

The Infallibility of Scripture

by C. H. Spurgeon

“The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.” Isaiah 1:20

What Isaiah said was, therefore, spoken by Jehovah. It was audibly the utterance of a man; but, really, it was the utterance of the Lord himself. The lips which delivered the words were those of Isaiah, but yet it was the very truth that “The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.” All Scripture, being inspired of the Spirit, is spoken by the mouth of God. However this sacred Book may be treated nowadays, it was not treated contemptuously, nor negligently, nor questioningly by the Lord Jesus Christ, our Master and Lord. It is noteworthy how he revered the written Word. The Spirit of God rested upon him personally, without measure, and he could speak out of his own mind the revelation of God, and yet he continually quoted the law and the prophets, and the Psalms; and always he treated the sacred writings with intense reverence, strongly in contrast with the irreverence of “modern thought.” I am sure, brethren, we cannot be wrong in imitating the example of our divine Lord in our reverence for that Scripture, which cannot be broken. I say, if he, the anointed of the Spirit, and able to speak himself as God’s mouth, yet quoted the sacred writings, and used the holy Book in his teachings, how much more should we, who have no spirit of prophecy resting upon us, and are not able to speak new revelations, come back to the law and to the testimony, and value every single word which “The mouth of the Lord hath spoken”? The like valuation of the Word of the Lord is seen in our Lord’s apostles; for they treated the ancient Scriptures as supreme in authority, and supported their statements with passages from Holy Writ. The utmost degree of deference and homage is paid to the Old Testament by the writers of the New. We never find an apostle raising a question about the degree of inspiration in this book or that. No disciple of Jesus questions the authority of the books of Moses, or of the prophets. If you want to cavil or suspect, you find no sympathy in the teaching of Jesus, or any one of his apostles. The New Testament writers sit reverently down before the Old Testament and receive God’s words as such, without any question whatever. You and I belong to a school which will continue to do the same, let others adopt what behavior they please. As for us and for our house, this priceless Book shall remain the standard of our faith and the ground of our hope so long as we live. Others may choose what gods they will, and follow what authorities they prefer; but, as for us, the glorious Jehovah is our God, and we believe concerning each doctrine of the entire Bible, that “The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”

In the second place, “The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.” THIS IS THE CLAIM OF GOD’S WORD UPON YOUR ATTENTION.

Every word which God has given us in this Book claims our attention, because of the infinite majesty of him that spake it. I see before me a Parliament of kings and princes, sages and senators. I hear one after another of the gifted Chrysostoms pour forth eloquence like the “Golden-mouthed.” They speak, and they speak well. Suddenly, there is a solemn hush. What a stillness! Who

is now to speak? They are silent because God the Lord is about to lift up his voice. Is it not right that they should be so? Doth he not say, "Keep silence before me, O islands"? What voice is like his voice? "The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars; yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness; the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh." See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. O my hearer, let it not be said of you that you went through this life, God speaking to you in his Book, and you refusing to hear! It matters very little whether you listen to me or not; but it matters a very great deal whether you listen to God or not. It is he that made you; in his hands your breath is; and if he speaks, I implore you, open your ear, and be not rebellious. There is an infinite majesty about every line of Scripture, but especially about that part of Scripture in which the Lord reveals himself and his glorious plan of saving grace, in the person of his dear Son Jesus Christ. The cross of Christ hath a great claim upon you. Hear what Jesus preaches from the tree. He says, "Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live."

God's claim to be heard lies, also, in the condescension which has led him to speak to us. It was something for God to have made the world and bid us look at the work of his hands. Creation is a picture-book for children. But for God to speak in the language of mortal men is still more marvelous, if you come to think of it. I wonder that God spoke by the prophets; but I admire still more that he should have written down his word in black and white, in unmistakable language, which can be translated into all tongues, so that we may all see and read for ourselves what God the Lord has spoken to us; and what, indeed, he continues to speak; for what he has spoken he still speaks to us, as freshly as if he spake it for the first time. O glorious Jehovah; dost thou speak to mortal man? Can there be any that neglect to hear thee? If thou art so full of lovingkindness and tenderness that thou wilt stoop out of heaven to converse with thy sinful creatures, none but those who are more brutal than the ox and the ass will turn a deaf ear to thee!

God's Word has a claim, then, upon your attention because of its majesty and its condescension; but yet, further, it should win your ear because of its intrinsic importance. "The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it"—then it is no trifle. God never speaks vanity. No line of his writing treats of the frivolous themes of a day. That which may be forgotten in an hour is for mortal man, and not for the eternal God. When the Lord speaks, his speech is God-like, and its themes are worthy of one whose dwelling is infinity and eternity. God does not play with thee, man: wilt thou trifle with him? Wilt thou treat him as if he were altogether such a one as thyself? God is in earnest when he speaks to thee: wilt thou not in earnest listen? He speaks to thee of great things, which have to do with thy soul and its destiny. "It is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life." Thy eternal existence, thy happiness or thy misery, hang on thy treatment of that which the mouth of the Lord hath spoken. Concerning eternal realities he speaks to thee. I pray thee, be not so unwise as to turn away thine ear. Act not as if the Lord and his truth were nothing to you. Treat not the Word of the Lord as a secondary thing, which might wait thy leisure

and receive attention when no other work was before thee: put all else aside, but hearken to thy God.

Depend upon it, if "The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it," there is an urgent, pressing necessity. God breaks not silence to say that which might as well have remained unsaid. His voice indicates great urgency. To-day, if ye will hear his voice, hear it; for he demands immediate attention. God does not speak without abundant reason; and, O my hearer, if he speaks to thee by his Word, I beseech thee, believe that there must be overwhelming cause for it! I know what Satan says: he tells thee that thou canst do very well without listening to God's Word. I know what thy carnal heart whispers: it says, "Listen to the voice of business, and of pleasure; but listen not to God." But, oh! if the Holy Spirit shall teach thy reason to be reasonable, and put thy mind in mind of true wisdom, thou wilt acknowledge that the first thing thou hast to do is to heed thy Maker. Thou canst hear the voices of others another time; but thine ear must hear God first, since he is first, and that which he speaks must be of first importance. Without delay do thou make haste to keep his commandments. Without reserve answer to his call, and say, "Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth." When I stand in this pulpit to preach the Gospel, I never feel that I may calmly invite you to attend to a subject which is one among many, and may very properly be let alone for a time should your minds be already occupied. No; you may be dead before I again speak with you, and so I beg for immediate attention. I do not fear that I may be taking you off from other important business by entreating you to attend to that which the mouth of the Lord hath spoken; for no business has any importance in it compared with this: this is the master theme of all. It is your soul, your own soul, your ever-existing soul which is concerned, and it is your God that is speaking to you. Do hear him, I beseech you. I am not asking a favor of you when I request you to hear the Word of the Lord: it is a debt to your Maker which you are bound to pay. Yea, it is, moreover, kindness to your own self. Even from a selfish point of view, I urge you to hear what the mouth of the Lord hath spoken, for in his Word lies salvation. Hearken diligently to what your Maker, your Savior, your best friend, has to say to you. "Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation," but "incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live." "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

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