

# Here We Stand - the Bible Is the Word of God

by J. Glyn Owen

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*The Bible's unity, timelessness, and divine inspiration demonstrate its authority as the Word of God, speaking directly and savingly to people of all backgrounds and experiences.*

**Duration:** 58:37

**Scripture:** Genesis 3:15, Exodus 20:1-17, Psalm 119:105, Isaiah 53:5, Matthew 28:19-20, John 3:16, Romans 10:9

**Topics:** "Word Of God"

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## Description

In this sermon transcript, a Muslim member of the Nigerian House of Representatives shares his personal journey of coming to faith in Jesus Christ. He initially started reading the New Testament with his nine-year-old daughter to help her with her school studies. However, as he continued to read, the Spirit of God touched his heart and he eventually turned to Christ after months of seeking and struggling. The man emphasizes the timeless and powerful message of the Bible, which has the ability to speak to people of all backgrounds and experiences, from simple children to scholarly veterans. The sermon also highlights the providence of God in revealing His truth through scripture and the unity underlying the diverse authors and historical circumstances involved in its production.

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## Transcript

The cardinal tenets of the faith that you would expect to hear, but let me just remind you of them. One, the divine inspiration, integrity, and authority of the Bible. Two, the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Three, the need and efficiency of the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ for the redemption of the world. Four, the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in the work of redemption. Five, the divine institution and mission of the church.

Six, the broad and binding obligation resting upon the church for the evangelization of the world. Seven, the consummation of the kingdom in the appearing of the great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ. Now, no one who knows his Bible will argue with the fact that we have there at least seven of the main tenets of scripture, seven fundamental doctrines.

Some of us might want to add to them, I'm not sure. Certainly none of us who call ourselves reformed or evangelicals would want to take away from them. We might want to speak of them in language a little different, I don't know, but certainly we cannot quarrel with what is said here.

And I believe that we would want to be quite clear that at this junction in history, we are loyal to these fundamental tenets of our Christian faith. After all, they are all based upon and arise out of scripture. And they are consistent with our subordinate standards, which some of us are studying on Wednesday evenings at the present time.

Between now and Christmas, then, we shall proclaim these abiding platform of principles. I'd never come across that phrase before and I rather like it, so if I use it too often, well, you'll forgive me. Platform of principles.

We shall do so under the general title, Here We Stand. And tonight we look at the first of these, not using the precise language found in Dr. Fitch's book, but we shall just put it like this, here we stand. The Bible is the Word of God.

Now, I want to explain to you that my approach tonight is not the usual approach. I want to assume tonight that there is someone here who is only recently introduced to Christian things. Your background may have been religious, your background may even have been Christian.

But it is only in comparatively recent times that you have really come to grips with this book of God, as so many Christians refer to it. And you have begun seriously to read it. It may well be that you know something about its impact, its influence upon history, not only upon Christian thought, but upon ethics and morals and indeed upon the whole spectrum of human life in one way or another.

It is amazing how this book of God has influenced human life right down through the centuries. And I am assuming tonight that you are reading your Bible with your eyes open. And I want to invite you to look at some things which are evident before you are able to study the Bible in depth, before you were able to come to the point where, as a theologian, you can dig into the depths and compare this with something else and weigh the views of one person over against another.

I am assuming tonight that you are simply reading the scriptures and coming to look at them as objectively as you can. You have got your eyes open. And I want to point out certain things to you which in and of themselves do not necessarily prove that the Bible is the Word of God.

I want to make that quite clear at the beginning. But they show us that there is a valid case for considering that, and it may be on another occasion we shall take our reasoning much further than we shall take it tonight. But I'm taking this tack because I have discovered that there are so very many people in the Christian church who have never beheld the glories of Scripture, who've never seen anything of the magnificence of the wonder of the order of the Holy Book of God, and therefore are a little bit afraid, a little bit self-conscious.

When they hear the Bible criticized and they stand by the Bible, they're a little bit put off. Now what I want to do tonight is to prepare the way for a deeper study, a more thorough study, a more theological study, and promise you, God willing, that that will come in due course. Now, reading the Bible, what is the first thing that should strike us? Of course, by reading the Bible I mean something other than just picking up a few passages here and there.

It's amazing how many folk you meet even in a university, even in theological colleges sometimes. I know a man who spent 12 years studying theology and he said that he only read six books over the entire period. Six books of the Bible, I mean.

Assuming that we are reading the Scriptures, that we are taking it seriously as possibly the Word of God, possibly the only valid authority in matters of faith and conduct. That is the case which we shall make for it ultimately. Reading it then from this vantage point, what should we be seeing? Well, the first thing I want to point out is this.

One of the things that really, really shook me at an early stage in my Christian life, and I've never got over the shock, and I hope I never will. It's the amazing unity of the Bible. One might almost need to go so far as to say the miraculous unity of this book.

Now, first of all, let's just consider the bare fact. We need to establish the fact before we proceed to its significance, and this is not, of course, difficult to do. The thoughtful reader can't miss the way in which the Bible concludes with the same strong emphasis as that with which it opens.

I hope you've noticed that. It concludes as it opened with an amazingly strong emphasis upon the sheer, absolute sovereignty of the God whom it proclaims. In the very first chapter of the Bible, what we are introduced to is a God who is altogether sovereign over the creation.

He brings it into existence by the very word of his mouth, and what he ordains comes to pass, and nothing fails to come to pass that he ordained. There we see the sovereignty of God in the origin of creation. When you come to the end of the book of the Revelation, you see the same sovereignty of God, but now in relation to the destiny of creation.

His purposes are consummated, and everything that is out with his purpose is cast aside and cast aside forever until nothing remains but that which was in his mind and in his heart and in his purpose at the very beginning. So that you end in the book of the Revelation with the same image of the God of all creation as you had at the beginning, as one thing. The Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

Moreover, as creation emerged, its central characters featured in a garden, in a garden with a river, and alongside the river the tree of life. When you come to the last book of the Bible, you will find that the same features appear in the heart of the now city foursquare described in Revelations 21 and 22. But something very remarkable has taken place.

The garden has become a city which also has the character of a garden. Running through the very center of the city is a river, and alongside of the river there are trees that bear their fruit, season after season, unremittingly and constantly. So as you started in a garden, so you end in a garden with a difference.

Again, whereas that early paradise with which history began was marred and lost, according to the intervening record, it has been regained. Regained by the time we come to the conclusion of the Bible, and the regained paradise is safeguarded henceforth from anything akin to the tragedy of Eden ever taking place again. Not the defileth shall ever, ever, ever enter in.

There will be no sin in the garden city. Binding together the book of Genesis and the book of Revelation, and linking every intervening book in the entire library of Scripture, is the record of the seed of the woman that was announced in the book of Genesis. And if you have just a little imagination, you can see it.

This is a thread that binds together every single book of Scripture. The seed of the woman whose coming redeems the situation. Scripture presents him in a myriad ways, in promise and in type and in symbol.

Then the promise is fulfilled. In his eventual appearance on the stage of human life, he bore our sins in his body to the tree. He wrought redemption.

And the remainder of Scripture looks back upon that fact of history, looks back upon that historic appearance and its accomplishment, while recognizing his continued presence by his Holy Spirit still with his people. I have used this analogy somewhere before, and it may well have been here in Knox, I don't know. But I've used it because it helped me so much at an earlier stage in my life.

In the United Kingdom, the BBC every week publish something to what we have here in Canada, but the whole picture doesn't apply over here. The BBC publishes what they call Radio Times. And in the Radio Times, you have a record, you have a forecast of everything that is going to happen on the radio and on the television, on the BBC throughout the coming week.

And all the details are there in the Radio Times, with some other things, of course. So if, for example, the Prime Minister is going to speak at a certain time, you know from Radio Times he's going to be speaking and you switch that knob on and you hear that's the event. But now, what we don't have here as far as I know, I hope it doesn't show my sheer ignorance, we don't have anything here that is quite comparable to what the English called the listener.

The BBC published the following week after the event, the listener. You say, what's the listener? Well, in the listener, you have a record of what was said by so-and-so when he appeared, according to the Radio Times on such-and-such a day. And so if the Prime Minister spoke and they think that his speech was worthy of record at any rate, they will most certainly have it in.

Now, what I want you to notice is this. There you have three related aspects of one particular event. You have it forecast.

The Prime Minister, shall we say, is going to speak at nine o'clock on a Tuesday night. Then at nine o'clock on the Tuesday night, you have the event. Then come next week, you have that event recorded in the listener.

Now, this is oversimplifying things and I'm very well aware of that. But forget about that for a moment. There is a general truth in it.

That's what the Bible is. In the Old Testament Scriptures, we have something equivalent to the Radio Times. The main purpose of the Old Testament being to introduce onto the scene, to the stage of human history, the incarnate Lord of all the ages, the Son of God, the Messiah.

Then came the event. That's what we read of in the Gospels. In Bethlehem of Judea, according to the prophets, the great event and the life of Christ lasting for three years or so, ending in his death.

You have the great event taking place, recorded in the Gospels. Then when you come to the book of the Acts and the Epistles, you have the apostles looking back upon the event. It's the listener.

It's the record of it all, seen now from the vantage point of fulfillment and the enabling of the Spirit to understand what it all meant. Moreover, all the writers of Scripture write of the one and only God. You know, that is very significant.

Considering the distance in time, considering the age, the span of time between the writer of the first book of the Bible and the last book of the Bible, it's nothing short of the miraculous. That both of them should speak about the same God and speak about the same God in such terms that you recognize him to be the one and the same. All the writers of Scripture write of the one and only God.

They trace the ills of man to the same ultimate source, and they point to the one and only way of salvation, which is by in the provision of a gracious God. That's the kind of unity we have here. Professor F.F. Bruce has written, any part of the human body can only be properly explained in reference to the whole body.

And any part of the Bible can only be properly explained in reference to the whole corpus. What if you came across a human hand and you'd never seen a human body? Well, the thing is monstrous. That couldn't have happened.

But what would you make of a human hand if you didn't know something about the human body? You need the human body in order to fit the hand onto it. It belongs to a corpus. And all Scripture belongs to a body, like the bones and the limbs of the human body.

So much for the simple fact of biblical unity. Now, just a moment or two concerning the significance of the fact. The Bible, you have noticed if you read it carefully, the Bible is a library of 66 separate books.

Now, to have the obvious marks of unity within any one book is quite a feat. To have 66 separate books thus linked together is something altogether out of this world. Humanly speaking, such a thing would not be possible without the most stringent editorial directions and control.

And yet here we have it. Now, that isn't the end of the story. This library of 66 books is the product of a variety of human authors located in a variety of historical periods and otherwise diverse circumstances.

First of all, over 40 writers were involved in this, in the writing of the Bible. Those 40 or so writers comprised men from a whole variety of social situations. Included among them are kings and peasants, scholars and untutored, statesmen and herdsmen, a soldier and a physician, a baker and a fisherman, Jews and Gentiles, old and young.

Moreover, the cultural background of some of these human writers were wholly diverse, almost antithetical in certain respects, and conflicting in their ideas and ideologies. You remember that Moses, though a Jew, was brought up in an Egyptian setting until he was a boy of 40 years of age. You remember that Daniel spent many of his formative years in Babylon.

You remember that in the Bible we find writers, and it is not adequate to say that they were simply Jewish. They represent so many segments of Jewish belief and of Jewish non-belief or unbelief, or the various shades of beliefs among Jewry. Those 40 or so writers of differing social status and cultural backgrounds spoke in three different languages, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.

Moreover, their writings emerged over a period of somewhere around 1,400 years, so that in the most cases they never knew one another. They could not be conversant with each other's contribution. They did not know that their writing was to be part of a library at all.

And the writer of the first book died over a thousand years before the writer of the last book was born. That library of 66 books comprising the works of over 40 authors who differed so greatly deals with matters which are invariably dividing men and women in every age, such as the nature of God. Men are divided

about this in the 20th century, and they have been in every century.

His will and his demands upon his creatures, what is right and what is wrong, the fate of the guilty, the way of salvation, all these are major issues, and you'll find people prepared to fight to the death about these issues. And all these writers over 1,400 years speak about these things and speak about them fundamentally with one mind. How come? How come? Finally, the writings themselves represent a whole variety of literary types.

May I quote again from F. F. Bruce? They include history and law and law of many kinds, civil law, criminal law, ethical law, ritual law, sanitary law, then religious poetry, didactic treatises, lyric poetry, parable and allegory, biography, personal correspondence, personal memoirs and diaries, in addition to the distinctly biblical types of prophecy and apocalyptic. For all that, says F. F. Bruce, the Bible is not simply an anthology. There is a unity which binds the whole together.

An anthology is compiled by an anthologist, but no anthologist compiled the Bible, and yet you have this amazing unity. And one would swear that there are many theological teachers in our theological colleges that have never seen this, never seen it, or they're keeping the secret very much to themselves. Whence came this obvious element in the Word of God? In the nature of the case, there was no committee who drew up the plans, and there was no editor to see the business through over 1,400 years.

You didn't have a committee of the Presbyterian Church. I'm sure the Presbyterian Church would have sent a committee if somebody'd asked them, but no one asked them. We've got plenty of committees.

As well expect an explosion in a printer's shop, as someone has said, to result in the compilation of a book on medicine, as expect this kind of book to emerge without some overruling intelligence. But here we have it. So that you and I can worship the one true God as He is revealed in the first chapter of the book of Genesis, and again as He is revealed in the last chapter in the book of Revelation.

How can we do it? Because God is the one in charge. He presents the truth. He reveals.

He discloses. And He undertakes to lead these several individuals in the way of His will, to write His truth, and to have it inscripturated for your profit and mine, and the ages of time as long as time shall last. Let me repeat.

The significance of the unity underlying Scripture, and emerging from the joint production of such a variety of people in such a variety of historical circumstances, and put into such a multiplicity of literary types over such a prolonged period of years, without the aid of an organizing and overseeing editor, is evident to any fair-minded person. There could be no human oversight. There must have been a divine.

That is the only satisfying explanation to the reason. Now that's one thing I wanted to say, and I hope it elicits from your every heart some sense of the wonder of the truth, though I'm only dealing with a segment of it. Now the next thing I would like a newcomer to these things to notice is the timelessness of the message of the Bible, the timelessness of its message.

Let us put it like this. The primary message of the Bible is timeless. In the light of what we have already noted in the course of our remarks to this point, it should not now appear improper or inappropriate to refer to the Bible's one message.

We've spoken of its unity. This entire library of 66 books is the stage upon which God reveals himself as Creator, Preserver, Judge, and Savior, and from which he addresses man with a word of grace and mercy. The perspective varies from the Old Testament to the New, but the message is the same.

And those who receive it and come to obey its commands are united into a body, a community of people, from Abel to Stephen, or if you like, from Abram to ourselves. Now a few positive statements may help spell out this one very important fact concerning the timeless message of the book of God. The Bible is timeless, or its message is timeless, in that its message is relevant to and is proved as God's redeeming word by people of every age.

The Bible's understanding of man is not an understanding of man as belonging to any given age in history, but it is an understanding of man as man and is true of man in every age. So too is its message of salvation. Not a message of salvation to man in just one age or two ages of history, but in every age.

Its message is timeless. Now the more you think about it, the more remarkable this will appear. You see, the same book, the Bible, speaks directly and savingly to a simple child and to a scholarly and experienced veteran of many years.

Now since I was meditating upon this during the course of the week, it's amazing how in the providence of God you hear about things. And I have heard of two distinct conversions. The one is the case of a young girl of approximately seven years of age who was reading a page of a New Testament that a friend of hers had brought to school.

And when she read this page, which included John 3, 1 to 16 or so, when she had read this page she turned to her friend and she said, what's all that about? I've never read anything like that before. And the girl says to her what it was. And the little girl could explain to her that Jesus was God's Son and had come to be the Savior, and that you have to open your heart and receive him in.

And here is a little girl of seven, having read the scriptures under the ministry of the Spirit of God, opening up like a flower to the rising sun. And then, believe it in the providence of God, I read this. People send their ministers some strange magazines from time to time.

I won't tell you what this is, but there are some good things in it. A Muslim member of the Nigerian House of Representatives in Lagos, Nigeria, has a nine-year-old daughter. In order to help her with her school studies, he found himself reading the New Testament with her.

The Spirit of God took a verse of scripture and applied it directly to the man. Night after night, for some six months, he sought and struggled until eventually on his knees he turned to Christ. Then he wrote what had happened, and now this is his statement.

I have just received Jesus Christ into my heart and life, and I want to tell you something. If you had come to preach the gospel to me face to face, you would never have converted me. I would have out-argued you every time.

But through the innocent hands of my little girl, there came into my home this printed word, and into his heart came the Savior. Oh, amazingly thrilling truth this. You see, we are living in an age when people tell you that the same books can't speak to folk once they turn 21 and the people who are younger.

When you come to Sunday school, you have to have everything graded, and so graded that it's very difficult to keep up with it. I'm sure this is largely machinated by people who want to dish out literature on us. You almost need to be a specialist in a particular age today before you are allowed to say anything that is accepted as meaningful to any section of society.

And you can't speak to two areas of society at one and the same time. You need to be an expert. Here is the book of God that confounds our canons and our dimensions, and it saves a little girl of seven and a lawyer in the House of Representatives in Nigeria, sophisticated and proud, a Muslim.

Whence came this power? Whence has it arrived? Where did you get it from? How does it emerge? Well, there is only one answer that I know of, and that is this. Somehow or other, God is in this book. He bleats over our age barriers and dismisses them as irrelevant and says, I will speak to this girl.

I will save that man. God uses his word. The Bible is timeless also in that it addresses folk in every age, in every conceivable human circumstance and mood, performing its distinctively appointed ministry, irrespective of all.

Oh, the mood of people. We know a little bit more today about people's moods than we ever did. The thinking and emotions of children, the sometimes turbulent experiences of adolescence, and the peculiar features of every stage of life are nowadays fairly widely known, or at least we have literature covering every phase and every facet.

But you know, the Bible preached those things as if they're unnecessary. And this word of God comes to a man that is downcast, lost in his moods, as well as to the man who's on the top of a hill. I listened to someone on a Billy Graham program, it must be about a few months ago, some of you may have heard it, a man who apparently had everything.

He spoke of his wealth, he spoke of his homes, he spoke of his automobiles, he spoke of what he was able to do in society, and he seemed to have every conceivable thing that the human heart could itch for. And then when he made a total, he said, I had nothing. But Christ saved him.

A word of scripture, one text from the lips of Billy Graham in one of his services, one solitary text got home like a shaft from the unseen and humbled him and pricked his bubble and he saw himself and saw the Savior. On the other hand, I was hearing last night of someone whom I counseled just a few months ago, ere he left this city and its restlessness and went across the seas on himself alone in his own boat, whose boat has come to the end of its life on the high seas and who himself has been just rescued, and in the midst of it all has found God. How? My dear friends, it's this amazing word of God.

It's alive. It's alive. And let me ask another question.

Some of its more general statements are evidently not the product of the thinking of this age, and I could add quite a lot to that, but perhaps I ought to come on to this. I ought to speak a word about the miracle of its preservation. I'm afraid that there are many people in our churches today that really don't know the real miracle of the Bible's preservation through history.

I will confess that it was quite an eye-opener to me to read this aspect of things, and I have by no means all the facts at my fingertips, but I have enough to make me stand back with a sense of awe and wonder at the intervention of God on behalf of this book. Again, you need no theological qualification to gain the general picture of the remarkable story of the Bible's preservation through the ravages of time. The Bible's

preservation through the ravages of time.

What is preserved? What is preserved? When we say that the Bible has been preserved, what do we mean? I wonder what you mean when you say that we've got the Bible, or somebody else when he would use the words that I have used tonight. The Bible is preserved. Do you know the wealth of manuscripts that we have underlying our Bible tonight? If we did know these facts, some of us would no more be cowed by liberals and humanists who chase us.

One scholar in his book on the introduction to the textual criticism of the New Testament went on record in these words, there are some 8,000 manuscripts of the Latin Vulgate alone, and at least 1,000 for the other early versions. Add over 4,000 Greek manuscripts, and we have 13,000 manuscript copies of portions of the New Testament. Besides all this, much of the New Testament can be reproduced from quotations of the early Christian writers.

Now, this is something that Christian people do not normally appreciate. Perhaps they've never been told about it, nor need to discuss it. But let me say it tonight, because it needs to be said.

With reference to the last sentence there, a New Testament scholar, J. Harold Greenlee, writing in his book *The Introduction to the New Testament Textual Criticism*, says this. The New Testament, he says, could virtually be reconstructed from quotations in the Fathers and in other writings without any use of the New Testament manuscripts. What's he saying? What he's saying is this.

Not only do we have the vast 13,000 manuscripts to which he refers, but he says we have the New Testament quoted in other books and by other writers of the early ages of our Christian era, and so quoted that we could actually reconstruct the whole of the New Testament without going back to the manuscripts. According to John Warwick Montgomery in his book *History and Christianity*, I quote, to be skeptical of the resultant text of the New Testament is to allow all of classical antiquity to slip into obscurity, for no documents of the ancient period are as well attested bibliographically as the New Testament. One other scholar has pinpointed something that I feel I must quote to you.

He adds his considerable testimony as to the extent and accuracy of such manuscripts as have come down to us, and this is something that I think we Christian people need to hear. Jews preserved their manuscripts as no other manuscript has ever been preserved. With their Massora, Parva, Magna, and Finalis, different kinds of writers with different qualifications and abilities, they kept tabs.

Now listen to this. They kept tabs on every letter, every syllable, every word, and every paragraph. They had special classes of men within their culture whose sole duty was to preserve and transmit these documents with practically perfect fidelity.

Scribes, lawyers, Masorettes, whoever asks Bernard Ramm, whoever counted the letters and the syllables and words of Plato or Aristotle, Cicero or Seneca or Shakespeare for that matter, whoever counted the number of syllables on any one page written by Shakespeare, no one. But when these holy men of God were dealing with the book of God and the manuscripts of scripture, they counted the syllables across and downwards and made sure that when they came to the end of the page, they had them all in. This is something, this is something, and you may believe that I'm exaggerating, this is something I am given to understand is wholly unique in the history of civilization.

We therefore have such a wealth of good textual attestation for our New Testament that it is wholly unique in this respect with no rival among ancient literature. To quote Dr. F. J. A. Hort, in the variety and fullness of the evidence on which it rests, the text of the New Testament stands absolutely and unapproachably alone amongst ancient prose writings. Now the next question is this, what has it been preserved through? Granted that we have over 13,000 such manuscripts to which we can turn to make sure that they say the same thing and therefore that we have the real word of God in our hands, what has all this been preserved through? First of all, political and social attacks.

These have varied from ancient Roman persecution and its consequences to medieval burning of Bibles and burning of Bible readers by the Roman church and to later Nazi and communist deeds. In 303 A.D., the Roman Emperor Diocletian inaugurated what may be the most dreadful onslaught in history upon a book, one book, the Bible. Every Bible was then claimed to be destroyed and countless possessors of Scripture were brutally massacred for no other offense than the fact that they had been caught in possession of a Bible.

A so-called column of triumph was erected over the rubble of the burnt Bibles and an inscription was written, *Extinctum nomine Christianorum*, the name of the Christians has become extinguished. The medieval persecution of Bible readers is too well known to require elucidation. The history of the Inquisition needs no retelling, nor the dastardly deeds of Hitler and the communist overlords of this modern world.

Political and social attacks, philosophical and other critical attacks. May I quote to you here, John W. Lee quotes Dr. H. L. Hastings, the editor of the renowned Dictionary of the Bible. He quotes him in these words, and I think I will quote it to you rather than just give it substance.

Dr. Hastings, who was no mean scholar, wrote these words, and I think they deserve to be indelibly written in our hearts. Infidels for 1800 years have been refuting and overthrowing this book, and yet it stands today as solid as a rock. Its circulation is increasing, and it is more loved and cherished and read today than ever before.

Infidels, with all their assaults, make about as much impression on this book as a man with a tack hammer would on the pyramids of Egypt. When the French monarch proposed the persecution of the Christians in his dominion, an old statesman and warrior said to him, Sire, the church of God is an anvil that has worn out many hammers. So the hammers of infidels have been pecking away at the book of the ages, but the hammers are worn out and the anvil still endures.

If this book had not been the book of God, men would have destroyed it long ago. Emperors and popes, kings and priests, princes and rulers have all in one way or another tried their hand at it. They die, and the book still lives.

Now, this is true. Celsus tried this kind of thing with the brilliance of his intellect. You historians will know about that.

Porphyry with his philosophy, and Lucian with his mastery of the art or ignoble art of ridicule. Down the ages, men like Harnack and Velaz and Bultman and Tillich, a whole host of them, right down to today, have tried some means or other of denigrating the authority or the glory or the wonder of the book of God. In consequence, the book has been chopped up into bits and pieces.

It has been analyzed and it has been dissected under the most rigorous circumstances, and its reliability and authority has been challenged in all quarters. In fact, its death knell has been sounded over and over again and the funeral arrangements have been made for it. But the smitten book rises from the dead.

It won't lie dead. Within a quarter of a century of Diocletian's bitter attack upon the Christians and their Bible, you know there was an emperor in Rome, Constantine, who acknowledged Jesus as the son of God and who had his name written on the banner of the empire. Within 50 years of Voltaire's prediction that in less than 100 years from his time, you'd only be able to find the Bible in a museum.

Within 50 years, I say, the Swiss Bible Society were housed in his own home and using his press to turn out Bibles in Europe. The mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small. The God of our Bible is a sovereign God, and that must bring me to a close.

But in coming to a close, I want to say this. There is so much more that could be said. You see, this is only a kind of introduction to something else.

But in the passage that I read tonight, I want you to notice a few words. From a child, says Paul to Timothy, you have known the holy scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Now, my friends, this is the most wonderful thing of all.

Here am I in my misery and my ignorance and my guilt. Where am I going to have help from? Where am I going to? Who's going to tell me the way out? I feel myself to be lost. My conscience worries me.

My past comes ever before me, and I don't know what to do with it. I look at my hands like Lady Macbeth and I see blood. Who can take this guilt away from me? I only know one book that deals radically and effectively with the subject, and it's this mighty book of God.

And somehow or other, from Genesis to Revelation, there are highways and byways that all lead me to the Lamb that was promised in the old, came in the fullness of time, and all the New Testament point back to him as the bearer away of sin. And I hear him say even to me, Son, your sins are forgiven you. This book makes men wise unto, it prepares them for, and it leads them into possession of salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And this brings us into an entirely new plane now. When once we have known this and we have found this salvation for ourselves, now we start on an entirely new footing. We look at the Bible differently.

We will begin to see its glory. We will begin to discover how it is a kind of spiritual atlas that directs our goings. It is food for our souls.

It is a lamp for our feet. It is a hammer that needs to break us sometimes. And it is honey for our souls and bread from heaven.

Here we stand. Here I stand. The Bible is not a word about God.

There are plenty of words about God that purport to be. They may be very faulty. Some of them are.

This is the only deputy for the deity in a world that needs authority in matters spiritual and moral. What this book says, Jesus attests, God says. Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift, his glorious Son to be our Savior.

And as gift of the Father and of the Son to those who receive the Savior, the outpoured spirit into our hearts, and as the further gift of the outpoured spirit, the written scriptures. Holy men of God spake and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Let us pray.

Our Heavenly Father, we have to ask you to forgive us that we do not spend more time in appreciation of the things you have done for us. In the realm of nature, you have placed us in such wonderful circumstances. The beauty unspeakable that is around us at this season of the year, it ought to make us dance with joy and gladness and gratitude.

But especially in this sense, you have not only given us the word of your knowledge, the knowledge of yourself in nature and in our consciences, but you've given us who have fallen short and have suppressed that knowledge, you have given us the knowledge of yourself in your holy word. Oh, our God, enable us to receive its message and to obey its precepts and so to know you, the author of it, that walking in fellowship with you in this life we may know that nothing can separate as we pass over the borderland into a territory that has yet we have not seen. Abide with us as we leave your sanctuary tonight and may some of these blessed truths about your word pursue us, wringing praise and joy and faith out of our stony hearts, making it impossible for men to make fools of us.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

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