

You say you know. Everyone with the most elementary knowledge of history would say, "I know it." I take leave to differ. You do not know it. You know nothing of the kind. You believe it. If you accept the fact, you believe that there was such a person as Alexander the Great, on the testimony of human writing, connected with circumstantial evidence—evidence (possibly) which no man in his senses ventures to dispute. Still, I say the thing is a *matter of belief*; it is *not a matter of knowledge*. It is belief in the testimony of men concerning man and concerning the things of man.

Now, where does the testimony of Scripture (as a book of history) to the existence of David or Abraham, or Daniel, or any of the worthies of old times—as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, of whom we were reading last Sunday—where does the testimony of Scripture to the lives and acts of those men differ from the testimony of ordinary history? Why, it does not differ at all in kind. It is the same kind of testimony. On the human side, it is the testimony of man to the things of man and the acts of man; and it is confirmed (as that sort of testimony can always be confirmed) by circumstantial evidence. Very well. Then the Bible is a book of history, as all history is history. And it has at least the same claim, if no higher claim to be accepted by mankind as truth. We receive the testimony of men whether in Scripture or in other historical books. In sacred history or in secular history, we receive the witness of men.

And if one might go a step further, and venture to compare the evidence, whether general or circumstantial, to the exactness of the history in Scripture, with that evidence which is forthcoming and has been furnished to the testimony of common history, then which of the two has the advantage? Which is the more accurate? Which is the more precise? Which has been the more severely tested—the evidence of common history or that of sacred history? I say again, without hesitation, that the Bible has been tried and sifted and tested in a way in which no human history is racked and tortured before it is believed. "Thy Word is tried to the uttermost." "The Word of the Lord is tried in the fire." Or in the first text on our paper this morning, "The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." That verse reminds me, too, of another old version of it, that it is "a trial for the earth" as well as