

**THE BOOKS OF THE OLD AND NEW
TESTAMENTS CANONICAL AND
INSPIRED; WITH REMARKS ON THE
APOCRYPHA. FIRST AMERICAN
EDITION; WITH AN APPENDIX**

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ROBERT HALDANE

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BOOKS
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Bible
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CANONICAL AND INSPIRED;

WITH

REMARKS ON THE APOCRYPHA.

BY

ROBERT HALDANE, ESQ.
OF SCOTLAND.

FIRST AMERICAN EDITION;

WITH

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PREFACE.

THE Canon and Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures are subjects of the highest importance to every Christian. The Divine Books contain the only information with respect to the salvation of sinners, and the duties, privileges, and hopes of the heirs of heaven. All that can be known of the mind of God, and of the future state of man, must be learned from them. The theories of men, with respect to the things of God, and reasonings respecting revealed subjects, grounded on any other foundation but the divine declarations, are not only fallacious as far as concerns their immediate objects, but prevent an accurate acquaintance with the ways of God, by opening innumerable devious paths, which deceitfully promise to lead to heavenly knowledge.

The Bible not only contains things that are divinely accredited as true, but it contains all the truth on divine subjects that is accessible to man. Hence every thing that respects the particular books composing the Canon, and the inspiration of these books, is of the liveliest interest to every Christian. Whatever tends to invalidate the authority of any particular book of the Canon, or to add others to the number, ought to be met

with the most decided opposition, as threatening to rob us of the most precious revealed truth, or to impose on us the traditions of men as the commandments of God. To reject a book, whose authenticity rests on the authority of the Canon, is not only to give up the portion of divine truth which such book contains, but to take away the evidence of every other book standing on the same authority. If one book of the Canon is given up, how shall any other be retained on the authority of that Canon? Is it a light thing to admit a principle that unsettles the evidence of every book of the Bible? Is it an innocent thing to charge as superfluous, unimportant, unholy, or unworthy of God, any thing that there is authority to hold as his word? What, then, shall be said of those Christians, who have not only discovered an unbecoming facility in surrendering parts of the book of God, but have labored with the most strenuous exertions to unsettle the Canon, and have availed themselves of every resource, with which a perverse ingenuity could supply them, to degrade some of the books that are as fully authenticated as any in that sacred collection?

In like manner, to recognize a book, not authenticated by the Canon, is to invalidate the authority of the Canon, and to lay a foundation for the admission of unaccredited books to an indefinite extent. It is obvious, that those who do so cannot be assured of the truths which they receive, nor that they have all revealed truths in the Bible. Such a mode of proceeding degrades the Word of God, unsettles the faith of the Christian, and greatly mars his edification and comfort.

The inspiration of the Scriptures is a thing of equal

importance with the authority of the Canon. If God is not the author of them, in the fullest and most complete sense of that term, we cannot receive them as the word of God. The Scriptures so plainly assert their inspiration, that it is matter of astonishment that any who profess to believe them should have denied it. Yet many have contrived to hold the word, and to deny the thing itself. In this way, they perhaps hide even from themselves the boldness of their unhallowed speculations. That inspiration extends to words, as well as to matter, is a thing so obvious, that it never could have been questioned, if those who deny it had not misled themselves by their vain reasonings on the subject, or taken the contrary for granted without inquiry, on the authority of others. A writing inspired by God, self-evidently implies in the very expression, that the words are the words of God; and the common impression of mankind coincides with this most entirely. That the inspiration is in the matter, not in the words, that one part of Scripture is written with one kind or degree of inspiration, and another part with another kind or degree, is contrary to the phraseology, and totally without foundation in any part of the Scriptures themselves, and never could have suggested itself as a natural meaning of the word. This unholy invention is the figment of an ill-employed ingenuity, either to invalidate some Scripture truths, or to repel some objections, which appeared otherwise unanswerable. It is an expedient to serve a purpose, and as little to be approved, when it is used to defend the declarations of God, as when it is used to overturn them. Yet degrading views both of the Canon and Inspiration of the Scriptures too generally prevail; and some writers of great

influence on the public mind, instead of correcting these errors, lend their influence to their establishment.

The plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is not only established by the most express passages in the way of direct authority, but it is a matter of no light consideration that there are no opposing passages on the other side. Hardly an error ever was maintained, but what could press some passage of the Word of God into its service, by the use of torture. Indeed, very many important truths of the divine word are not without their difficulties, from passages that afford a handle to human ignorance and human depravity. While these are always capable of a solution in perfect accordance with the truths to which, at first sight, they may appear to be opposed, they prove a test of our submission to the divine wisdom. They manifest the childlike disposition of the people of God; but they are as gins and snares to the wisdom of this world, and the wise are taken by them in their own craftiness. As the contiguity of the Canaanites manifested the unbelief of the people of Israel, so these passages in the divine wisdom bring out into open avowal the enmity of men to the truth of God. But the inspiration of the Scriptures, in the words as well as in the matter, is not opposed by any difficulty of this kind; and the authors of the low and derogatory view of the Word of God, which ascribes to it different degrees of inspiration, cannot plead a single passage that will afford them even the shadow of support. Their doctrine is but a theory—a theory in opposition to the most express assertions of Scripture, and not countenanced by the allegation of a single text.

Whence comes the Bible? is a question in every way worthy of the deepest attention of the Christian. The grounds on which is rested the happiness of this world, and of the world to come, can never be too deeply examined. The title-deeds to so immense an inheritance, are worthy of the constant researches of the life of man.

To establish with the utmost precision what are the books belonging to the Canon of Scripture, to fix the brand of reprobation on all false pretenders to the honor of inspiration, and to vindicate the writings of the Old Testament and the New, as the words of the Spirit of God, can at no period be a useless labor. But present circumstances add greatly to this importance; and recent events have discovered not only ignorance on these subjects, where knowledge might have been expected, but opposition, even from the friends of the gospel. It is much to be regretted, that unscriptural opinions concerning these subjects have long been entertained, and have, of late, been advocated by persons, who might have been expected to be the most zealous in opposing their progress. The Christian public are in the greater danger from the infection of this heresy, because it is propagated by persons whom they have long been accustomed to regard as among the brightest ornaments of true religion. Had these dangerous opinions made their appearance in the works of Socinians, Christians would have stood on their guard against them. But when the Canon is unsettled, and plenary inspiration is denied by men who profess to hold the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel, many will be misled. If, then, we are commanded to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered