taken away the key of knowledge" God's word; "you entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in you hindered." That is a very simple but a very solemn representation. That is the man of sin indeed; setting himself above God, making himself wiser than God; those are the locusts indeed that darken the air. They come in and say to God, No, O God, you do not know how to speak unto the people; I will speak to them myself.

This to "be continued in the next Sermon.