
A COMMONSENSE VIEW OF RELIGION



**The Truth about God
The Evidence of the Egg
The Rise and Fall of Nations
God's Hand Revealed Today
Where Commonsense Leads**

THE Bible is a fascinating book, widely distributed, but little read. People have no time for things in which they are not really interested, and they cannot be interested in what they do not understand. What is needed is a commonsense approach to religion which gets back to the Bible itself. Its pages show that true religion is not the mysterious and gloomy thing some suppose it to be; that the state of man need not be oppressed by the fearful problems that belong to an old way of thinking; that religion is about the earth and man, and points to the glory that will flood the world at the second coming of Jesus Christ. God willingly offers salvation. His plan is to people the earth with immortal beings who faithfully obey His will and overcome the difficulties and problems of life. This is all explained in the Bible, which offers hope and comfort, where human philosophy and science utterly fail. It enlivens the mind and rejoices the heart by providing an objective and purpose in life. Read it, and find the *commonsense* view that answers all the questions of life.

HERALD OF THE COMING AGE

A Christadelphian Publication

DECLARING THE TRUTH OF THE SCRIPTURES REVEALED FOR THE SALVATION OF THOSE WHO ARE PREPARED TO EXAMINE THE CLAIMS OF GOD'S WORD; AND PRESENTING THE GLORIOUS MESSAGE OF THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF GOD'S ETERNAL KINGDOM ON EARTH.

Edited by G.E. Mansfield,

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A COMMONSENSE View of Religion

“IS THERE A GOD?” — This is the most important question that a person can consider. It may not so appear on the surface, but careful thought reveals that the answer will determine one's destiny. In fact, the conclusion reached is sure to have a practical impact upon our life, as well as upon the hopes, desires and plans we have for the future. Any other considerations soon lose their importance as we continue through the short span of life. Our “seventy years of existence,” sometimes shorter, sometimes longer, soon finds their own limitations. In fact, from the feebleness of the babyhood, youth develops and middle age flourishes for a little while, but soon the decay of our powers is felt in weariness and sickness, and ultimately we inevitably disappear in the cold silence and oblivion of the cemetery.

What, then, is the purpose of life? What is the reason for our existence? For the answers to these questions, we must look beyond ourselves. We must discern the evidence of logic and fact in the grand plan of the universe and unravel the secrets of life for ourselves.

This leads directly to the question posed at the beginning of this article.

Is there a God? The man who says there is no God, or, even admits that He exists but cares nothing for His revelation, cuts himself off from the invaluable experience that comes with reverence for the eternal, and the sunshine of a better hope for the future, which lightens the darkness of human life with its present despair. The person who rejects the Creator may not be aware of the folly which results from his denial, nor realize what he loses by so doing. He may not understand that, eventually the stark reality of human existence stares everyone in the face, demanding an answer even from those who have none! For a life without the knowledge of God is a life of abject emptiness and frustration.

Times of crisis shake everyone sooner or later — when calamity, disease, solitude and weakness, become a personal experience. Then the hopelessness of unbelief makes itself felt, desolating the innermost being like the biting cold of eternal Antarctic frosts. Where, then, can such a person turn for comfort and a ray of hope when God is left out of the picture?

In times of public turmoil the ignorance of God becomes a menace even to the safety of society, as the leaders of the French Revolution found to their dismay, and as the world has since suffered under the impact of godless socialism. So terrible has this menace been, that history records the instance when men, crushed by the violence and misery of unbelief even invented a god, in order to bring the masses back under the influence of some moral restraint and discipline.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "GOD"?

It is impossible to express all the significance of what God should mean to us in a single sentence, but for present purposes, it may be said that by "God," we mean an intelligent Being with sufficient energy to produce and sustain the whole system of nature as we see it in the earth and universe about us, and of which

we ourselves form a minute part.

Is there such a Being? Or is the universe merely the result of the chance evolution of fermenting elements destitute of any power of intelligent purpose for present needs, or of the capacity to form plans to benefit mankind in the future?

THE ANSWER OF COMMONSENSE

Commonsense is the general understanding, or sound, practical judgment, that a person might have as regards the making of decisions for his benefit, without always discerning the basis, or facts, of the matter. Commonsense is built upon the acceptance and expectation of natural circumstances, their development and effect, without really perceiving their cause.

Let us illustrate what we mean by pointing to the law of gravitation. The ordinary man has a correct sense of the action of gravitation, though he may not know the science or principles governing gravitation. He knows that a stone pushed over a hillside will go crashing into the valley beneath, though he be unaware that this occurred due to a universal law by which bodies in space attract each other.

So in this matter of the Creator. Without conscious reasoning, man has an inborn intuition that there is a higher Power, and a desire to worship.

When we consider why human intelligence reasons the logical universe must have a Maker, we will discover the principles that convince us that there is a God, for man's latent capacity for God is proof of His existence, though only His Word, the Bible, explains why we are separated from Him because of sin.

There is a God because there must be one!

LOOK ABOVE AND AROUND FOR THE EVIDENCE

First, consider the earth, sun, moon and stars. 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 at that moment 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 work then than it might have had a hundred millions of years earlier.

If it began to stir then, something must have stirred it. What was this? It was something in addition to its former passiveness and immobility. It was *intelligence* and *power* that began to stir it, for the work done was both wise and stupendous. We are forced to the conclusion that *Power* possessing *Intelligence* exerted itself upon the scene at that time of creation. It is a scientific fact that no effect can take place without an efficient cause operating before it. Power possessing intelligence is God, and it was Power possessing intelligence that was at work when the universe passed from original chaos to order.

LOOK UPON THE EARTH FOR MORE EVIDENCE

When we look at matters of detail, the answer is greatly strengthened. Intelligence and purpose is seen in every department of nature. And, as soon as *intelligence* is admitted, God is recognized.

The construction of the hand, or foot, or the various working parts of the body, demonstrates the operation of intelligence, designing these for a specific purpose. Above all, this evidence of design, intention, or purpose, is indicated in the constitution of nature when the power of every plant and animal to reproduce itself is considered.

Here is the reflex of purpose, that the various species of life can be perpetuated. All other powers and faculties are for the creatures own use and need, but the capacity for reproduction alone points to futurity. It is not essential to the individual life of plant or animal; it is only needed to ensure that its own kind shall be continued. It is a deliberate provision to secure the

perpetuation of species.

Can this be the arrangement of blind, unintelligent force? It is the arrangement of intention or purpose. If blind force can exercise *intention*, then it is no longer "blind" force; it "sees" something for which it provides. And if that be the case, then it would be a greater miracle than that of a remarkable universe coming from the hands of a wise and eternal Creator — and the credulity of the faith of God-rejectors much greater than the faith of God-believers!

So commonsense unites with the Bible in saying: **"The fool hath said, there is no God!"** (Psalm 14: 1).

WHAT CAME FIRST: THE HEN OR THE EGG?

But what we have stated is only the beginning of the evidence that *intention or purpose* support the verdict of *commonsense*, that there is a living and eternal God.

There are details in nature that cannot be explained apart from the operation of the wisdom and power of God.

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 really matters not which it was, but 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 impractical. You ask us to believe in a thing happening that never happens now, and a thing contrary to all present known experience and truth, namely, that nothing happens and that nothing occurs outside the laws of nature without efficient reason.

The first hen or the first egg must have had efficient reason. 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, by instinct, actions controlled by most remarkable physical and physiological laws. Did blind force bestow this instinct? How do we account for it? Instinct cannot be accounted for by experience, for it is independent of all experience. The young duckling that has never seen the water, dives and swims with perfect ease. The youngest chick knows a hawk, and the dreadful form appearing in the heavens above, fills it with instant terror, though it had never seen it before. The newly-hatched chick pecks corn. The working bees go to work with perfect architectural skill as soon as they issue from the comb. These, and a thousand other examples, all endorse with one voice the verdict of *commonsense* that 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.

MAKING HIMSELF KNOWN TO MANKIND

If commonsense demands the existence of God, does it not also require that He reveal His purpose unto man? Whilst natural creation demonstrates the fact of an intelligent Power, it reveals nothing of His purpose or character. For that we require *revelation*. Without it we can know little of God apart from the fact that He exists as a creative Being. Without it we might be open to the idea that there are various gods — a god of love, of hate, of light, of darkness, of peace, of war — like the polytheistic speculators of Greece and Rome.

But God has made available the evidence of His existence and purpose. The Bible is God's revelation to man. It reveals Him 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 has taken the leading part. The Bible, in fact, is primarily the manifestation of God's personality by what it records of His actions and statements. In the pages of this wonderful Book, we have the character of God set before us that we might be drawn to worship Him. He is revealed as a loving heavenly Father, and the measure of His mercy and love is revealed in the destiny He has ordained for the earth, and the reward laid up for those who would serve Him.

People have an idea that the Bible consists only of pious platitudes and what are called "devotional exercises." This is a great mistake. Even Christ, who rises above all other Bible characters in the expression of His Father's words, was more intent on revealing God than advising man. His ministry was designed to "manifest" and "declare" the Father's name unto men (John 17:6, 26), that they might be drawn unto Him. This was done both by precept and example, by outright teaching as by the revelation of God's hand in man's affairs.

There is an increasing tendency to regard the Bible in the light of myth, legend, tradition. Those who make such suggestions are of different classes.

There is the shallow, vulgar, blatant blasphemer, who speaks evil of things he does not understand.

There is the refined agnostic, who classes the Bible with the religions of superstition, and looks disdainfully from the "heights" of an intellectual culture befogged by philosophies that lead nowhere and achieve nothing of value.

And there are higher critics, even clerics of religion, who profess to recognize a certain divinity in the Bible, but destroy its value by asserting that it contains many human and erring elements. 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 its real character. But none of these classes just mentioned is given to reading the Bible in this way. They read what people say about the Bible, which is a very different thing.

That the Bible is of divine origin and authorship is proven by all the tests we can apply. Chief among those is the quality of the book itself. A divine book ought to differ from a human book inasmuch as divine ways differ from human ways. And it is so. The Bible differs from human literature in its style of diction, in the nature of its sentiment, in the principles it sets forth. It depreciates man; it exalts God, as no human book does. Look at the unsparing candour of its narrative, its amazing prophecies!

Consider this fact: that though written in ages when the world was sunk in gross superstition and ignorance of all natural laws and scientific concepts, steeped in cruel, idolatrous beliefs and practices, the Bible presents noble and pure principles of thought and action.

There has been more opposition and persecution levelled against the Bible than any other book — yet it has surmounted them, and gone forth in greater numbers. Century after century men have tried to burn it and destroy it. Crusade after crusade has been organized to extirpate it. Kings have set themselves, and rulers of the church have taken counsel together to destroy it from off the face of the earth. In the year AD303, the Roman Emperor Diocletian, inaugurated the most terrific onslaught that the world has known upon a single book. Every known Bible was destroyed, thousands of Christians perished, and a column of triumph was erected over an exterminated Bible with the inscription: "*Extincto nomine Christianorum*" (which means "*The name of the Christians has been extinguished*"). But Diocletian is long dead, and the

Bible still continues. But sadly its suppression was to become a greater force than ever before. It is a remarkable fact, that in nearly all the great epochs of Christian persecution and martyrdom, the fury of opposition has not been so much directed against doctrine or creed, but against the Book itself. In past ages, men who read the Bible were subjected to the tortures of the Inquisition, or the fierce opposition of bigots.

CONTINUING THE DESTRUCTION OF THE BIBLE

In recent years, it has been the rationalist with his cold and deadly philosophy, who has attempted to destroy the influence of the Bible. But how well has he succeeded? No better than the butcher Diocletian, or the brutal Inquisition of the Romish church. The writings of Voltaire, Paine, Bolingbroke and others have been levelled against the Bible, and the voices of these men raised in ridicule concerning its contents. But, today, their voices are silenced, though the Bible is still heard; their writings have little influence, but the message of the Bible is still powerful.

One writer has well expressed this phenomenon in the following words: ***"Mighty emperors and kings and priests have shunned no toil and no guilt in order to exterminate it; wise and scholarly men have thoroughly refuted it; and now that higher criticism lords over it, and science has done away with it, it is spreading over the whole earth with astonishing rapidity in millions of copies and hundreds of languages, and is being read and preached from pole to pole."***

The challenge of Moses can well apply: *"Ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it?"* (Deuteronomy 4:32).

COMMONSENSE LOOKS AT THE BIBLE

The Bible is largely a book of predictions. This is particularly so in relation to the Old Testament. All through its 39 volumes, contained in the one cover, there are predictions far beyond any human conjecture. Their exactness is remarkable; their detail significant. Mighty nations of antiquity have come and gone exactly as declared in the prophecies of the Bible. For example: where today are these six nations which, at the *height of their power*, Bible prophecy declares would totally disappear? — Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, Edom, Ammon and Philistia.

As foretold in the Bible, they no longer exist.

NINEVEH, the capital of Assyria, was to become a complete desolation (Nahum 1:8; Zephaniah 2:13-15), and **BABYLON** was to become "heaps" (Jeremiah 25:12). So complete was the fulfilment as the Bible predicted, that the exact site of these once mighty cities was unknown until a little over a century ago. Since then, the spade of the archaeologist has unearthed their ruins, to find their condition answering exactly to what Bible prophecy declared.

The once mighty mercantile marine power of **TYRE** was to be thrown into the sea; its site to become a place "for the spreading of nets" (Ezekiel 26:4, 12, 13, 15, 21). On a clear day, the ruins of Tyre may be seen scattered about in the shallow waters of the Mediterranean.

On the other hand, the Bible foretold that the following peoples would continue until the setting up of God's kingdom on earth — the Jews, Arabs, Persians, Ethiopians and Egyptians.

These predictions have been fulfilled. Those nations are still with us, and in the very condition described by Bible prophecy.

In fact, Bible prophecy has been so remarkably vindicated as should stop the mouths of scoffers, and change the hearts of unbelievers. For instance, the

prophet Isaiah declared: "*Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited; neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there*" (Isaiah 13:19-22). Complete destruction came upon Babylon as is here announced. But, in addition, the curious detail regarding the Arabs refusing to pitch tent there, has also been accurately fulfilled. When the archaeologist Layard excavated the site of ancient Babylon, he found it impossible to get Arab workers to remain on the site overnight. A Turkish army officer has reported that when he was once hunting near Babylon, the Arabs struck their tents because they believed there were ghosts and evil spirits there.

The prophecy concerning Babylon was made when the empire was at the height of its glory, and the metropolis of a great community which welcomed many visitors from all parts of the ancient world.

The unbeliever Volney was compelled to confirm the truth of the prophecies about Idumea and the Edomites (Jeremiah 49:16; Ezekiel 35:3-15; Obadiah 18) when, during eight days' travel, he found the ruins of thirty utterly abandoned cities.

The Old Testament abounds with prophecies concerning the first and second coming of Christ. Centuries before he was born, his coming and mission was described in outline and detail in the Old Testament. His ancestry, time of birth, place of birth, manner of birth, infancy, manhood, teaching, character, career, preaching, reception, rejection, death, burial, resurrection, ascension into heaven, second advent to the earth, and future earthly reign are all the subject of Old Testament prophecies.

Sceptics respond that this is all a forgery, and that these prophecies have been added later to synchronize with New Testament teaching. But commonsense shows the fallacy of such an answer. The Old

Testament is pre-eminently the Jewish Scriptures, though the Jews reject the status of the Lord Jesus. This fact alone shows that the Old Testament existed long before the birth of Jesus. And the fact that these Scriptures exactly foretell that the Christ, when he came, would be rejected and crucified by the Jewish people, surely testifies to the Wonder of the Book. Would the Jews forge such statements in their own scriptures, seeing they rejected Christ? *Commonsense*, having admitted there is a God, is forced to acknowledge that the Bible is His book.

In other words, Commonsense having demanded that we believe in a God, now demands that we believe God.

THE HAND OF GOD IN HISTORY

When king Frederick the Great of Prussia (Germany) asked for one single statement of proof that the Bible is inspired and infallible, he was given the answer: "The Jews, your Majesty!"

The answer is a compelling one when the facts are examined. The Bible predicts with unerring accuracy the destiny of the Jewish nation, and history amply demonstrates the truth of these prophecies. Even the condition in which the Jews have found themselves among the nations is clearly outlined in the Bible. Centuries before Israel was constituted again a nation in AD1948, the people were told: "Thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee" (Deuteronomy 28: 37).

How true these words are ! Call your friend "a real Australian," and he feels complimented; call him "a real Jew," and he is insulted. Why?

Because the Jew is universally despised. He is, in the terms of Bible prophecy, "an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all nations."

Yet, in spite of bitter and continuous opposition and persecution throughout the ages, the Jew remains, as

Bible prophecy declared he would. Greater and more powerful nations have disappeared, swallowed up by their conquerors, or the passage of time; but the Jew remains despite repeated subjugation and persecution. History thus testifies to the truth of such passages as Jeremiah 30:11, spoken concerning the Jewish people: *"For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee; though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee in measure and will not leave thee altogether unpunished."*

This statement alone satisfies the enquiring mind. How else can the continued existence of Israel be explained? Time and again powerful nations have risen against the Jew determined to crush him out of existence, but it has inevitably been the persecutor that has gone under.

Commonsense asks the question, Why is this?

The Bible answers that it is the hand of God in history. In Jeremiah 33:20-26, God challenges man. He declares that if man could prevent day or night following in their sequence, then he might have some hope of completely destroying Israel.

But *Commonsense* again enquires, "Why should God preserve the Jewish nation? Is not their history a record of disobedience? Did they not crucify their Messiah, God's Son? Are they not, to this day, rebellious against His teaching?"

All this, and more, is true. Why then preserve them? The answer is given in Ezekiel 36: 22. God declares, *"I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the nations whither ye went."*

God promised faithful Abraham that He would make of his descendants "a great nation" (Genesis 12: 1-3). The descendants of Abraham are the Jewish people, and their record of disobedience is such that God would

be justified in the eyes of most people if He destroyed the rebellious nation. But because of His essential quality of faithfulness He does not do so. He has promised to accomplish a purpose with the nation, and "for His name's sake," He will do it. Because of that, the Jews have been preserved, and are returning to their land and rebuilding their nation. *Commonsense* can see the hand of God in all this, recognizing it as a token of His faithfulness. *Commonsense* reasons that if God thus fulfils His promise in relation to faithless Jewry, He will also fulfil His promise of individual salvation to those who seek to serve and obey Him. Thus *Commonsense* finds that it can place implicit trust in the record and promises of the Bible.

A PHENOMENON OF THE LAST DAYS

Today, however, we see more than the preservation of the Jews as a separate identity among the nations, we see their restoration to their own land, and the re-emergence of a Jewish State. In these happenings the world is witnessing a miracle. The Bible declares: "He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock" (Jeremiah 31:10). Over 2,000 years have passed since those words were spoken, and today they are being fulfilled. And a hundred similar prophecies, could be quoted (see Jeremiah 3:14-17; 30:17-18; 32:37; Hosea 2:23; Isaiah 37:31; Micah 4:6-8).

Scepticism cannot explain the phenomenon — *Commonsense* reasons that the Bible is true, and this is God's hand in history.

But what is the ultimate purpose of God with the Jews? Again the Bible does not leave us in doubt. "*I will take the children of Israel from among the nations whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all...*" (Ezekiel 37:21-22). These verses teach (1) the

regathering of Israel back to their own land; (2) the establishing of them as a nation; (3) the setting over them of a king. The king referred to is he who was crucified because he claimed to be the king of the Jews, over whose cross Pilate caused it to be written: "*This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.*"

The return of the Jews to Israel is thus a miracle paving the way for an even more momentous event.

The Bible again declares: "When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory" (Psalm 102:15). The return of the Jews is a Biblical sign speaking of the imminent second advent of the Lord Jesus to this earth (Acts 1:11; 3:19-20; Revelation 1:7). He comes to discipline and educate the Jewish people (Jeremiah 33:7-9), to reward his followers with life eternal (Matthew 19:29), to subdue and reign over all nations (Isaiah 2:2-4), to set up his power in Jerusalem as the metropolis of a world at peace (Jer. 3:17-18).

WHERE COMMONSENSE WILL LEAD US

We now come to the final result of *Commonsense*, namely that these things being true, we should do something about them. Salvation is an individual matter, dependent upon individual initiative and action. *Commonsense* sees this as a universal law. It is the man or woman of initiative, of action, who gets things done, who succeeds in a venture. Laziness accomplishes nothing — whether of mind or of body. And it is also a law of life that the most desirable things are the hardest to obtain. We will not succeed in the battle of life unless we are prepared to sacrifice to gain success, and reach out for the things we desire. Salvation is no different. We should not leave it to others. "*None can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him; that he should still live for ever, and not see corruption*" (Psalm 49:7-9)

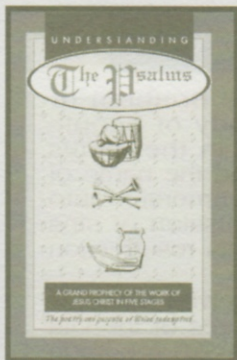
The "salvation" of which we speak is that which rescues from death. The Bible declares that its reward

awaits an appointed era (1Corinthians 15:23; Revelation 22:12), to be inaugurated by the personal re-appearance of Christ in the earth (Hebrews 9:28; 2Timothy 4:8), and the resurrection of many men and women of the past, that they with those of the present, might appear before him in judgment. The worthy will be given immortality, and a position of honor for evermore.

The very vastness and splendour of this scheme stamps it as divine. Man could never have invented such a project. Man either promises a reward on this earth now, or sets forth the theory that death is the gateway to an immaterial heavenly existence. The Bible knows nothing of these theories, but sets forth clearly the hope of life eternal to be enjoyed upon this earth.

It is, however, against all the reason of *Commonsense* that God will give us salvation if we are not prepared to do something to obtain it. What must we do to be saved? Christ answers: Believe the gospel, be baptized, and subject the flesh to the will of God (Mark 16:16; Romans 1:16; 1Corinthians 15:1-3; Matthew 7:21-29). We must first discipline the mind by accepting the basic elements of Truth set forth in the Scriptures, and then build a moral life, that a suitable foundation might be developed for the accepting of immortality at the second coming of Jesus Christ (1Corinthians 15:53-54). This requires effort but the effort is well worthwhile. *Commonsense* declares it to be so.

We hope that you have enjoyed this article, and will act upon it for your personal benefit and eternal salvation. Questions or comments are most welcome upon all Biblical topics, and should be directed to ***The Editor, Herald of the Coming Age, Box 220, Findon 5023, South Australia.***



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They do not profess to have received any new revelation, but hold that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are able to make a person wise unto salvation ([2Timothy 3:15-17](#)). Believing in the divine authorship of the Bible, they think it only reasonable to reject any interpretation which fails to harmonise all the testimonies of the Holy Scriptures; and, finding that the creeds of the various existing religious groups are, in a great variety of ways, opposed to the direct teaching of the Bible, they feel compelled to stand apart, making appeal in all such matters to the statements of Scripture, and testing all teachings thereby.

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