



Articles and Sermons :: There is a Presumption

There is a Presumption - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/1/21 10:37

There is a Presumption
in Favor of the Bible
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This argument may be simply and tersely stated thus: Man needed a Divine revelation which was committed to writing, a revelation couched in human language. God had previously given man a revelation of Himself in His created works—what men please to term “nature”—but this revelation was inadequate. Though the creation bears unmistakable testimony to the existence of its Creator, and though sufficient is revealed of God through it to render all men “without excuse” (Rom 1:20), yet creation does not present a complete unveiling of God’s character. Creation reveals God’s wisdom and power, but it gives us a very imperfect presentation of His mercy and love. Creation is now under the curse. It is imperfect because it has been marred by sin. Therefore, an imperfect creation cannot be a perfect medium for revealing God and hence, also, the testimony of creation is contradictory.

In the spring of the year, when nature puts on her loveliest robes and we see the beautiful foliage of the countryside and listen to the happy songs of the birds, we have no difficulty in inferring that a gracious God is ruling over our world. But what of the wintertime, when the countryside is desolate and the trees are leafless and forlorn, when a pall of death seems to be resting on everything? When we stood by the seashore and watched the setting sun crimsoning the placid waters on a quiet eve, we had no hesitation in ascribing the picture to the hand of the Divine Artist. But when we stand upon the same seashore on a stormy night, listening to the roaring of the breakers and the howling wind and watching the boats battling with the angry waves, having to helplessly listen to the heartrending cries of seamen as they go down into a watery grave, then we are tempted to wonder if, after all, a merciful God is at the helm. As one walks through the Grand Canyon or stands before the Niagara Falls, the hand and power of God seem very evident; but, as one witnesses the desolations of the San Francisco earthquake or the death-dealing effects of the volcanic eruptions of Mount Vesuvius, he is again perplexed and puzzled. In a word then, the testimony of nature is conflicting, and, as we have said, this is due to the fact that sin has come in and marred God’s handiwork. Creation displays God’s natural attributes but it tells us little or nothing of His moral perfections. Nature knows no forgiveness and shows no mercy, and if we had no other source of information we should never discover the fact that God pardons sinners. Man then needs a written revelation from God.

Our limitations and our ignorance reveal our need. Man is in darkness concerning God. Blot the Bible out of existence and what should we know about His character, His moral attributes, His attitude toward us, or His demands upon us? As we have seen, nature is but an imperfect medium for revealing God. The ancients had the same nature before them as we have, but what did they discover of His character? To what knowledge of the one true God did they attain? The seventeenth chapter of the book of Acts answers that question. When the Apostle Paul was in the famous city of Athens, famous for its learning and philosophical culture, he discovered an altar on which were inscribed the words, “To the unknown God.” The same condition prevails today. Visit those lands that have not been illumined by the light of the Holy Scriptures and it will be found that their peoples know no more about the character of the living God than did the ancient Egyptians and Babylonians.

Man is in darkness concerning himself. From whence am I? What am I? Am I anything more than a reasoning animal? Have I an immortal soul, or, am I nothing more than a sentient being? What is the purpose of my existence? Why am I here in this world at all? What is the end and aim of life? How shall I employ my time and talents? Shall I live only for today, eat, drink, and be merry? What after death? Do I perish like the beasts of the field, or is the grave the portal into another world? If so, whither am I bound? Do these questions appear senseless and irrelevant? Annihilate the Scripture, eliminate all the light they have shed upon these problems, and whither shall we turn for a solution? If the Bible had never been written how many of these questions could have been satisfactorily answered? A very striking testimony to man’s need of a Divine revelation was given by the celebrated but skeptical historian Gibbon. He remarked, “Since, therefore, the most sublime efforts of philosophy can extend no farther than feebly to point out the desire, the hope, or, at most, the probability, of a future state, there is nothing except a Divine revelation that can ascertain the existence and describe the condition of the invisible country which is destined to receive the souls of men after their separation from the body.”

Our experiences reveal our need. There are problems to be faced which our wisdom is incapable of solving; there are o

obstacles in our path which we have no means of surmounting; there are enemies to be met which we are unable to vanquish. We are in dire need of counsel, strength, and courage. There are trials and tribulations which come to us, testing the hearts of the bravest and stoutest, and we need comfort and cheer. There are sorrows and bereavements which crush our spirits and we need the hope of immortality and resurrection.

Our corporate life reveals our need. What is to govern and regulate our dealings one with the other? Shall each do that which is right in his own eyes? That would destroy all law and order. Shall we draw up some moral code, some ethical standard? But who shall fix it? Opinions vary. We need some final court of appeal; if we had no Bible, where should we find it?

Man then needs a Divine revelation; God is able to supply that need; therefore, is it not reasonable to suppose He will do so? Surely God will not mock our ignorance and leave us to grope in the dark! If it is harder to believe that the universe had no Creator than it is to believe that "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," if it is a greater tax upon our faith to suppose that Christianity with all its glorious triumphs is without Divine Founder than it is to believe that it rests upon the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, then does it not also make a greater demand upon human credulity to imagine that God would leave mankind without an intelligible communication from Himself than it does to believe that the Bible is a revelation from the Creator to His fallen and erring creatures?

If there is a personal God (and none but a "fool" will deny His existence), and if we are the works of His hands, then He surely would not leave us in doubt concerning the great problems which have to do with our temporal, spiritual, and eternal welfare. If an earthly parent advises his sons and daughters in their problems and perplexities, warns them of the perils and pitfalls of life which menace their well-being, counsels them with regard to their daily welfare and makes known to them his plans and purposes concerning their future, surely it is incredible to suppose that our Heavenly Father would do less for His children!

We are often uncertain as to which is the right course to pursue; we are frequently in doubt as to the real path of duty. We are constantly surrounded by the hosts of wickedness which seek to accomplish our downfall. And we are daily confronted with experiences which make us sad and sorrowful. The wisest among us need guidance which our own wisdom fails to supply; the best of humanity need grace which the human heart is powerless to bestow; the most refined among the sons of men need deliverance from temptations which they cannot overcome. Will God mock us then in our need? Will God leave us alone in the hour of our weakness? Will God refuse to provide for us a Refuge from our enemies? Man needs a Counselor, a Comforter, a Deliverer. The very fact that God has a Father's regard for His children necessitates that He should give them a written revelation that communicates His mind and will concerning them and that points them to the One who is willing and able to supply all their need.

To sum up this argument, man needs a Divine revelation. God is able to supply one. Is it not, therefore, reasonable to suppose He will do so? There is then a presumption in favor of the Bible. Is it not more reasonable to believe that He whose name and nature is Love shall provide us with a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path than to believe that He has left us to grope our way amid the darkness of a fallen and ruined world?