

**SERMONS ON THE  
BEGINNING OF ALL  
THINGS, AS REVEALED TO  
US IN THE WORD OF GOD**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649701995

Sermons on the Beginning of All Things, as Revealed to Us in the Word of God by S. Best

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

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# SERMONS

On the Beginning of All Things,

AS REVEALED TO US IN THE WORD  
OF GOD.



BY THE

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LONDON: SIMPKIN, MARSHALL AND CO.  
SALISBURY: BROWN AND CO.

1871.

100. w. 97.

SALISBURY:  
BENNETT, PRINTER, JOURNAL OFFICE.

## PREFACE.

To the reader I would say a few words in subjecting these discourses to his judgment. They were not written for the profoundly wise and scientific, but for a country congregation, amongst whom it has been the author's blessed privilege to minister for the larger portion of his life, until at least two generations have grown up under his teaching in Church and in School. He knows, therefore, their powers and the familiar subjects which interest them, and has endeavoured in these discourses to turn the thoughts and observations of every day life to their profit. In thought is our strength. If "*dimidium facti, qui bene coepit habet*" is true, it is far more true that if we can only lead any one to think, we have done half our work, and if to think soundly, the victory is won. May GOD lead those who read this little effort to fulfil this duty. Controvert it if they will, but think and think soberly, and God's blessing is with them. The thoughts and arguments are the same as those made use of in a series of scripture readings for families and schools.

## SERMONS.

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2 TIM. iii. 16.

“Scripture is given by inspiration of God.”

WE may look on *this* as a noble preface to the Bible. It tells us whence it comes, and whose word it is. Were we to pursue the question further it would tell us, in the following words, why and for what purposes it was given. But it is not my intention at the present moment to lead you into this. I want you to go with me in investigating what these words mean; not in the spirit of controversy, which I dread, for it only separates that which ought to be united, but that we may go away from this house of God wiser and better for considering His ways and dealings with men. Let me suppose that a thoughtful and well-instructed mind for the first time found a Bible or had it put into his hands, and was told that it was the Book of God, of that great and glorious Spirit who created, and who rules the



Universe. One's first fear, surely, would be that he would bow down and worship it, mistaking the creature for the Creator. Well, it would be natural; but why has it not this effect on us? Let us ask ourselves; first, because, if it be possible, let me guard myself and you, we are too familiar with its contents; and, secondly, by a curious contradiction, because we know too little of it to express surprise. If we did know what it is, or thought about it, we should receive it and handle it reverently, we should suppress all flippancies in reading, and if we found any difficulty in understanding it, we should recollect that it is compelled to speak of things heavenly and spiritual in human language, to weak and fallible intellects, and that it is the poverty of our language and the weakness of our powers of understanding which cause all the difficulty. The effort to bring home truths to our hearts by familiar images is in fact a most remarkable proof of God's mercy and lovingkindness. God humbles His truth to bring it within the range of our faith. This is beautifully shown in the parables of our Lord, where truths, otherwise hard and stern, are so simply brought home to us. But what is the result? Why, that we sometimes make this very condescension of God a stumblingblock. Let us admit only the great

truth pre-supposed throughout the Bible, that it is GOD who speaks to us, and we shall not waste our time, nor weaken our faith by nice questions beyond our comprehension, and inconsistent with God's method of communicating truth. We shall embrace it, both in word and in spirit as a kindly message sent in mercy to enlighten us on subjects which would be otherwise mysteries. These words of the Apostle are solemn introductions to the temple we are about to enter in search of truth. We hear the solemn and swelling notes of the organ as we enter, and consider well into whose presence we are going. We may, perhaps, further consider what it is we are likely to hear; surely, not common things, not that which our own inquiry or our own knowledge could teach us. This surely would be a waste of Divine power, and there is no waste in heavenly things. Even the fragments were gathered that nothing should be lost. The Bible tells us, then, of things which we could not otherwise know. It tells us of the Creation, and of the origin of all things; not as historical facts, for they are before and beyond all history, but that we may trace all things back to GOD. We read them as matters of faith, but all our knowledge and observation confirm them. Thus are we doubly instructed, that everything in our ordi-

nary life, our science and our observation, may be profitable to us. "Philosophy and vain deceit," and again, "the oppositions of science falsely so called," you will recollect, we are warned against by the Apostle Paul. It is not against Science he speaks, which is and ought to be the handmaid of Religion; for all knowledge, rightly so called, has the same source, but against "the oppositions of science falsely so called," that he warns us. We must observe this distinction, or we shall let ignorance triumph over knowledge, and refuse the light which, shining in the dark places of the heart, leads us to understand and appreciate the ways and wisdom of God. Thus is it, that inspiration guides us when we have no other guide. When in Gen. i. the Word of God opens with that grand declaration, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep." What a beginning was that! How profound, how fathomless! What ideas, were it not for Revelation, would the great attribute, by which the great Being, the Creator is expressed—God—what would it convey to us? Again, "the heavens and the earth." How could we bring what this expresses within the comprehension of the faculties of man; or what would