

the elders,” He turned on them with this question: “Why do you also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?” (*Matt 15:2,3*). Before Saul of Tarsus became a believer in Jesus Christ, he was “exceedingly zealous of the traditions” of his fathers (*Gal 1:14*); but when he became a believer he renounced the traditions and turned to the Scriptures. There are many traditions which need to be given up today – things handed down that are contrary to Scripture.

## Revelation and Inspiration

These two words must not be confused. The Word of God came to the prophets; that was revelation. Inspiration is the method by which the Word came through them to us. It is by inspiration that the revelation to them became a revelation to us. Without inspiration we would have no revelation, for the Word of God does not come today as it came to men of old. This inspiration has given us a written revelation. God’s Word which we have today is in the form or nature of a book – the Bible.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God [God-breathed], and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (*2 Tim 3:16*). This does not say the prophets were inspired; inspiration has to do with the words. The words of Scripture came from God; they were God-breathed. It is not our purpose to enter the controversy about theories of inspiration, except to say that we believe in the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, which means that the very words were selected by God, and the men spake as they were borne along by the Holy Spirit. They were not given conceptions or ideas of truth; they were given words of truth and directed by the Spirit to put those “words” of truth in writing (*see 2 Sam 23:2; Isaiah 59:21; Jer 1:9; Matt 4:4*).

The human element in the production of the Bible is fully recognized. The Book came to us through human agency; but the human element was not allowed to hazard the accuracy or infallibility of the Book. The Bible is as accurate and infallible as if God had written it without the human agent. “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (*2 Peter 1:21*).

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son” (*Heb 1:1*). The Old Testament is the Divine record of what God said at different times and in different ways to Israel through their prophets. The New Testament is the Divine record of God speaking in the Son. The comparison between the prophets and Christ is to point a contrast. God was using the prophets to give His Word to Israel; but in Christ it was God Himself speaking. The prophets were many; the Son is one. The prophets were servants; the Son is the Lord. The prophets were temporary; the Son abideth for ever. The prophets spoke the word; Christ is the Word.

The Bible is in two editions, commonly called the Old and the New Testaments. They are not two, but one Book. The Old Testament is the New enfolded; the New Testament is the Old unfolded. In the Old Testament the New is concealed; in the New Testament the Old is revealed. The Old is prediction; the New is fulfillment. The two Testaments have the same Author: God; they have the same subject: Christ. The crimson thread runs through the whole Bible. You can begin anywhere and preach Jesus. In both Testaments, it is recorded that the Lord said, “In the volume of the book it is written of me” (*Psalms 40:7; Heb 10:7*).

## Arguments that the Bible is The Word of God

**1.** There is a *presumption* in its favor. Man needs a revelation from God, and if the Bible is not this revelation, we have none. To be sure, there are the sacred books of other religions, but they are like the gods they witness to, and are obviously not the revelation of the true and living God. Man needs the kind of revelation we have in the Bible. There is a revelation of God in nature, but this revelation is inadequate; it does not cover enough subjects. Nature reveals “His eternal power and Godhead” (*Rom 1:20*), but has nothing to say about His moral qualities. Nature tells us there is a God, but it does not tell us what He is.

A savage on an island far removed from civilization, finding a watch, might reach the conclusion

that it was made by man; but he could not, by examining the watch, learn anything of the character of the watchmaker. And man cannot learn the character of the Creator through the study of geology, biology, and astronomy. The Bible makes no effort to prove the existence of God, but it goes to great lengths in telling us what God is. He is revealed in His mode of existence and in His many moral perfections.

Man is in darkness about himself. He needs a written revelation to tell him what he is, whence he came, and whither he is bound. The Bible answers every question concerning the eternal welfare of the human soul. It convicts every man of sin and tells him how to be saved. Yes, there is a presumption in favor of the Bible. Man needs revelation; God is able to give it. The Bible is the kind of revelation man needs. The Bible satisfies the thirsty soul.

**2.** The Bible *claims* to be the Word of God. If the Bible is not what it claims to be it is a bad book. It is utterly inconsistent to extol the Bible as a good book, and at the same time deny its infallibility. All through the Bible runs the expression, “Thus saith the LORD.” This expression or its equivalent is used fully two thousand times in the Old Testament.

**3.** The *testimony of Christ* argues for the authenticity of the Bible. The Old Testament was in existence in His day, and He accepted it and quoted it as “the Word of God” (*Mark 7:13; John 10:35*). The very book most frequently attacked by the critics, Deuteronomy, was the book from which He made every quotation when tempted by Satan (*Deut 6:13,16; 8:3; cp Luke 4:4-12*).

**4.** The *uniqueness* of the Bible attests its Divine origin. It is different from all other books. To drink at this fountain of truth is to “taste the difference.” It is unique in its teaching about God, about creation, about man, about sin, and about salvation. It has been said that man could not have written such a book if he would, and would not if he could. Any honest man, who knows much about the Bible, will readily admit that it cannot possibly be a human production.

**5.** The *frankness* with which this Book deals with its heroes and authors, gives abundant evidence that it is God’s Word. Human biographies give only

the bright and best side of a man’s life. They extol his virtues and praise his achievements, while saying little or nothing about his weak points. But the characters of the Bible are painted in the colors of truth. The Bible does not whitewash.

**6.** The wonderful *unity* of the Bible is an argument for its inspiration. This is a miracle in itself. Penned on two continents, written in three languages, its composition and compilation extending through the slow progress of 16 centuries, having about 40 different authors; parts of it written in tents, palaces, dungeons, in cities and deserts; written in times of danger and in seasons of ecstatic joy. Among its writers were judges, priests, kings, prophets, prime-ministers, herdsmen, scribes, soldiers, physicians, and fishermen. Yet in spite of these varying circumstances, conditions, and workmen, the Bible is one Book. It holds together. There is affinity one part for the other. The more this truth is pondered the more amazing is the Bible.

Imagine forty persons of different nationalities, possessing various degrees of musical culture, visiting the organ of some great cathedral and at long intervals of time and without any collusion whatever, striking sixty-six different notes, which when combined yielded the theme of the grandest oratorio ever heard. Would it not show that behind these forty different men there was one presiding mind, one great Tone-Master? As we listen to some great orchestra, with its immense variety of instruments playing their different parts, but producing melody and harmony, we realize that at the back of these many musicians there is the personality and genius of the composer. And when we enter the halls of the Divine Academy and listen to the heavenly choirs singing the Song of Redemption, all in perfect accord and unison, we know that it is God Himself who has written the music and put this song into their mouths.

(A. W. Pink)

**7.** *Fulfilled prophecies* give testimony to the Divine origin of the Bible. Prophecy is the foretelling of events before they come to pass. This is the acid test of Divine revelation. God’s appeal to fulfilled prophecy is made all through the Bible (*Deut 18:22; Isaiah 41:21-23; 2 Peter 1:19-21*). Men may make some general predictions about the future, but the Bible contains hundreds of prophecies, which have been

literally fulfilled hundreds of years after they were written.

**[a]** Prophecies about *Christ*. He is the one great subject of prophecy (*Rev 19:10; Heb 10:7*). Micah predicted His birthplace (*Micah 5:2*). Isaiah said His mother would be a virgin (*Isaiah 7:4*). We have many things about His death and resurrection foretold (see *Psalms 16 & 22* and *Isaiah 53*).

**[b]** Prophecies about *the Jews*. These like the prophecies about Christ, are too many to enumerate. The destruction of their royal city, Jerusalem, was foretold years in advance. Read Matthew 22:1-7; Matthew 24 and Luke 21 and then read the account of the destruction of Jerusalem by Josephus, who was with Titus in this campaign and afterwards wrote the history of it. The wandering Jews have long been a proverb in human history, but they were a Divine prophecy a long time before.

**[c]** One of the most interesting bits of prophecy is that concerning *Josiah*, the boy king of Judah, who reigned from 637-608 BC. When Jeroboam stood by his altar at Bethel to burn incense, an unknown prophet of God came out of Judah and cried against the altar in these words: “O altar, altar, thus saith the LORD; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men’s bones shall be burnt upon thee” (*1 Kings 13:2*). The date of this prophecy was 975 BC.

Here is the prediction of the birth, and name, and deed of a later king of Judah, which took place three and one-half centuries later. The fulfillment is recorded in 2 Kings 23:15,16: “Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burned the high place, and stamped it small to powder, and burned the grove. And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchers that were there in the mount and sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchers, and burned them upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words.” The fulfillment took place in 624 BC or 351 years after the prophecy.

## Some General Characteristics of the Bible as a Divine Revelation

**1.** The Bible is a *religious* Book. It is not a textbook on natural science, but a revelation of moral and saving truth. It was not written to tell men how to get on here, but to tell them how to prepare for the hereafter.

**2.** The Bible is an *open* Book. Its truths are not veiled in scientific language, but are given in the popular language of the people. If the Bible had been written in the scientific language of the first century, it would have been out-of-date in this century. If it had been written in the language of this century, nobody could have understood it until a few years ago. If written in scientific language, only the scholars could understand it. The Bible was not written for scholars, but for men. It is the people’s Book. It was delivered to the saints, not to pope, or priest, or cleric. If the gospel is veiled, the veil is not on the Book, but on the human heart. The best qualification for understanding it is a sincere, honest and Spirit-enlightened mind.

**3.** The Bible is a *practical* Book. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable. The value of the Bible is beyond human appraisal. This Book came from God and takes us to God. I know it came from God because it treats of subjects beyond the human intellect. The Bible shows the way to God, and how to become righteous before Him. It is a manual of life and conduct. It was not given to adorn a table, but to direct a life. Read this Book to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy.

**4.** The Bible is an *immortal* Book. All other books die. It can be said of the Bible as was said of Christ: “From the womb of the morning Thou hast the dew of Thy youth” (*Psalms 110:3*). Time writes no wrinkles on the brow of the eternal Word.

The Bible is the world’s best seller and at the same time the most hated of all books. Every weapon from the arsenal of hell has been used against it. All the strategists of Satan’s empire have collaborated in an effort to destroy it. But the Bible is a living and indestructible Book. It has survived the fires of pagan and papal Rome, and the sophistries of all opposing philosophers. It triumphed over the arguments of Ingersoll, the ridicule of

Voltaire, and the reasonings of Tom Paine. “Forever, O LORD, Thy word is settled in heaven” (*Psalms 119:89*). The Bible is like the bush that Moses saw – burning but not consumed, for God was in it. It is like the anvil that wears out all the hammers.

*Yes, like a solid anvil the sacred Scripture stands,  
And fiercely is it beaten by unbelievers’ hands;  
With noise and show of learning they make a large display  
But like the blacksmith’s hammer, they wear themselves away.*

**5.** The Bible is an *expensive* Book. The cost to us is not much. We enter a bookstore and ask for a Bible; we lay down a few dollars. But is that the cost of the Bible? God in providential mercy has made the costliest of all books cheap to us. We estimate the value of an article by the cost of producing it. The Bible is a costly Book in its human aspect. Men sank their lives in medieval monasteries to make copies of it for future generations. Then there was the cost to martyrs who laid down their lives for love of the truth when pope or pagan would try to sweep away every copy of it.

The Bible also represents a cost to God. From Genesis to Revelation it is written in the blood of His Son. The Old Testament is the finger of prophecy pointing forward to Calvary; the New Testament is the finger of history pointing back to Calvary. To write the message of love we have in the Bible God broke the heart of His Son on the cross. In olden times the work of God was inscribed on parchment which was the skin of sheep; today it’s written on paper. The parchment speaks of the Lamb slain that its skin might clothe and its blood might atone, and that its skin might also bear the news of gracious love to sinners. The paper made from wood crushed into pulp reminds us that the Tree of Life was cut down and crushed on Calvary, crushed and marred beyond all the sons of men (*Isaiah 52:14*), that the glad tidings of God’s love and mercy might be published abroad. □

– Adapted from the writings of C.D. Cole

## THE WORD OF GOD

### • The Holy Scriptures •



Christianity is the religion of a Book. Without this Book Christianity cannot be perpetuated. Wherever this Book has not gone there is no evidence of anything Christian. Salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ, and people cannot believe in Him of whom they have not heard (*Rom 10:14*); and we are shut up to this Book for news about Jesus Christ. This Book is the Bible, and in its original, is God’s Word to us today. Efface the teachings of the Bible from human thought, and Christianity passes into oblivion. The Bible is an infallible Book, sufficient and authoritative in all matters of religious faith and practice (*2 Tim 3:16,17*).

### Scripture vs. Tradition

The word for Scripture in the Greek is “*graphe*” and means “a writing” or “anything written.” The expression “holy Scriptures” occurs only twice in the New Testament (*Rom 1:2; 2 Tim 3:15*), but wherever the Scriptures are referred to, the Divine writings are meant. The usual reference is to the Old Testament writings, but Peter speaks of Paul’s epistles as “Scripture” (*2 Peter 3:16*).

The Scriptures of our Lord’s day were the writings of the Old Testament. The Bible of that time was the Septuagint, which was the Greek version of the Hebrew Old Testament. To our Lord and the apostles the Old Testament was the Word of God. This was the Book Christ challenged the Jews to “search” when He said, “Search the Scriptures” (*John 5:39*). This was the Book He meant when He said, “The Scripture cannot be broken” (*John 10:35*). This was the Book the Bereans searched to see if what Paul preached was true (*Acts 17:11*).

Christ charged that the “traditions of men” were against the Scriptures. The Scriptures were the verbally inspired writings of God; the traditions of men were the teachings handed down by the Jewish elders. When the scribes and Pharisees charged Jesus with transgressing “the traditions of