

makes it all clear. Answers are given which men can find nowhere except in the Scriptures.

**2.** There is an extraordinary unity and harmony in the contents of the Bible which is supernatural and above man.

We all know how difficult it is to get a story told by any three persons, not living together, in which there are not some contradictions and discrepancies. If the story is a long one, and involves a large amount of detail, unity seems almost impossible with men, but not so with the Bible.

Here is a long book written by no less than 30 different persons. The writers were men of every rank and class in society. One was a lawgiver; one a warlike king; one a peaceful king; one a herdsman. One had been brought up as a publican; another as a physician; another as a learned Pharisee; two as fishermen; several as priests. They lived at different intervals over a period of 1500 years, and the greater part of them never saw each other face to face. And yet there is a perfect harmony among all these writers!

They all write as if they were under one dictation. The style and handwriting may vary, but the mind that runs through their work is always one and the same. They all tell the same story. They all give one account of man, one account of God, one account of the way of salvation, one account of the human heart. You see truth unfolding and developing under their hands as you go through the volume of their writings, and you never detect any real contradiction.

**3.** It is another fact that there is an extraordinary wisdom, sublimity, and majesty in the style of the Bible, which is above man.

Strange and unlikely as it is, the writers of Scripture have produced a book which even at this day is utterly unrivaled. With all our boasted attainments in science, art, and learning we can produce nothing in literature that can be compared with the Bible. Even at this very hour the book

stands entirely alone. There is a strain and a style and a tone of thought about it which separate it from all other writings. There are no weak points, and flaws, and blemishes. There is no mixture of infirmity and feebleness such as you will find in the works of even the best Christians. "Holy, holy, holy" seems to be written on every page.

To talk of comparing the Bible with other so-called "sacred books," such as the Koran or the book of Mormon, is completely absurd. You might as well compare the sun to a candle! God seems to have allowed the existence of pretended revelations in order to prove the immeasurable superiority of His own Word.

**4.** There is an extraordinary accuracy in the facts and statements of the Bible which is supernatural and above man.

Here is a book which has been finished and before the world for nearly 2000 years. Those years have been the busiest and most-changeable period the world has ever seen. During this period the greatest discoveries have been made in science, the greatest alterations in the ways and customs of society, the greatest improvements in the habits and usages of life.

Hundreds of things might be named which satisfied and pleased our forefathers, which we have laid aside long ago as obsolete, useless, and old-fashioned. The laws, the books, the houses, the clothes, and the means of transportation of each succeeding century have been a continual improvement of those of the century that went before. There is hardly a thing in which faults and weak points have not been discovered. There is scarcely an institution which has not gone through a process of reforming, amending, and changing.

But all this time men have never discovered a weak point or a defect in the Bible. Infidels have assailed it in vain. There it stands, as perfect, fresh, and complete, as it did over nineteen centuries ago. The march of intellect never overtakes it. The wisdom of wise men never goes beyond it. The science of philosophers

never proves it wrong. The discoveries of travelers and archaeologists never convict it of a mistake.

**5.** There is in the Bible an extraordinary suitability to the spiritual needs of all mankind.

It exactly meets the heart of man in every rank or class, in every country and climate, in every age and period of life. It is the only book in existence which is never out-of-place and out-of-date. Other books after a time become obsolete and old-fashioned. The Bible never does. Other books suit one country or people, and not another. The Bible suits all. It is the book of the poor and unlearned no less than of the rich and the philosopher. It feeds the mind of the poor and simple laborer, and it equally satisfies men of gigantic intellect.

It is the only book which seems always fresh and new. It is a well never dry, a field never barren. It meets the hearts and minds and consciences of Christians in the present century as fully as it did those of the Greeks and Romans when it was first completed. It is still the first book which fits the child's mind when he begins to learn of Christianity, and the last to which the old man clings as he leaves this world. In short, it suits all ages, ranks, climates, minds, and conditions. It is the one book which suits the world.

Consider these facts about the Bible well. Treat them fairly and honestly. Upon any other principle than that of supernatural and Divine inspiration, these facts are unexplainable and unaccountable.

Here is a book written by a succession of Jews in a little corner of the world which positively stands alone. Not only were its writers isolated and cut off in a peculiar manner from other nations, but they belonged to a people who have never produced any other book of note except the Bible! There is not the slightest proof that, unassisted and left to themselves, they were capable of writing anything remarkable, such as the Greeks and Romans. Yet these men have given the world a volume which for depth, unity, sublimity, accuracy,

suitableness to the wants of man, and power of influencing its readers, is perfectly unrivaled! How can this be explained or accounted for? There is only one answer. The writers of the Bible were Divinely helped and qualified for the work which they did. The book which they have given to us was written by inspiration of God.

Now, infidels see nothing in these facts. Such unhappy persons always appear blind to the enormous difficulties of their own position. We have a just right to ask them how they can possibly explain the origin and nature of the Bible, if they will not allow that it is of Divine authority. We have a right to say, "Here is a book which not only courts inquiry, but demands investigation. We challenge you to tell us how the book was written if you deny its inspiration." How can they account for this book standing so entirely alone? How can they account for nothing having ever been written equal to it, like it, near it, or fit to be compared with it? They cannot give any rational reply on their own principles; whereas, the Christian can certainly give a reply on his principles.

To tell us that man's unassisted mind could have written the Bible is simply ridiculous. It is worse than ridiculous: it is the height of credulity. In short, the difficulties of unbelief are far greater than the difficulties of faith. No doubt there are things "hard to be understood" (*2 Peter 3:16*) if we accept the Scriptures as God's Word. But after all, they are nothing compared to the hard things which rise up in our way and demand solution if once we deny inspiration. There is no alternative. We must either believe things which are grossly improbable, or else we must accept the great truth that the Bible is the inspired Word of God.

## Inspiration—A Miracle

The Bible was miraculously written. We must not confuse it with intellectual power such as great poets and authors possess. To talk of Shakespeare and Milton being inspired, like Moses and Paul, is

almost profane. Nor must we confound it with the gifts and graces bestowed on the early Christians in the primitive church. All the apostles were enabled to preach and work miracles, but not all were inspired to write. We must rather regard it as a supernatural gift, bestowed on about 30 men out of mankind, in order to qualify them for the special business of writing the Scriptures.

Like all miracles, we cannot entirely explain it, but we can believe it. A miracle would not be a miracle if it could be explained! In some marvelous manner the Holy Ghost made use of the reason, the memory, the intellect, the style of thought, and the peculiar mental temperament of each writer. He put into their minds thoughts and ideas, and then guided their pens in writing and expressing them. When you read the Bible you are not reading the unaided, self-taught composition of erring men like yourselves, but thoughts and words which were suggested by the eternal God—"Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." As you hold a Bible in your hand, you should know that you hold not the word of man, but the very Word of God.

Every book, chapter, verse, and syllable of the Bible was given by inspiration of God. It not only contains the Word of God, it is the Word of God. This is not to say that every word in all the various versions and translations of the Bible are inspired. Only so far as they are translated correctly are they of equal authority with the original Hebrew and Greek.

## Verbal Inspiration The Only Acceptable View

Why is every word of the Bible inspired?

1. The Bible cannot be a perfect rule of faith and practice if it contains any flaws and imperfections. The Bible is the statute-book of God's kingdom, the code of laws and regulations by which the subjects of that kingdom are to live, the register-deed of the terms on which they

have peace now and shall have glory hereafter. Now, why are we to suppose that such a book would be loosely and imperfectly drawn up any more than legal deeds are drawn up on earth? Every lawyer can tell us that in legal deeds and statutes every word is of importance, and that property, life, and death may often turn on a single word.

Think of the confusion that would exist if wills, and agreements, and Acts of Parliament were not carefully drawn up and carefully interpreted, and every word allowed its due weight. Where would be the use of such documents if particular words went for nothing, and everyone had a right to add, or take away, or alter, or deny the validity of words, or erase words at his own discretion? At this rate we might as well lay aside our legal documents altogether!

Surely we have a right to expect that in the book which contains our title-deeds for eternity every word should be inspired, and nothing imperfect admitted. If God's statute-book is not inspired, and every word is not of divine authority, what a pitiful state God's subjects are left in!

2. The Bible is fully inspired, containing no imperfections, because of the language which is frequently used about it in its own pages—"the oracles of God" (*Acts 7:38; Rom 3:2; Heb 5:12; 1 Peter 4:11*), "He saith" (*Rom 9:25; Eph 4:8; Heb 1:8*), "the Holy Ghost spake by Isaiah the prophet" (*Acts 28:25*), "the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear his voice..." (*Heb 3:7; 10:15*). These expressions are unexplainable if applied to a book containing occasional defects and mistakes.

3. There are quotations from the Old Testament that are found in the New Testament in which the whole force of the passage turns on a single word—"The LORD said unto my Lord" (*Matt 22:44*); "To Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ" (*Gal 3:16*); "He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren" (*Heb 2:11-12*). In each of these cases the whole

point of the quotation lies in a single word. We must conclude that every word in Scripture is inspired of God.

4. If the words of Scripture are not all inspired, the value of the Bible as a weapon in controversy is greatly damaged, if not entirely taken away. In challenging error and false doctrine the whole point of the text we quote often lies in a single word.

5. To give up verbal inspiration is to destroy the usefulness of the Bible as an instrument for public preaching and instruction. Where is the use of choosing a text and making it the subject of a pulpit address if we do not believe that every word of the text is inspired?

6. Lastly, the denial of verbal inspiration destroys a great part of the usefulness of the Bible as a source of comfort and instruction in private reading. Where is the truly Christian student of the Bible who does not know that words, particular words, afford a large portion of the benefit which he derives from his daily reading? How much the value of many a cherished text depends on some single phrase, or the number of a substantive, or the tense of a verb?

Alas! there would be an end of all this if we once concede that each word is not inspired; and that, for anything we know, some much-loved favorite noun, or verb, or adjective, was an apostle's mistake, and the word of man, not of God! What others might think I do not know. For myself I should be tempted to lay aside my Bible in despair, and become of all men most miserable.■

—Adapted from the writings of J. C. Ryle

# The Bible, Inspired of God

"Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost"—2 Peter 1:21

## Facts About The Bible

1. There is an extraordinary depth, fullness, and richness in the contents of the Bible which is supernatural and above man.

There is a complete gulf between the Bible and any other book that was ever written. It throws more light on a vast number of most important subjects than all other books in the world put together. It boldly handles matters which are beyond man's reach when left to himself—things which are mysterious and invisible: the soul, the world to come, and eternity, depths which no man can fathom.

All who have tried to write of these things, without Bible light, have done little but show their own ignorance. They grope like the blind, they speculate, they guess, they generally make the darkness more visible, and land us in a region of uncertainty and doubt.

The Bible alone gives a reasonable account of the beginning and the end of the globe on which we live, a true picture of man, and just views of God. The Bible alone shows us a reasonable and satisfactory remedy for the spiritual wants and needs of dying men, and meets the universal cravings of conscience by revealing the Saviour, Jesus Christ.

The Bible alone explains the state of things which we see in the world around us. There are many things on earth which man cannot explain—the amazing inequality of conditions, the poverty and distress, the oppression and persecution, the failures of statesmen and legislators, the constant existence of evils and abuses—all these things are often puzzling to him. He sees, yet does not understand. But the Bible