

The Truth About God And The Bible

By Bro. Robert Roberts

CONTENTS

I. IS THERE A GOD?

Introduction

CHAPTER I. The Answer of Commonsense

CHAPTER II. The Answer of Science

CHAPTER III. The Answer of History

II. WHAT ARE WE TO THINK OF THE BIBLE?

CHAPTER IV. The Bible Reveals God

CHAPTER V. What Christ Thinks

CHAPTER VI. The Bible And Science

CHAPTER VII. The Bible And Human Nature

CHAPTER VIII. "The Lord Alone Exalted"

CHAPTER IX. No Hero-Worship

CHAPTER X. A Nation That Changed Its God

CHAPTER XI. The Purpose of God

CHAPTER XII. Perfect Candour Of The Bible

CHAPTER XIII. "That They Should Seek The Lord" (Acts 17:27)

The Truth About God And The Bible

By Robert Roberts

Introduction

I. IS THERE A GOD?

No subject comes near this in the immensity of the issues involved. The conclusion we may come to is very practical in its influence, whether we consider the principles on which we regulate our present lives, or the hopes and cravings with which we instinctively contemplate the limitless future of time. Other themes exhaust themselves in the short life we now live, beginning in the feebleness of the cradle and ending in the decay of all our powers, and our inevitable disappearance in the silence and oblivion of the grave. This goes forward and links itself with the universe and the everlasting.

The man who says there is no God cuts himself away from the elevating power that comes with reverence for the eternal, and from the sunshine that comes into the darkness of human life with hope of a better state. He may not be aware of the injury that comes from his denial, nor in the moment of polemic heat can he be expected to admit it; but the effect works itself out with the slow, but inexorable, persistence and irresistible power of a law of nature.

In times of private crisis, that come to every man sooner or later -- in times of calamity, times of disease and solitude and weakness, and it may be desertion -- the quenching and desolating power of unbelief makes itself felt in the innermost soul.

In times of public turmoil it becomes a menace to the safety of society, as the leaders of the French Revolution found out over 100 years ago, and at last were led to say if there were no God it would be necessary to invent one.

What do we mean by God? It is impossible in a single sentence to express all the significance of the glorious idea, but for present purposes it may be said that by God we mean a conscious Being possessed of intelligence and organising energy sufficient to produce and sustain the system of nature as we see it, and of which we ourselves form a part. Is there such a Being? Or is the universe the chance evolution of fermenting elements destitute of the power of intelligent contrivance for present ends, or of the capacity to form plans of beneficence for the future?

Three great lines of evidence converge upon a decisive answer in the affirmative to the first question. These are:

1. The intuitions of commonsense.
2. The necessity arising out of the inductions of science. And
3. Most powerful of all, the answer furnished by actual occurrences in the history of mankind.

Next: [CHAPTER 1: The Answer of Commonsense](#)

The Truth About God And The Bible

By Robert Roberts

Chapter 1: The Answer of Commonsense

Commonsense may be defined as that faculty of receiving impressions of truth which may dimly see a conclusion without being able to formulate the reasons out of which it arises, and of roughly discerning a fact without knowing the foundation on which the fact stands.

It may be illustrated by the case of gravitation. The commonest man has a correct sense of the action of gravitation, though he may not know it as gravitation. He knows that a stone pushed over a hill side will go crashing into the valley beneath, though he is unaware that the occurrence is due to the action of a universal law by which bodies in space attract each other. He has a correct appreciation of the value of fresh air, though he may not be aware that its necessity arises from the constant combustion of oxygen that goes on in confined places, where living lungs are breathing. So in this matter. He has an intuitive conviction that things in general have had a Maker, without knowing why he holds this.

For these impressions of commonsense there is in all cases a reason that can be seen and stated.

When we look into the causes of the feeling that the universe has had a Maker, we discover reasons for the answer that there is a God. Critical analysis says there is a God, because there must be one, as a necessary conclusion from the facts which roughly impress commonsense with that conviction.

First, looking at the earth, it has not always existed; so also concerning the sun, moon, and stars. Now, if they have not always existed, there must have been a time when they commenced to exist. When we go back to that time we have to face the question, "Why did they begin to exist then and not ages before?" If there was nothing but unintelligent, blind force in space before that time, it could have no more power to begin to work then than it had a hundred millions of years earlier. If it began to stir then, something must have stirred it. What was this ?

It was something extra to its former passiveness and immobility. It was intelligence and power that began to stir it, for the work done was wise work and stupendous work. We are shut up to the conclusion that power possessing intelligence came upon the scene at that time. It is a mathematical necessity, for if there is one conclusion more firmly established by the investigations of science in modern times than another, it is that no effect can take place without an efficient cause operating before it. Power possessing intelligence is God, irrespective of other elements of truth in the case. Power possessing intelligence began to

work when the universe passed from chaos to order. Consequently, the answer of common sense is supported by what may be called the philosophy of the case.

When we look at matters of detail, the answer is greatly strengthened. Intention is manifest in every department of nature. If this is a fact, then the power that formed nature must be an intelligent, conscious power, for it is inconceivable that blind, elementary forces could form an intention. As soon as intention is admitted, God is recognised. Now, that intention is indicated in the constitution of nature must be allowed, when we consider the power of every plant and animal to reproduce itself. Here is the reflex of a purpose, that the various species of life shall be perpetuated.

The existence of living creatures at all is a proof of the existence in the universe of a contriving power of superb wisdom and power, in view of the amount of contrivance -- mechanical, chemical and dynamical -- necessary to produce it. The meanest creature is a mechanism on which the impress of the highest contriving intelligence is stamped. The wing of a bird is a masterpiece of contrivance in all its parts, to accomplish the traversing of the air. Man's own organisation is the standing proof of a master's power, when we consider the adjustment of his frame to give him graceful locomotion -- the ball and socket insertion of his limbs -- the leverage of the bones of his arm under a system of pulleys and contracting ligaments the exact construction of the foot to give power to bear weight with grace of form -- especially when we consider *the power of self renewal* of every part of the body by the action of the blood vessels, and above all, the perfect chemistry of that wonderful organ, the stomach, in which an acrid fluid is generated, with power to dissolve the food without dissolving the stomach, and which yet possesses that terrific strength, that if a single drop of it escape through some accidental perforation of the stomach, it means death.

But none of these things can compare in inductive force with the fact that every creature is endowed with a mechanism contrived to work the daily miracle of reproduction. All other powers and faculties are for the creatures' own use, but the capacity for reproduction points to futurity alone. It is not essential to the individual life of plant or animal; it is only essential to secure that its own sort shall be continued. It is a provision to secure the perpetuation of species. Can this be the arrangement of blind, unintelligent force? It is the manifest arrangement of intention. If blind force can exercise intention, then does it cease to be what men mean by that; and if the works and arrangements of intention can be performed without any intention, then is an intentionless and God-lacking universe a greater miracle than the miracle of a wisely-made universe, coming from the hands of a wise and eternal Creator; and then is the credulity of the faith of God-rejecters much greater than the faith entertained by God-believers.

Consider the case of the common hen's egg. All eggs come from hens and all hens come from eggs. No man ever ate a hen's egg that was not laid by a hen, and no man ever knew of a hen that was not hatched from an egg. Now, the curious question is this, "Which was

first, the hen or the egg?" It matters not which it was; here is the difficulty: the first hen or the first egg must have been made. If you say: No, the first hen or the first egg came into existence of itself, then you are unscientific or unpractical. You ask us to believe in a thing happening that never happens now, and a thing contrary to all present known experience and truth -- viz. that nothing happens and that nothing occurs outside the laws of nature without efficient cause. The first hen or the first egg must have had efficient cause. To produce a clever thing requires cleverness. What more clever than to make an egg that would produce a hen, or a hen that would produce an egg? Therefore, the power that produced the first egg or the first hen must have been a wise power -- that is, God.

The same argument applies to a thousand other matters. Consider the case of instinct. All manner of creatures perform, without knowledge, actions requiring the most intimate knowledge of physical and physiological laws, and even in some cases knowledge of the mental qualities and dispositions of other animals. But where is the knowledge that knew the facts, and bestowed the gift? The gift is genetal, innate, and wholly independent of experience. How do we account for it? It cannot be accounted for by experience, for it is independent of all experience. The young dipper that has never seen the water dives and swims with perfect ease." The youngest chick knows a hawk, and the dreadful form fills it with instant terror," though it had never seen it before. The newly-fledged merganser escapes peril when man or beast is near by a manœuvre suitable only to the young, and not to the parent bird. The newly-hatched chick pecks corn. The working bees go to work with perfect architectural skill as soon as they issue from the comb. It would be a manifest absurdity to attribute the knowledge on which these instincts are based to the creatures themselves, for they show instinct before they have had opportunity of acquiring it by any kind of experience. To say it is acquired by "heredity" is only a convenient way of evading the issue, for heredity itself is as great a mystery as instinct; and even if there was evidence of the operation of heredity it would not help the difficulty, because the evidence goes to show that instinct of every kind, from the lowest to the highest forms of organisation, has been the same from the beginning, as far as knowledge can be traced. Nothing has been done by heredity except to hand down the same instinct by the wonderful law of reproduction already noticed.

Considering all these things as effects which must have had a cause equal to their production, we are bound to endorse the verdict of commonsense, and to say, -- Yes, there is -- there must be -- a Being in the universe possessing the wonderful wisdom and power shown in the construction of the system of Nature in which we live."

The Truth About God And The Bible

By Robert Roberts

Chapter 2: The Answer of Science

When we turn to science, we address ourselves to a department of knowledge of which three things are often assumed that are not true:

1st, That science has plumbed and settled the mysteries of the universe;

2nd, That its conclusions are final and infallible; and

3rd, That these conclusions are opposed to the verdict of commonsense on the question of the being of a God.

In truth, science has but noted, registered, and classified the facts or phenomena that lie on the surface of the universe. It has not touched -- it cannot touch -- the great question of the how, or the beginning, or even the why of things. The testimony of scientific men themselves is the best evidence of this.

TYNDALL said in one of his published addresses: "At best it (science) only marshalls the phenomena of nature under the head of all its sequences, which are called law: the great ocean of the unknown simply recedes as we advance, and all the researches that science may make to the end of time will never abridge by one hair's breadth the infinite expanse of mystery across the boundless ocean. The curiosity of the intellect will always sail towards an ever vanishing horizon."

PROFESSOR THOMPSON (better known under the title of his knighthood, Lord Kelvin) said in one of his last addresses: "One word characterises the most strenuous of the efforts for the advancement of science that I have perseveringly made for 55 years, and that word is -- **failure**. I know no more of electric and magnetic force, or of the relation between ether, electricity and ponderable matter, or of chemical affinity, than I knew 50 years ago."

The prevalence of agnosticism is itself a proof of the inadequacy of scientific investigations to reach any certainty as to the nature and reason of the universe. The agnostic says, "I do not know"; he goes further, and says "I cannot know -- the fundamental truth is unknowable." There are theories, there are speculations, but, as to knowledge in the highest realm, it is unattainable. Consequently, the way is open, so far as

science is concerned, for anything that may be proved true in another way. We may even go a step further, and say that the inductions of science, so far as they can be conducted demonstratively, make room for and necessitate the very conclusion to which common sense conducts us as to the being of a God.

The DUKE OF ARGYLE says, in his *Reign of Law*: -- This is now one of the most assured doctrines of science -- that invisible forces are behind and above all visible phenomena moulding them in forms of infinite variety. . . . The deeper we go in science, the more certain it becomes that all the realities of nature are in the region of the invisible, so that the saying is literally true that the things which are seen are temporal, and it is only the things which are not seen that are eternal. The profoundest physiologists have come to the conclusion that organisation is not the cause of life, but that life is the cause of organisation -- life being something -- a force of some kind, which precedes organisation, and fashions it and builds it up. . . . For illustrations, look at the shells of the animals called *Foraminifera*. No forms in nature are more exquisite; yet they are the work and the abode of animals which are *mere blobs of jelly* -- without parts, without organs -- absolutely without *visible* structure of any kind. In this jelly, nevertheless, there works a vital force capable of building up an organism of most complicated and perfect symmetry. But what is a vital force? It is something we cannot see, but of whose existence we are as certain as we are of its effects. We must go a step further and ask, 'What is force?' We know nothing of the ultimate nature or the ultimate seat of force. Science, in the modern doctrine of the conservation of energy, and the convertibility of forces, is already getting something like a firm hold of the idea that all kinds of force are but forms or manifestations of some one central force, issuing from some one Fountain Head of Power. Sir John Herschel has not hesitated to say that 'It is but reasonable to regard the force of gravitation as the direct or indirect result of a consciousness or a will existing somewhere.'"

These are the views and impressions of the master minds in the scientific world. Of course, there are shallow minds in the scientific world -- mere memorisers of technical learning, mere echoists of speculative opinions -- who are more positive than their teachers. By these, "meaningless words are heaped on each other in the desperate effort to dispense with those conceptions of intelligence and design which alone render the order of nature intelligible to us. Thus we are told that 'organism is the synthesis of diverse parts, and life is the synthesis of their properties,' and, again, that vitality is 'the abstract designation of certain special properties manifested by matter under certain special conditions.'" What is gained by calling life "the connexus of organic activities?" It still leaves untouched the question -- Who or what connected them?

The DUKE OF ARGYLE says:- "It is a great injustice to scientific men to suspect them of unwillingness to accept the idea of a personal Creator merely because they try to keep separate the language of science from the language of theology."

Even PROFESSOR HUXLEY said:- "If I really saw fit to deny the existence of a God, I should certainly do so, for the sake of my own intellectual freedom. As it happens, I cannot take this position with honesty, inasmuch as it is, and always has been, a favourite tenet of mine, that atheism is as absurd, logically speaking, as polytheism. . . . Denying the possibility of miracles seems to me quite as unjustifiable."

PROFESSOR TYNDALL, in the address already quoted from, said that when he looked at the springtide -- at the sprouting leaves and grass and flowers -- he has said to himself: 'Can it be that there is no being in nature that knows more about these matters than I do? Can it be that I in my ignorance represent the highest knowledge existing of these things in the universe?' The man who puts that question to himself, if he be not a shallow man, . . . will never answer it by professing that creed of atheism which has been so lightly attributed to me."

Even DARWIN, in a letter published shortly before his death, said he felt no certainty on the subject -- that sometimes he thought there must be a Supreme Being, and sometimes he doubted it.

The answer of science, therefore, is an ambiguous answer. In fact, it does not profess to give an answer. It says the subject is outside the range of its studies; that so far as it is concerned, there may be a God; that it does not know; that it cannot account for the existence of the universe without an antecedent cause, that may as well be called God as anything else, so far as science is concerned.

[CHAPTER 3: The Answer of History](#)

The Truth About God And The Bible

By Robert Roberts

Chapter 3: The Answer of History

This answer adjusts itself perfectly to the answer of common sense and science. Commonsense says there must be a Creator, because there is the created. Science says there must be an originating and contriving force at the back of nature, though the nature or seat of this force eludes the knowledge and conception of man. History steps in, and says that what common sense and science say must be -- is really and actually the fact.

We do not speak of history in general, but of a particular history. The Bible contains that particular history, and the visible state of things now in the world corresponds with that history. The general testimony of that history is condensed in the opening statement of the Epistle to the Hebrews:- "God, at sundry times and divers manners *spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets.*" If God has spoken, then God exists.

The pith of the argument turns on the nature of the speaking. Was it such a speaking as to make it quite certain it was as real and unquestionable as the speaking that passes between a man and his friend. A study of the facts will justify a very positive answer on this head. It will be found that "the Lord spake unto Moses face to face as a man speaketh unto his friend" (Ex. 33:11; Num. 12:8 ; Deut. 34:10), and that this sublime intercourse took place in connection with events of a character that did not admit of misrepresentation or concealment.

The events were public events -- national events -- events to which multitudes of people were accessory, and of a nature that could not be humanly manipulated. They were events of which *a whole people were eye-witnesses*, as Moses constantly reminds them. They are well summarised in the words spoken by Moses before his death at the end of the forty years' wanderings in the wilderness. In the course of a long address, he said, "Ask now of the days that are past which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth. . . . whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it? Did ever *people hear the voice of God* speaking out of the midst of the fire as thou hast heard and live? Or, hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation. . . . by a mighty hand and a stretched-out arm and great terrors, according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? Unto thee it was showed that thou mightest know that the Lord, he is God: there is none else beside him ". (Deut. 4:32).

In this, we are dealing to a certain extent with a palpable contemporary fact. There is such

a nation in the world as the Jews: its records go farther back into the remote dim regions of antiquity than those of any other nation under heaven, with the exception of the inscriptions on Egyptian and Assyrian remains and monuments, which are childish affairs compared with the magnificent writings of Moses. That they are the writings of Moses is proved in several ways. The tradition of the Jews in all generations is conclusive on this point. Such a reputation could not come to exist apart from the fact that Moses at the beginning did write them.

But it is said the Mahommedans are witnesses to the Koran. So they are. And it is said the Mormons are witnesses to the writing of Smith. So they are. But what have we then? We have a book admittedly written by Mahomet, and a book admittedly written by Joe Smith; but when we come to examine the books in the light of facts, we find evidence that Mahomet and Joe Smith are impostors. The authenticity admitted, their undivine character is self-manifest. A similar process applied to the writings of Moses proves them to be divine. Just as the authenticity of the Koran is proved by the universal consent of the Mahommedans, so the authenticity of Moses is proved by the universal consent of the Jews. Then go to the investigation of the book, and its divine character is proved by its very contents.

Take God out of the five books of Moses and they fall to pieces. They cannot be understood on the hypothesis that they were written by a man to glorify himself, his name, or his nation. The evidence of this is on the face of them. If the object of Moses in the operation he conducted in connection with the Jewish nation was to make himself a great leader and make himself a great name, as Manetho says, it would have been necessary for him to conciliate the people by complimentary words, as all popular leaders in all ages have found it necessary to do and have done. Moses did nothing of the sort, but used language and assumed an attitude utterly inconsistent with any human object whatever. We cannot imagine Moses or anyone else speaking thus while practising an imposture for the glorification of himself or the Jewish nation:-

"Speak not thou in thine heart after that the Lord thy God hath cast them (the Canaanitish nations) out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land: but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord doth drive them out from before thee. *Not for thy righteousness or for the uprightness of thy heart* dost thou go to possess their land; but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord thy God doth drive them from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Understand, therefore, that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it *for thy righteousness*, FOR THOU ART A STIFF-NECKED PEOPLE. Remember, and forget not, how *thou provokedst the Lord thy God in the wilderness, from the day thou didst depart out from the land of Egypt ; until ye came unto this place ye have been rebellious against the Lord.*" This is only a sample of his style. His writings are all in the same strain. If God sent and was with Moses, this style is

explained. If God did not appear to Moses, but Moses, out of his own head, sought to accomplish a personal object, such language is incomprehensible.

While Moses did not glorify Israel, did Israel glorify Moses? Did they accept him as their leader? If this book was written in order to glorify Moses or to glorify the Jewish nation -- if Jewish transactions in their beginnings were merely human performances, with which God had nothing to do, or if this book had been written afterwards to create confidence in a merely traditional Moses, without reference to truth, it would have been carefully shown that, at the beginning and during all his life, Moses was accepted by the people; certainly, every circumstance tending to show rebellious conduct on the part of the people during all the circumstances attending their exodus from Egypt, and their passage through the wilderness, would have been suppressed. Instead of this, the people are described as in a state of continual revolt.

Let Exodus 16:2 be taken as an illustration:- "And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of Israel came unto the Wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt. And the whole congregation of the children of Israel *murmured* against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness; and the children of Israel said to them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

Again, when the spies sent before to see the land to which they were journeying took an evil report, we read (Num. 14:1-5; 2:22, 23), "And all the congregation lifted up their voice and cried, and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would to God that we had died in the land of Egypt, or would to God we had died in this wilderness. . . . Were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a captain and let us return into Egypt. Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel. . . . And the Lord said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me for all the signs which I have showed among them? . . . Because all those men which have seen my glory and my miracles which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times and have not hearkened to my voice, surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers."

Then there is the conspiracy of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, who rose against Moses with the support of the entire assembly, and whose rebellion was only quelled by miraculous destruction. Now, if God did truly send Moses, and if His statement to Korah, Dathan, and Abiram be true -- that "The Lord sent me to do all these works for I have not done them of mine own mind" (Num. 16:28) -- then the putting on record such a history is intelligible. But if these things never happened, how came they to be invented? What purpose could be

served by the invention? No man invents a lie without an object, and what object could there be in insulting the national character by placing in the national archives such an invention? It is impossible to conceive such a thing.

It is a popular habit to ascribe the Jewish law to the wisdom of Moses as if he were the author of it. This habit is totally at variance with the scriptural representation. God is always kept in the foreground and Moses appears as His servant only. This peculiarity is not confined to the language of Moses, but belongs to the events connected with the organization of the nation. It is particularly manifest in the incident on which Moses based his claim to Israel's submission to the law. He did not, like an impostor, merely report that so and so had happened to him privately, and that the result was this law, which they had to obey. He based his claim to their submission on an open and public event of which they were all witnesses.

"He brought forth the people out of the camp *to meet with God*, and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire, and the smoke thereof went up as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly" (Ex. 19:18). The people were afraid at the manifestation. "And all the people saw the thunderings and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, and when the people saw it, they removed and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us and we will hear, but let not God speak with us lest we die" (Ex. 20:18, 19). Afterwards referring to this, Moses asks them to remember it: "Specially the day that thou stoodest before the Lord thy God in Horeb when the Lord said unto me, Gather me the people together and I will make them HEAR my word that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth. . . . And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire. Ye heard the voice of the Lord, but saw no similitude: only ye heard a voice. . . . Out of heaven, He made thee to hear His voice that He might instruct thee; and upon earth He shewed thee His great fire and thou heardest His voice out of the midst of the fire" (Deut. 4:10-12, 33, 36).

It was this public demonstration that laid the foundation of the authority, over a rebellious nation like Israel, of Moses, whom they several times sought to destroy. This was the object of it. It is so stated: "The Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, *that the people may hear when I speak with thee* AND BELIEVE THEE FOR EVER" (Ex. 19:9). When the event was over, "The Lord said unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, *Ye have seen* that I have talked with you from heaven" (Ex. 20:22).

These things *base the authority of the law on the command of God, and never on the wisdom of Moses*. And the argument arising from this fact is that such a thing is inexplicable on the hypothesis of the Mosaic writings being writings of a merely human origin, for written with a human origin, they would have been written with a human aim like all other human writings; and the aim would have been to show that the law was due to

the superior sagacity of Moses, and to set forth the constant loyalty of the Israelites to it. Of course, the argument is strengthened a hundredfold when it is shown that Moses was the writer.

The nature of the sentiment pervading the law is inconsistent with the idea of the human origin. We know what human nature is in the thousand instances of experience, history, and political institutions. To glorify the leader or the nation, is the tendency of all men in every country and age; and the Jews, as we know them in their speeches and literature, are no exception. But the Mosaic institutions offer a complete contrast to this tendency. Instead of boasting in ancestry and the exploits of their armies, they were taught, for instance, to speak deprecatingly of their origin on the presentation of the firstfruits and to refer their deliverance to God. They were taught to say: "A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation great, mighty and populous. And the Egyptians evilly entreated us and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage. And when we cried unto the Lord God of our fathers, the Lord heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labour and our oppression. And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs and wonders. And He hath brought us into this place " (Dent. 26:5). The deliverance of Israel is never ascribed to Israelitish prowess. The style of allusion is well illustrated in Psalm 44:1-3: "We have heard with our ears, O God: our fathers have told us what work Thou didst in their days, in the times of old, how Thou didst drive out the heathen with Thy hand, and plantedst them: how Thou didst afflict the people and cast them out. For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them; but **THY RIGHT HAND AND THINE ARM** and the light of Thy countenance, because Thou hadst a favour unto them."

This peculiarity is intelligible enough if God spake to Moses and did all the mighty works by which Israel was delivered from Egyptian thralldom. On any other principle it is unintelligible. Particularly is this the case with certain matters of detail. There are features in the law which could not have originated with men legislating out of their own heads. For instance, Israel was commanded to let the land lie untended and unsown every seventh year; and we read this in connection with it: "And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year? Behold, we shall not sow nor gather in our increase. Then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and *it shall bring forth fruit for THREE YEARS*" (Lev. 25:21).

What man or men would have been mad enough to append to a public law a provision beyond all human control (affecting the weather and the crops), and subject to the test of experience once in every seven years? For inventors to have enacted such a law would have been to make the detection of their imposture inevitable, and that in a short time; for once in every seven years it would be found whether, as a matter of fact, the enhanced production took place. Take God out of this law, and its enactment is inexplicable; but if God spake by Moses, it is perfectly intelligible.

So with the attendance at the periodical feasts exacted of all Israel. Three times a year were they all to assemble at the chosen centre. In the natural order, obedience to this would expose their country to the danger of invasion while they were absent, but this assurance was associated with the law. "Neither shall any man desire thy land when thou shalt go up thrice in the year to appear before the Lord thy God" (Ex. 34:24). If God gave the law this is intelligible, because, as with the weather and the crops, so with the matter of human desires, it is in His power to regulate their operation; but if this law was a human invention, it is impossible to conceive how a promise came to be introduced as to affairs beyond human control, and the truthfulness of which was open to test every year.

There is a variety of incidents and other matters of detail to which the same general remarks apply, viz., that their record is inexplicable on any theory short of the narrative being a true one. Prominent among them is the reason given for Moses, who led them out of Egypt, not being allowed to take the children of Israel over Jordan into the Land of Promise and not being allowed to enter there himself. Moses alluding to this reason in his rehearsal on the plains of Moab, says: "The Lord was angry with me for your sakes, saying, Thou also shalt not go in thither. But Joshua, the son of Nun, which standeth before thee, he shall go in thither; encourage him, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it" (Deut. 1:37). The incident to which Moses alludes is described in detail in Num. 20:7-13; and expressly referred to in Num. 27:12,14. On the reading of these parts, it will be found that the incident in brief was this: Under the irritation caused by the continual discontent and insubordination of the people, Moses, when directed by God to bring water for them out of the rock, struck the rock twice with his rod, and took the credit of bringing out the water. "Hear now, ye rebels," he exclaimed "Must WE fetch you water out of this rock?" This was an offence to God in standing between Him and Israel, and is thus condemned by God: "Because ye believed Me not, to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them" (Num. 20:12).

Let there be read in connection with this matter the account of the death of Moses in Dent. 32:48-52 and 34:1-6: Such a story is intelligible if true: but if not true, for what purpose could it have been invented? Invention is resorted to always with an object: and in a case like this (the leader of a nation), the object is to establish the credit and reputation of the man concerned. But here is an incident having the very opposite effect. Here is an account of the death of Moses, showing his career cut short in punishment for the unfaithful use of divine power in a certain matter. The man who can believe such a story to have been invented, must either have a very poor acquaintance with mankind or a poor capacity for judging of the simplest facts.

The work of Moses was followed by the ministry of the prophets for a thousand years. We have their writings. They constitute an important part of what Paul refers to in his statement that God had spoken at sundry times and divers manners, "unto the fathers by the prophets." God has not left us to guess at Him by the evidence of nature. He has revealed

Himself in a manner that has left His palpable mark on the affairs of mankind. In this we may rejoice, as bringing not only the present comfort of a living God who will guide our ways, but the guarantee of the perfect good for all mankind which He has covenanted from the beginning to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and confirmed by all the prophets.

The Truth About God And The Bible

By Robert Roberts

II. What Are We To Think Of The Bible?

Chapter 4: The Bible Reveals God

An important question, indeed, which does not receive the attention it calls for. The subject of the Bible is in the same rank of importance as that of God, for the Bible comes before us as the revelation of God. Without a revelation we could know nothing of God. We might know there must be a God from the various considerations already passed in review; but we could know nothing of Him if He had not revealed Himself. We could not have known His character. We could not have known His will concerning man; or, if He had any will. We could not have known whether He took any notice of us, or felt any interest in us, or entertained any purpose concerning our welfare. We could not have known even that He was supreme. We might have been open to the idea that there were various gods -- as many gods as there are apparent powers in the universe -- a god of love, a god of hate, a god of light, a god of darkness, a god of peace, a god of war-like the polytheistic speculators of Greece and Rome.

The Bible reveals God in the most interesting and effectual way possible. It records what He has done and what He has said in connection with actual transactions in which He had taken the leading part. In these His mind has been revealed and His thoughts declared. The Bible in fact is primarily the manifestation of God's personality by these transactions and utterances. People have an idea that it consists of pious platitudes and what are called "devotional exercises." This is a great mistake. Even Christ, who shines above all other Bible luminaries in the inculcation of excellent counsels, was more intent on revealing God than advising man. When a mere boy, he said, "I must be about my Father's business." When his work was nearly done, he said, "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world." In the midst of his career, he said, "I am come in my Father's name . . . I came forth from him -- I do always those things which please him. The works that I do bear witness of me that my Father hath sent me."

There is a method in Bible religion which, when critically investigated, will show that it was a designed affair, and not an accidental development of sentiment; and designed especially with the one object of bringing God to notice: showing His existence and power as objects of human faith and the basis of human obedience. The work of Moses in Egypt and the wilderness, for forty years with the Jews; the life and sayings of the prophets that arose in Israel; the appearance and doings of Christ and his apostles in the beginning of the

Christian era, are all matters of historic character, connected with actual works of God which, if sustained, prove the divinity of Bible religion beyond question: and the writings produced by all these men, giving an account of their proceedings, are also matters of palpable evidence.

An examination of all these things in connection with the effects which are now visible in the world before our eyes, will yield the result that the religion of the Bible is directly due to the initiative of Almighty wisdom, and therefore a coherent, and rational, and elevating, and glorious system of truth, which has already, despite all declarations to the contrary, immensely benefited the world, and given us a far higher civilization than any other system is capable of doing, and which, in the hands of God, like the path of the just, will yet shine brighter and brighter unto the perfect day: for the world has not seen the completion of the work of God on earth.

If you consider the Mosaic economy as embodied in the Old Testament, you find its central idea is the worship and service of God, just as the central feature of the national encampment in the wilderness was the tabernacle of His presence, around which clustered the tents of the tribes. And if you consider the messages of the prophets, the burden of their complaint is that Israel had forgotten God and refused Him the service He required. Take Isaiah 1:2-3 for example: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know: my people doth not consider. Ah, sinful nation . . . they have forsaken the Lord: they have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger: they are gone away backward."

Or, Mal. 1:6: "A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour: if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O ye priests that despise my name."

The bulk of the messages of the prophets consists of expostulations and complaints of this kind. But intermixed with them are magnificent delineations of the being of God and His relation to men: Take the following from Isaiah 40 for example:

Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding? Behold the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations before him are as nothing: and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity. To whom, then, will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him? Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might for that he is strong in power: not one faileth. Hast

thou not known? hast thou not heard that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his under standing?

Or, Jer. 23:16-24

Thus saith the Lord of hosts: hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord. They say still unto them that despise me, The Lord hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you. I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings. Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.

Or, Psalm 139:1

O Lord thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path, and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit; or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.

We have not only these sublime exhibitions of the being of God, but the most exhilarating declarations of His good purposes -- not only the statement that He is love but the varied and highly coloured unfolding of His intention to do for Israel and for all nations through Israel, what they all require. Take for example Isaiah 25:

In this mountain (Zion), shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away

from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Or take Isaiah 61:

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted: to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound . . . to comfort all that mourn, to appoint unto them beauty for ashes, and the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.

Or take the following extract from Isaiah 60, addressed to downfallen Israel:

Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the LORD shall rise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee . . . And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee. Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted. The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious. The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee: and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel. Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. Thy people also shall be righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the LORD will hasten it in his time.

These are glorious things. The New Testament supplements but does not change them. Are they true? This is the question involved in the enquiry what we are to think of the Bible. If they are not true, their beauty does not redeem them from the worthlessness inherent in all falsehood.

There is a great and increasing tendency to regard the Bible in the light of myth, legend, tradition. There are different classes of enemies in the field. There is the shallow, vulgar, blatant blasphemer, who speaks evil of the things he understands not. There is the refined agnostic, who classes the Bible with the religions of superstition, and looks disdainfully down from the heights of an intellectual culture that has shot its head up into the region of eternal frost and snow, and wrapped itself in the impenetrable fogs of a transcendentalism too stupendous for human faculty. And there are the higher critics who profess to recognise a certain divinity in the Bible, but destroy the value of their concession by asserting the large presence of a human and erring element; and still further destroy it by claiming inspiration for clever human writers such as Shakespeare. They kiss and stab the Bible at the same time. Reading the Bible itself in a methodical and studious manner is the only way of being able to judge of its real character. But none of these classes is given to reading the Bible. They read what people say about the Bible, which is a very different thing.

[CHAPTER 5: What Christ Thinks](#)

The Truth About God And The Bible

By Robert Roberts

Chapter 5: What Christ Thinks

We ask what Christ thought about the Old Testament scriptures -- the part of the Bible that existed in his day. What he thought must be the truth, for he proclaimed himself "the way, the truth, and the life," and proved his assertion by the miracles he wrought, and finally by the resurrection of which he was the subject after crucifixion.

First of all, he expressly said to people who imagined he was come to set up a new religion, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets, I am not come to destroy but to FULFIL" (Matt. 5:17). The law and the prophets (another way of describing what we know as the Old Testament) teem with assertions of divine authorship. Nearly two thousand times the phrase occurs, "Thus saith the Lord." Hundreds of times in the law the statement occurs, "And the Lord spake unto Moses," "If this allegation so constantly made be true, we can understand there being something in Moses and the prophets for Christ to "fulfil," for when God speaks, He not only utters commandments, but shows things to come: saying, as by Isaiah (46:10), "I shew the end from the beginning."

But if the writings of Moses and the prophets were the mere product of human thought and impression, how could there be any thing for Christ to fulfil? Man cannot lay down plans for God to follow: man cannot foretell the future. But the prophets do foretell the future. And they especially lay down plans in connection with Christ (Dan. 9; Isa. 53; and many other places).

How Christ regarded these utterances is shown by the use he made of them in his intercourse with the disciples. See what we read in Luke 24 -- that after his resurrection, he expounded to them in all the scriptures of Moses and the prophets, "the things concerning himself." Referring to his death, from the standpoint of his resurrection, he said, "These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses and in the prophets CONCERNING ME" (verse 44).

This proves Christ's recognition of the divine character of the scriptures. It was shown more expressly when he quoted from the Psalms in his argument with the Pharisees, and said "The scripture cannot be broken" (Jno. 10:35). If the scripture were human, it certainly could be broken, for nothing is more upsettable than the word or appointment of mortal fallible man. If it cannot be broken, it must be of God. This was Christ's view.

He advised the people on one occasion to "Search the scriptures" (Jno. 5:39). "They," said

he, "are they that testify of me." The scriptures which Jesus was referring to (for there were no New Testament scriptures at the time Jesus spoke) were written hundreds of years before Christ appeared. How could they testify of a teacher to appear hundreds of years afterwards if they were merely human writings? They did so testify, and their word was fulfilled. What conclusion remains but that they were divine and not human writings?

This conclusion is expressly affirmed by the apostles, who were inspired to declare the truth (Jno. 16:13), and concerning whom Jesus said, "He that heareth you, heareth Me." First Peter said, "No prophecy of the scripture is of private interpretation (or origination), for holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit " (2 Peter 1:21). This is in harmony with what Paul declares concerning the knowledge of God. He says a man can only know the things of man, "but the things of God KNOWETH no man, BUT THE SPIRIT OF GOD" (1 Cor. 2:11). Now, the scriptures of the Old Testament declare the things of God. Consequently, they must on the principle defined by Paul be the product of the Holy spirit, which Paul expressly alleges, saying, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for correction and reproof and instruction in righteousness."

Thus the doctrine of Christ and the doctrine of the apostles concerning the Scriptures are one. It is a different teaching from the doctrine which is becoming so fashionable through the influence of what are called "the higher critics." The choice we are called upon to make is a choice between the doctrine of Christ and the apostles, who were divinely illuminated, and the speculative opinions of men who do not know, but guess, and whose guesses are being continually upset by the progress of discovery, as in the case of the inscribed tablets of Tel-Amarna. Before these tablets were discovered, the critics used to contend that the art of writing was not known in the days of Moses, and that therefore Moses could not have written the first five books of the Bible. They have ceased that contention now that these ancient written tablets have been discovered.

The view enunciated by Christ and his disciples -- that the Scriptures are of divine origin and authorship -- is borne out by all the tests it is in our power to apply. Chief among those may be said to be the quality of the book. A divine book ought to differ from a human book as much as divine ways differ from human ways. And it is so. The Bible differs from human literature in its style of diction, and in the nature of its sentiment. It depreciates man: It exalts God, as no human book does. Then look at its unsparing candour of narrative; its forecasts of the future.

It differs from human books also in this, that though written in an age when the world was sunk in gross ignorance of all natural things, as well as in the deepest immorality of practice, it enunciates the noblest and purest principles of action, and even the grandest discovery of scientific investigation.

CHAPTER 6: The Bible And Science

The Truth About God And The Bible

By Robert Roberts

Chapter 6: The Bible And Science

Science has shown in the lifetime of the present generation, that all manifestations of power are referable to a common source, origin or principle, though that common origin is itself admitted to be inscrutable. The doctrine is defined as "the correlation of forces": that is, that all forces have their root or origin in one principle. Now, that fact the Bible taught ages before it occurred to natural thinkers. But there is a difference between the Bible form and the scientific form of this doctrine, at least in the hands of some scientists. They say the primal force is an unintelligent impersonal force, while the Bible says the antecedent power of all things is one personal God in one universal Spirit. Scientists will not accept a personal God, because they cannot comprehend such a conception. They cannot comprehend how universal power should have a personal nucleus at one central point in the heavens, as taught by the scriptures. They cannot grasp the idea of universal power being, in its totality, One Mighty Being. They reject it because they cannot understand it. Do they give us something they do understand? So far are they from doing this, that they boast in professing the origin of things unknowable and themselves agnostic.

In what the Bible reveals concerning God, its divinity is as dearly seen as in anything. This is distinguished from all human conceptions of Deity, as reflected in the polytheism of confessedly unenlightened men. The gods imagined by men were limited like men. The God revealed in the Bible is declared unsearchable. The different powers of nature were, by the ignorant, attributed to different gods, which superficially seemed probable. The Bible attributed all to ONE GOD. Science has confirmed the Bible revelation of God to this extent, that it has shown all power to be ONE at the root, and that root "unknowable," which is only another word for the Bible term "unsearchable."

CHAPTER 7: The Bible And Human Nature

The Truth About God And The Bible

By Robert Roberts

Chapter 7: The Bible And Human Nature

As to man, the case is equally strong: The philosophers taught that man was constitutionally an immaterial immortal being, underlying and distinct from the body, and capable of existence apart from it, a fallacy from which came their doctrine of post mortem rewards and punishments in the Elysian fields and Tartarus, and a consequent rejection of the doctrine of the resurrection. This notion, succinctly defined as "the immortality of the soul," was, like their polytheism, a plausible deduction from appearances -- universal among the ancients, beginning with the Egyptians. But Moses, by the admission of Gibbon, is untainted with the notion, notwithstanding his Egyptian associations. The prophets and apostles are likewise free of this philosophic speculation, and, on the contrary, teach human mortality as expounded by Tyndall and other scientists of the modern era. The doctrine of immortality which they teach is the hope of resurrection to a future existence on the earth. Science does not teach this, because science only deals with what is, and can throw no light on what is to be. With the doctrine of human mortality all Scripture agrees, consequently the Bible is in harmony with science on the subject of man as well as God; that is, as regards his present constitution. That the Bible should teach a doctrine in harmony with science in an age when all the world was dreaming about the natural immortality of speculative induction, is another proof of the Bible's divinity. This argument has been obscured by orthodox religion, which accepts the Pagan view, and, by consequence, teaches the eternal torment of the unrighteous -- a doctrine which gives the argument for unbelief an advantage that does not belong to it.

The Bible's depreciation of human nature is the strongest proof of the Bible having come from God. The sentiment is foreign to human nature. This depreciation of human nature is characteristic of the Bible alone. We have in Psalm 9 this inquiry made: "What is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him?" In Psalm 144 a similar question is asked and answered in this way: "Man is like to vanity: his days are like a shadow which passeth away." In Isaiah 40 we read: "The voice said, Cry; and he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field; the grass withereth; the flower fadeth, because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it; surely the people is grass." Isaiah 2 last verse: "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of?" Ezek. 36:22: "Not for your sakes, O house of Israel," -- that is, not for their sakes would He bring them from all the nations among whom they were scattered. "I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for my holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen whither ye went." In Jeremiah 17:5 we read: "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm . . . but

blessed is the man that putteth his trust in the Lord." In Jeremiah 9:23: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might; Let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me."

No book, pervaded by such sentiments, could have a merely human authorship. All writers, whether ancient or modern, Jew or Gentile, glorify human nature, and boast in human achievements. All human writers, without exception, speak of the dignity of manhood and the greatness of human nature.

CHAPTER 8: "The Lord Alone Exalted"

The Truth About God And The Bible

By Robert Roberts

Chapter 8: "The Lord Alone Exalted."

We have no parallel in any human writing to the constant exaltation of God as the great object of all arrangements and operations. "This people," for instance, we read, referring to the Jews, "have I formed for myself: they shall show forth all my praise." Again consider this (1 Cor. 1:26): "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world and things which are despised hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; THAT NO FLESH SHOULD GLORY IN HIS PRESENCE."

This is not a sentiment native to man. Man always chooses the powerful, the great, the rich, the mighty, the noble, for the accomplishment of any schemes he may conceive, as we see in all other religions throughout the whole world in every country and in every age. It is an absolutely universal characteristic of man to glory in man and to boast in his own or somebody else's wisdom, riches, glory and might. The Bible runs directly counter to human feelings and sentiments in this matter throughout its entire contents. This would be inexplicable on the hypothesis of a human production; but if the Bible be the reflex of divine views communicated by the Spirit of God to the writers, there is an explanation, instant and entirely satisfactory.

CHAPTER 9: No Hero-Worship

The Truth About God And The Bible

By Robert Roberts

Chapter 9: No Hero-Worship

Another feature of the Bible is the perfect modesty of all the men who took a part in the development of Bible things; modesty, that is, as regards any credit for the part they performed. The tendency in human nature, acting by itself, is to take the credit of any gift possessed and to glory in it, and make it the means of honour and personal consequence. No one with the history of mankind before him can deny this: But here are men who refuse the credit, as in the case recorded in Acts 14: "Sirs, why do ye teach these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities UNTO THE LIVING GOD." Or Acts 3:12: "Why look ye so earnestly upon us (Peter and John), as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?" Again, in Acts 10:25 we read: "And as Peter was coming in Cornelius met him " (Cornelius having sent for him by divine direction), "and fell down at his feet and worshipped him; but Peter took him up, saying, Stand up I myself also am a man." In 1 Cor. 15:9, we find Paul saying: "For I am the least of the Apostles that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God." In Exodus 16:8, Moses, speaking of the murmurings of the people, says: "What are we? Your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord." In Numbers 11:29, Moses, when told deprecatingly by Joshua that somebody else had received the Spirit, replied: "Enviest thou for my sake? Would GOD all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them."

In Daniel 2:30, Daniel, when cited before Nebuchadnezzar to explain a dream which had baffled the magicians, prefaced his explanation by these words: "As for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart." If Daniel had been an impostor, like all other impostors, he would have placed his own credit in the front rank; instead of that, he says the explanation he is about to give is not due to his superior wisdom, but to communication from God. That is the utterance of a true man, who knew that the information was not out of his own head but that he had received it from external sources. Then there is the case of Joseph in Gen. 41:15-16. Joseph was standing before Pharaoh under similar circumstances, and was called upon to explain an enigmatical dream. Pharaoh said to him: "I have heard say of thee that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it. And Joseph answered Pharaoh saying, It is not in me; GOD SHALL GIVE PHARAOH AN ANSWER OF PEACE."

Coming down to CHRIST himself we see the same peculiarity. What does he say concerning the miracles he wrought and the wisdom he spake? "The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works" (John 14:10). "I am come in my Father's name" (John 5:43). And again, "Of my own self, I can do nothing" (John 5:30).

Now, although this argument may not tell in an excited public meeting, it will in the calm hours of anxious thought be felt in its full weight by those who are capable of appreciating an argument. It goes more than anything to show that the men who had to do with the transactions involved in the scriptures, and the writing of them, were true men, and not such men as unbelief would represent.

CHAPTER 10: A Nation That Changed Its God

The Truth About God And The Bible

By Robert Roberts

Chapter 10: A Nation That Changed Its God

The aversion of Israel to the teaching of the true prophets, and their relish for those who led them to idolatry, is another remarkable fact in the Bible record. The Jews have always been on the side of those who drew them aside from the One God, and against the few faithful men who, in different ages, have striven, under Divine command, to bring them back to the paths of Moses. Why did the Jews prefer idolatry to the Divine institutions? The Mosaic worship was contrary to human inclinations. It called on them to serve an invisible God: it required faith at their hands. Other nations had gods they could see, and whose worship they made the occasion of licence and delight. To these foreign gods Israel turned aside from the beginning of their history, as soon as Joshua and his contemporaries were dead (Judges 2:11-13); which is proof that their God was no invention of their own, or the outcome of a national idiosyncrasy. Other nations have always been faithful to their invented gods, because they continued subject to the taste and fancy that led to the invention.

Such a thing as a nation changing its gods is unknown. This very fact is made the basis of expostulation by God with Israel, through the prophet Jeremiah: "Pass over to the Isles of Chittim and see, and send unto Kedar and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing: hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? But my people hath changed their glory for that which doth not profit" (Jer. 2:10). This fact of itself -- that the Jews as a nation continually departed from the God of their fathers, while no other nation deviated from their traditional idolatries goes a long way, in a logical process of treatment, to prove that the religion of the Jews was not a religion of Jewish origin, in the sense of its being the invention of the Jews; but was higher than they, namely, what it professes to be -- a system Divinely communicated to them by the hand of Moses.

CHAPTER 11: The Purpose Of God

The Truth About God And The Bible

By Robert Roberts

Chapter 11: The Purpose Of God

Another fact is the agreement of one part of the Bible with another, notwithstanding the long intervals during which its different parts were produced. The weight of this as an evidence of its divinity, will be felt by those who remember that in human productions each successive contributor imparts his own sentiments. Diversity of character belongs to every human work in which many actors have been engaged during a series of ages. Instead of that, this book is absolutely one. Whether you take Moses, Malachi, or Christ, there is the same depreciation of human nature; the same supreme exaltation of God; the same stern enunciation of duty; the same uncompromising rebuke of departure from the way of right. The spirit of the book in this respect is identical throughout, and this cannot be said of any literature under the sun in which a variety of writers of different ages have been employed, nor is there any book under the sun characterised by the sentiments just enumerated. The Bible stands absolutely alone in this respect, like a majestic mountain among hillocks of rubbish.

Then there is the same hope, in all the books of the Bible, of a coming age in which Christ, as King of Israel, shall rule on earth universally, and mankind be blessed.

If the Bible were a merely human production, there would not be this absolute identity of hope among writers, extending over three thousand years. The existence of this identity is a proof of the controlling presence of a common guidance in all the writers, even the guidance professed in the book itself:

"Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:21). The force of this argument will be appreciated by those who realise the endless and contradictory diversities of human authorship of different ages. Its force is somewhat hidden by the corruptions of orthodox Christendom, which has long ago abandoned the one apostolic "hope of Israel," common to the whole scriptures, and embraced the miserable substitute of an imagined post mortem beatification of an imaginary personal invisibility, in regions above the stars.

Then consider the Bible scheme of future life. This scheme defers all reward till an appointed era, to be inaugurated by the personal re-appearance of Christ in the earth, when many generations shall have yielded -- first to the grave, and then to the resurrection -- their quota of tried men, tried in necessary times of evil. The vastness and splendour of this scheme stamps it as divine. Man would never have invented such a scheme.

The Truth About God And The Bible

By Robert Roberts

Chapter 12: Perfect Candour Of The Bible

Above all, think of the perfect candour of the Bible narratives, which is never characteristic of human histories. David's crime is chronicled in sober and merciless truth, although he was king when the record was written. So with the fathers before him. The naked truth is told. The very things that the enemies of the Bible make use of against the Bible, are in this respect one of the highest evidences of its genuine character, for had the Bible been written by king-flatterers and sycophants, there would have been a suppression of things that do not stand to the credit of those for whom they are supposed to have been written.

Matthew records that at an interview with Christ after his resurrection, some of his disciples "doubted" (Matt. 28:17). A bolsterer-up of a pretended revelation would never have written this. It is written because it is true; and the fact that some doubted is an element in the self-evident truthfulness of the narrative, for it is just what would happen with real living men who, not expecting Christ to die, had seen Christ crucified and now saw him alive. In their partly-enlightened state his death was a puzzle and his resurrection a puzzle also, and "doubt" the natural consequence.

Had there been no further evidence, the doubt of the "some" might have continued. But their doubt did not continue; all doubt vanished with the outpouring of the Spirit and display of miraculous gifts. The fact that they previously "doubted" made their subsequent confidence all the more reliable, because it shows the reason of their doubt had disappeared.

We read concerning Christ, that at a certain time "many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him." This is a candid record of a fact which there could be no object in publishing, but rather in suppressing, as the fact itself was capable of causing a damaging effect. Its record is an evidence of truth. At first sight, it might seem strange that anyone having seen the miracles of Christ should leave him and walk no more with him. But men get accustomed to anything. Marvels cease to be marvels when they are of common occurrence. It is easy to understand that men, drawn after Christ in the first instance by the sensational attraction of his miracles, would easily become disaffected when doctrines unpleasant to human nature were propounded for their acceptance. It is human nature to the life. A fictitious writer would never have imagined it possible for any human being to desert the Christ of his narrative: he would be certain to represent every one as awe-struck and spellbound for ever. And even if he could have imagined another possibility, he would have been careful to conceal it from a narrative intended to create confidence in a Christ who never existed. The record that many ceased to be his disciples

is one among many strong proofs of the genuineness of the narrative. There are many such candid statements throughout the scriptures.

We have left to the last the notice of the literary character of the Bible, as evidential of more than a human authorship. Its diction is chaste, dignified, vigorous, free of redundancy or irrelevant details. It is unlike all other books in the nature of its historic narratives. It never puts on record the kind of occurrences that come under the category of story and adventure. It never shows any regard for the curiosity of the reader. It never ministers to the taste that finds pleasure in the mere knowledge of what happens. It confines itself to matters having relation to the main purpose in hand. If it ever diverges from its condensed historical style, and enters into personal particulars, it is because those personal particulars have a bearing on some subsequent event of public importance, or to illustrate the operation of some truth important to be known. The story of Amnon and Tamar is an example: it led up to the rebellion of Absalom. The story of David and Uriah is another: it led to a public revolution in the punishment of David. The story of the Ephraimite and his concubine is another: the episode nearly led to the extirpation of a tribe, and brought about the slaughter of multitudes in Israel in punishment of their sins. In no case is a story told for its own sake.

Finally, the character and precepts of CHRIST as displayed in the New Testament are themselves conclusive evidence of the divinity of the Scriptures. No man could have imagined such a character; no man could have invented such precepts, least of all such men as those who wrote the gospel narrative -- poor fishermen, "unlearned and ignorant men." The only way such a narrative could come to be written (even if men who were called "learned" had been the writers) is its truth. But when we consider that it is the product of "ignorant and unlearned" fishermen, we are enabled to realise that even with facts as their guide, it is nothing short of a literary miracle that in language so simple and without any attempt at praising Christ, but by the mere record of what he said and what he did, they should have been able to have placed before the world such a personation of character in Christ as it never entered into the heart of man to conceive.

CHAPTER 13: "That They Should Seek The Lord" (Acts 17:27)

The Truth About God And The Bible

By Robert Roberts

Chapter 13: "That They Should Seek The Lord" (Acts 17:27)

It is proved by the facts accessible to all men that God exists, and that the Bible is His revelation to us of the fact; that He has a glorious purpose with the earth and with man upon it, involving immortal life and perfect well-being to all who may become beneficially related to it in the way revealed by Christ. Is there no antecedent presumption in favour of such a conclusion in our own constitution and in the spectacle of heaven and earth around us? Is it reasonable to suppose that the stupendous system of the universe exists for no higher end than the feeble gratification of an ephemeral and decaying race of animals? Is it reasonable to suppose that the aspirations of the noblest of mankind are without a counterpart in the region of the possible? Is it reasonable to suppose that the earnest uplifting of the human heart in agonising desire towards a Higher than man are without a meaning in the universe of being? The vibrations of the needle pointed to the Pole long before the existence of such a point on the earth's surface was known. So, in true philosophy, do our fervent longings point to the Almighty Father and Disposer of all things, even if He had not chosen to reveal Himself.

The higher minds of the world are on the side of this argument. MR. GLADSTONE has told us that the unbelief growing so common is calculated, if generally received, to disintegrate society in the next generation [Robert Roberts died in 1898] though its present advocates, through the bias of inherited principles, might continue subject to moral restraint. PROFESSOR TYNDALL, in the preface to his published addresses, says that mankind requires the lifting power of a noble ideal. Even JOHN STUART MILL, born and bred a sceptic, in his last days assumed an attitude indicative of some thing higher than his atheistic proclivities. The Daily News says:

"Mr. Mill was so far true to his early training that he tried hard to show how small was the intellectual warrant for the misty aspirations; but the 'Time-Spirit' led him again and again to the brink of the abyss after logic had made its final declaration; and his last book reveals him in the attitude of one looking across the ocean of eternity with wistful eyes and something of a fond expectancy. Thus he presents one of the most pathetic figures in all the literature of negation. His aspiration for something to believe in beyond this petty life will speak to doubting intellects with intense force. He and such as he testify not that this age is sceptical, but that even sceptical minds hunger for a religion in which they can believe. The last century tried to feed the mind on the husks of dry and negative logic, but again has come that yearning for something higher which has often before been the harvest of new faiths. When essentially scientific intellects like Mill and Tyndall link reverential

hopes to strict deduction of the reason, the most careless observer may detect an immense transformation of opinion, and the most timid heart may take comfort."

All these utterances point in the direction of a need which the Bible supplies. The Bible gives us the purifying and reforming restraint which Mr. Gladstone sees human society needs. It gives us the uplifting ideal which Professor Tyndall declares to be necessary. It gives us an ideal glorified man -- the manifestation of the Eternal invisible Father of all -- a man who once lived in our weak and afflicted state, whose work has already filled the world with light compared with the darkness that reigned before his appearance; a man who now exists in an incorruptible, immortal, omnipotent nature; whose re-appearance in the world will take place at an appointed time for the assumption of human government, and the blessing of all mankind, on the foundation of glory to God, with whose appearance there is associated this glorious prospect of every friend of his, that he will use the power God has given him to recall them from the oblivion of the grave, or transform them from their physical weakness to an immortal state identical with His own, and associate them with Himself, with every circumstance of honour and renown, in the perfect order of things He will establish and administer among men in that blessed day of promise, when there shall be no more curse, and no more pain and sorrow, and sighing shall flee away.

THE END