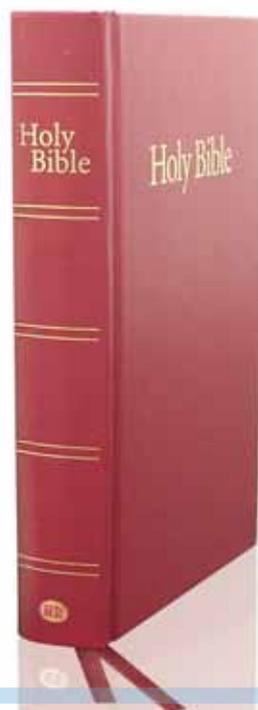


The
Wonder
of
The Book



The Wonder *of* The Book

Summarised and selected by T. H. Brown from
The Wonder of 'the Book' by Prof. Dyson Hague, M.A.
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The Wonder of the Book

The wonder of the Book grows upon us as our experience is enlarged, for the more deeply we search it, the more we feel that the Bible is not merely a book, but The Book. It alone is the universal Book, the eternal Book, the Book for all time. It is the voice of the Lord. It stands alone, unapproachable in its grandeur, as high above all other books as heaven is above earth, or as the Son of God is above the sons of men.



The Wonder of its Formation

One of the first things about this Book that evokes our wonder is the very fact of its existence, for there was never any order given to any man to plan the Bible, nor was there ever any concerted plan on the part of the men who wrote to write the Bible. The way in which the Bible grew is one of the mysteries of our time. Little by little, century after century, it came out in fragments, written by various men, without any concerted arrangement. One wrote a part in Arabia, another in Syria, a third in Palestine, another in Greece and Italy, and the first part was written hundreds of years before the man who wrote the last part was born.

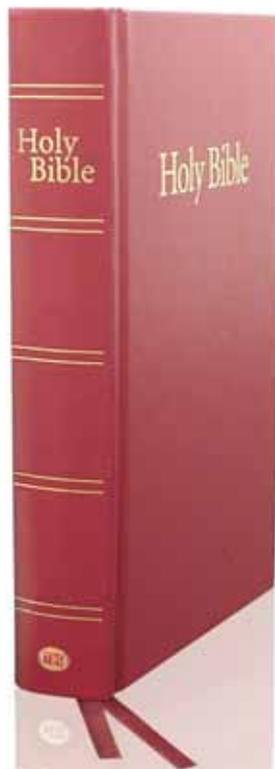
Here is a Book that took at least fifteen hundred years to write, spanning sixty generations of this world's history. It enlarges our conceptions of God and gives us new ideas of His infinite patience as He watched the strain, the haste and restlessness of man across the feverish years, while slowly the great Book grew. Here a little, and there a little, history, prophecy, poetry and biography, it came forth before a needy world in its finished completeness.

There was no pre-arrangement by men. It is not as if Matthew, Mark, Luke and John met in committee and after solemn conference and seeking for the leading of the Spirit, Matthew undertook to write of Christ as the King, and Mark agreed to write of Him as the Servant, Luke undertaking to delineate Him as the Man, and John determining to crown it all by writing of Him as the Son of God. It was not as if Paul and James met and after talking and praying about it agreed that Paul should write of the doctrinal and James of the practical aspects of the Christian faith. There is no trace of such a thing. They simply wrote as they were moved by the Spirit to meet a present need, to teach some glorious truth, to express some earnest longing, and from the aggregation of their writings came this miraculous unit that we call the New Testament.



The Wonder of its Unification

The Bible, though regarded as a Book, is in fact a library of sixty-six volumes, written by between thirty and forty different authors, in three languages, on totally different topics and in extraordinarily different circumstances. One wrote history, another biography, one wrote on theology, another poetry, another prophecy, others on philosophy, jurisprudence, genealogy, ethnology, and narratives of wonderful journeys. Here in the Bible we have them all, in a little Book that a child can carry in its little hand. The strangest thing of all is that, although their subjects are so diverse and difficult, and although it was impossible for the man who wrote the first pages to have the slightest knowledge what others would write 1,500 years later, yet this collection of writings is not only unified by men in one Book, but so unified by God, the Author, that we can never think of it today as anything else but one Book! And one Book it is indeed—the miracle of all literary unity.



The Wonder of its Interest



Another marvellous thing about this Book is that it is the only book in the world read by all classes and all sorts of people. Literary people rarely read a child's book, and children do not read books of philosophy and science. There is but one Book that is read by the wisest of men, read to the little child, and read by the old man as he trembles on the brink of another world. Professor Dyson Hague asked the nurse what she was reading to his daughter, and she replied. 'I am reading the story of Joseph in the Bible', and the child added, 'And please do not stop her, father.' She was listening with delighted interest to a story that had been written in Hebrew three thousand five hundred years before. Not far away from the same room where the child was listening, there sat one of the greatest of modern scientists, Sir William Dawson (a humble believer in the Lord Jesus Christ), reading with profound devotion and higher delight the pages of the same marvellous Book. Here is a phenomenon—one of the ablest of modern scientists delights in reading a Book which is the joy of a little child in the nursery!



The Wonder of its Language

The Book was not written in the seats of learning, either at Athens in Greece or at Alexandria in Egypt, but in Palestine. Some of the writers were not distinguished for their scholarship. Some did not speak even their own language perfectly. Peter was betrayed by his Galilean dialect, and he and John were described in Acts 4.13 as 'unlearned and ignorant men'. Many of the men who wrote the Bible were of that character. One was a farm-hand, another a shepherd, others were fishermen. They were men of no literary reputation, and yet by the mysterious power of God the Book has become the standard of language of the most literary nations of the world.



The Wonder of its Preservation

The Bible has withstood ages of ferocious and incessant persecution. Century after century men have tried to burn it and to bury it and to extirpate it. Kings of the earth set themselves and rulers of the church have taken counsel together to destroy it. Diocletian the Roman Emperor

inaugurated in AD 303 a terrific onslaught upon the Book. Bibles were destroyed, Christians were slain, and the Emperor boasted that the very name of the Christians was blotted out, and yet after a few years, the Bible came forth as Noah from the ark to repeople the earth, and in AD 325 Constantine enthroned the Bible as the Infallible Judge of Truth in the great council of the Church held in that year.

Later the Church of Rome denied the Scriptures to the people and for ages the Bible was practically an unknown book. Martin Luther was a grown man when he said that he had never seen a Bible in his life. No jailor ever kept a prisoner closer than the Church of Rome kept the Bible from the people.

The worst opposition of all has been during the last two hundred years, with rationalism and modernism seeking to undermine the authority, inspiration and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures. It was Voltaire's boast that within one hundred years of his death not a Bible would be found save as an antiquarian curiosity. Many more than one hundred years have passed, and other pens and other voices have joined in the attack, but the Bible remains and is being more widely distributed and used than ever before.



The Bible is Self-Authenticating

You need no historical critic for God's own Word. The Holy Spirit, who is the Author of the Book, makes it speak to our souls in such power as to give divine conviction. Men may arise to unsettle and destroy, but the Spirit of Christ comes to validate and confirm, with a certainty that is incommunicable by mere reason, and is impervious to the assaults of doubt. Spurgeon spoke of a poor woman who was challenged by an agnostic to prove that the Bible in her hand was God's Word. She pointed to the sun and said, 'Can you prove that there is a sun in the sky?' The unbeliever answered, 'Of course, the proof is that it warms me and I see its light.' 'That is it,' she replied, 'and the best proof that this Book is the Word of God is that it warms and lights my soul.'



It cannot be improved

We do not gild gold. We do not paint rubies. We cannot brighten diamonds. Neither can any artist add any final touch to this finished Word of God. It stands as the sun in the sky and this proud age can add nothing to it. It has the glory of God and any attempt to improve it can but disfigure it. It speaks with authority and breaks upon you as the Voice from heaven. Five hundred times in the Pentateuch, three hundred times in the following books and twelve hundred times in the prophets, the declarations are prefaced or concluded with such expressions as 'Hear the Word of the Lord', or 'Thus saith the Lord'. No other book dares thus to address itself to the universal conscience. No other speaks with such a binding claim or presumes to command the obedience of all mankind. The Book speaks to the inner conscience with the authority of God Himself.



It is living and powerful

Men think of the Bible as a Book that was inspired, and this is true, but it is also true that it still comes sweeping into the hearts of men today, and the same breath of God that gave it life makes it living and spiritually energizing today. This is a most remarkable and unique feature of the Bible—to feel that it is *mine*. Its promises are mine. The 103rd Psalm is not ancient Hebrew, it is a present-day message to my soul. The other day I took up an old Bible that my mother gave me, in which years ago I had marked Genesis 28.15 when I was in great trouble and had to leave my wife and children and travel in quest of health in distant lands. One day as I opened the Bible at random these words came before my eye. Shall I ever forget the flood of comfort that swept over my soul as I read that verse? 'Behold, I *am* with thee, and will keep thee in all *places* whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land'. All the critics in the world could never persuade my soul that those words were a mere echo of some far-off relic of a Babylonian legend or oriental myth. No, no! That was a message to *me*, and it swept into my soul as a voice from heaven and lifted me up. No man will ever shake me out of the conviction that that message was God's own Word to me—inspiring because inspired.



LUKE 4,5

42 And when it was day, he departed and went into a desert place: and the people sought him, and came unto him, and stayed him, that he should not depart from them.

43 And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent.

44 And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee.

5 AND it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret,

2 And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing *their* nets.

3 And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

4 Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

5 And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

6 And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.

7 And they beckoned unto *their* partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.

8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

9 For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken:

10 And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

1030

It reveals Christ

It changes men's lives and alters their destinies. It inaugurates worldwide movements. A single text transformed Luther and launched the greatest of modern epochs. It comes today into communities of unrighteousness as a regenerating force.

The supreme wonder of the Book is Christ, Who is its fulness, its centre, its great subject. Of the whole Book it may be said, 'The glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof' (Revelation 21.23). As long as men live upon the face of the globe, the Book that tells of Christ the Revealer, Redeemer, the Risen, Reigning, Returning Lord will draw men's hearts like a magnet, and men will stand by it, and live for it, and die for it.

Do not think that we ought to read this Book as we read any other book, and study and analyse it just as we do any textbook in literature or science. No! When you come to this Book, come to it with reverence. Read it with a plea for the Spirit's help. 'Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground' (Exodus 3.5). Other books are of the earth. This is from heaven, it is the living Word of the Living God, supernatural in origin, divine in authorship, regenerative in power, infallible in authority, personal in application, inspired in its every part.

The aims of the Society

- To publish and distribute the Holy Scriptures throughout the world in many languages.
- To promote Bible translations which are accurate and trustworthy, conforming to the Hebrew Masoretic Text of the Old Testament, and the Greek Textus Receptus of the New Testament, upon which texts the English Authorised Version is based.
- To be instrumental in bringing light and life, through the Gospel of Christ, to those who are lost in sin and in the darkness of false religion and unbelief.
- To uphold the doctrines of reformed Christianity, bearing witness to the equal and eternal deity of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, One God in three Persons.
- To uphold the Bible as the inspired, inerrant Word of God.
- **For the Glory of God and the increase of His Kingdom through the circulation of Protestant or uncorrupted versions of the Word of God.**

For introductory literature and catalogue please write to the Society at the address below.



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