God's word

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Christianity is a super natural religion. It believes in a super natural God, One Who stands over and above nature and is not part of nature; a God Who created nature, Who created us and the whole universe, calling it into existence simply by a decision of His will. Science tells us a little of the process which God used in bringing the world into being, but the fact remains (on which science is unable to make any comment) that God is the originator and director of that process.

God is a super natural God standing above nature, not only as its Creator, but also as its controller. Not a single event takes place in the universe which He does not control; not even the movement of the smallest electron in the most distant star. The thought is, of course, too stupendous for us to apprehend. Our minds are stupefied by the concept, for we are inclined to think of God in terms of things we know, thinking of Him as a general manager of a department store who has to delegate detail to his subordinates. Of course this is not so. God Who created all the details, knows and controls them all.

We believe in a super natural God, not only as Creator and controller but also as revealer of Himself. He has made Himself known to men. Centuries ago He called Abraham and Moses and sent His prophets to the children of Israel in order to make Himself known to men, to show what His character is and to call them into fellowship with Him. God's super natural revelation of Himself reached its climax and acme in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Divine Son of God. His name is 'Emanuel' which means 'God with us'. His perfect life, the sublimity and truth of His teaching, His powerful miracles of love, and His own claims and teaching about Himself all testify to the truth reflected in that name Emanuel. He was indeed God with men, His coming a most remarkable super natural event, but entirely in keeping with our super natural God.

The inspiring of the Bible by the Spirit of God is part of this same movement of God in revealing Himself to men. It is a super natural book. Although written by men and faithfully reflecting the divergent characters and historical situations of the authors who wrote the sixty-six books that made up the Bible, the most important fact and the fact which gives the Bible its unity, is that the Holy Spirit of God was the true author. He used the writers, not forcing their wills or their minds or their thoughts, but working through these things of which He Himself was the Creator, so that what they wrote was not only their own words but more importantly God’s words; words infallible for the purpose for which God inspired them, which was to teach us about Himself and about His relations with men.

There are many reasons why Christians believe the Bible to be a super natural book and the true word of God. Of course the final reason is that they hear God’s word in it, for when God speaks to the conscience which He has created, it would indeed be strange if His voice was not recognised by His children, to whom He has given His Spirit. As Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice and they follow me". But before we reach that final reason there are some preliminary considerations worth noting. To start with, the Bible itself claims to be the word of God. How frequently there occurs in it this introductory phrase: "Thus saith the Lord". Then, too, the Lord Jesus Christ's testimony to the divine inspiration of the Bible is very clear, and for Christians who believe that Jesus Christ is the divine Son of God, in itself it is quite sufficient. Jesus knew the Bible thoroughly, based His teaching on it and regarded it as of final authority. Thus when He was tempted by the Devil, to each temptation He simply quoted a phrase from God's Word.
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His fellowship with them expounding to them the Scriptures.

A very interesting illustration of Jesus' view that whatever the Bible says, God says, is found in Matthew 19 where Jesus quotes a verse from Genesis 2, reminding His hearers that God the Creator had said in the beginning, with regard to husbands and wives, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife and they two shall become one flesh". Now in Genesis this verse is actually the comment of the writer, but Jesus said unequivocally that God is its author. So we see that for Jesus the words of the Bible, no matter who was the human writer, are the words of God.

The same attitude to Scripture is reflected in the rest of the New Testament, for example in Hebrews 2:7 a verse from the Old Testament is introduced by the words "Even as the Holy Ghost saith" making clear that the New Testament writer realized that though the verse was written by the psalmist the ultimate author was God. Similarly in Acts 1:16 a quotation from the Bible is introduced by the phrase "The Scripture which the Holy Ghost spoke by the mouth of David". This is an interesting illustration of the two-sided truth. David wrote the words naturally and freely, yet the true author was the Holy Spirit Who was infallibly directing those faculties which He Himself had given to David. There is an important verse in 2 Timothy 3:16 where St. Paul commends Timothy because He had known the Bible from his earliest years. The Apostle affirmed that the Bible is able to make the reader wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus, adding "Every scripture is inspired of God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work". That last phrase is most interesting in view of the fact that some, for example Roman Catholics, deny the sufficiency of Scripture and say that the Bible has to be added to by Church tradition, yet St. Paul three times over in this verse affirms the sufficiency of the Bible, saying "that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work". That last phrase is most interesting in view of the fact that some, for example Roman Catholics, deny the sufficiency of Scripture and say that the Bible has to be added to by Church tradition, yet St. Paul three times over in this verse affirms the sufficiency of the Bible, saying "that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work". We do not need to add to the Bible but rather to read it and absorb its message, because it is a super natural book through which God Himself speaks to us, just as in the past He spoke through the prophets who said "Thus saith the Lord", or spoke through Jesus Christ the Son of God, teaching on the hills of Galilee or in the temple at Jerusalem.

If you reflect you will see why it is necessary that God should give us a book of this super natural character. For had He not done so it would not have been possible for us to have the same religion as the disciples had or as those who heard the Old Testament prophets had. The disciples and the Israelites were in a position to hear God's word directly, and with certainty, either from the mouth of Jesus Christ Himself or from a prophet filled with the Spirit of God. But what of us? If we are to have the same religion we must be in a position to hear the same sure direct word of God, but how can this be, now that Christ has returned to Heaven and prophecy has ceased? God has provided for it by inspiring in a super natural way the Holy Scriptures which are His direct and infallible word to those who will read them prayerfully.

There is a further consideration. The Christian religion is essentially one of faith and trust, but it is not possible to have true and utter trust unless we have been given a reliable word or promise in which to trust. If we sense any element of unreliability in that in which we are trusting, then to that extent trust becomes impossible. But the Christian religion calls upon us to have utter trust in God, which implies that we must have an utterly reliable word. And this God has given to us in the Scripture, which is utterly reliable because He has
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church except through His clear and true word? If He had not left us His word, we could not obey Him or if that word were doubtful or unreliable, our obedience would to that extent be less than full and we would have to have reservations in our obedience. But Christ calls for complete obedience, which in turn necessitates a completely reliable word from Him. This has been given to us in the Bible. Any view of the Bible which mingles it up with unreliable elements as some modern thinkers suggest, is not only false to the teaching of Jesus but also strikes at the very basis of the Christian religion. We may be thankful that God has given us in the Bible His inerrant word, the instrument through which He calls us to faith and obedience, and through which He moulds in us the character of Christ. It is our duty to believe that word and to read it regularly and prayerfully, and through it to trust God completely and to obey Him gladly.