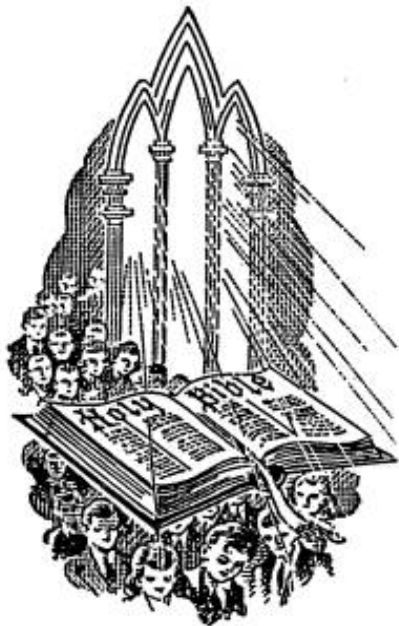


LESSON 2

THE DEPENDABILITY OF THE BIBLE

Scripture Texts: *John 5:45-47; 1 Corinthians 15:4-5; Acts 17:2; John 2:22*

The dependability of the Bible involves at least three things—its genuineness, its integrity, and its inspiration. In this lesson we will discuss its genuineness and integrity, leaving the discussion of its inspiration for a future lesson.

The genuineness of the Bible has to do with its authorship. The integrity of the Bible has to do with the preservation of the reading without alteration. Does the Bible of today read as it did when first written?

MEMORY VERSE: *"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."*

Matthew 24:35

The Genuineness of the New Testament

The Bible exists today in the English language in many translations, chief among which is the King James Version. Earlier English versions made during the Reformation period include Tyndale's Version, which was first published in 1525. Tyndale was influenced by Luther's German version. Coverdale's Translation, published in 1535 was the first English Bible permitted to be published in England. The Geneva Bible was the most popular English Bible until the King James Version appeared. The earliest translation of the complete Bible in English was made by Wycliffe in 1380. As printing was unknown in Europe at that time, only handwritten copies were made. A few of these still exist.

Emperor Diocletian, in A.D. 302, ordered all copies of the Bible destroyed. A few copies escaped destruction and Emperor Constantine ordered fifty new copies made. Thus, we know that the Bible existed before A.D. 300, for Diocletian could not have ordered its destruction before it existed.

Jesus declares that Moses wrote about Him, and He accused the Jews who would not believe in Him of not believing the writings of Moses. This statement of Jesus must be understood as ascribing the authorship of the first five books of the Bible to Moses. Christ many times quoted authority recognized by the Jews and placed over against it His own "I say unto you." Matthew 5:38-39 is one example of this.

The disciples found the words of Christ to harmonize with the words of the Old Testament. Christ's words were the message the disciples taught, which message they regarded as fulfilling the more spiritual teachings of the Old Testament. To sum up the whole matter, the Bible has been tried and proven to be true and genuine by millions, down through the ages. Who can doubt that it has proven to be the inspired Word of God?

The Genuineness of the Old Testament

The teachings of the Old Testament and the New Testament fit together as hand in glove. Paul enforced his preaching by the Old Testament. The central theme of Paul's preaching was the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. All of this he claimed was "according to the scriptures." This Paul accepted the authority of the Old Testament and found in it the evidence with which to support the Christian message. The Old Testament was all that the early Apostles had to preach from. In Acts 17:2 Paul took the Jews' own Scriptures and showed them to be in harmony with the Gospel he preached. Jesus and the disciples quoted freely from these Old Testament books. They were divided into three parts—the Law, the Prophets, and the Sacred Writings.

The Integrity of the Scriptures

The integrity of the Scriptures can be determined largely by examining completely the evidence taking place in them and by putting them to the test. None of us can be sure that the translators and copyists did not make some errors in making the change over into English, but we have many lines of evidence that support the Bible's reliability. Christ recognized the Scriptures as the voice of God spoken through earthen vessels. Should not we recognize this truth also?

Just a Thought

"We live in an age of guided missiles and misguided men."

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
It is revised and posted here with written permission from (c)
Bible Paths Publication, PO Box 299, Keithville, LA 71047