The Divine Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures

TRINITARIAN BIBLE SOCIETY ♦ ARTICLE 116
“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”
2 Timothy 3.16, 17

“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
The Divine Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures

The Trinitarian Bible Society affirms that the Holy Scriptures are given by inspiration of God and are therefore the sole, supreme and infallible rule of faith and practice. We do not attempt to explain how the Spirit of God worked to ensure that we should be given an absolutely accurate Book, but the Scriptures make it plain that the Holy Spirit has brought this to pass. “The ways of God are past finding out”, and it is not inconsistent with the Divine wisdom to confront us with the result of His works without acquainting us with the method. An excellent evangelical Christian definition of inspiration is, “The supernatural influence of the Spirit of God on the human mind, by which prophets, apostles and sacred writers were qualified to set forth Divine truth without any mixture of error”.

J. W. BURGON:

There was a time when the Archbishops and Bishops of the Church of England were not ashamed to express their convictions in this
way, “All our hopes for eternity, the very foundation of our faith, our nearest and dearest consolations, are taken from us if one line of that Sacred Book be declared unfaithful or untrustworthy”. These words are quoted from the Bishops’ united protest to Bishop Colenso in 1863. The attitude of Christian men towards the Bible is one of implicit trust and deep veneration, because they have been conscious that the Bible is the faultless Word of the only Wise God.

As this view of inspiration is now by many dismissed as absurd and untenable, it behoves Christian men and women to be ready to give a reason for their deep conviction that their view is the only sound and scriptural one. The opponents of plenary inspiration are apt to dismiss it with ridicule as involving the assumption that the writers were mechanically controlled and made the recipients of a dictated message. The absurdity, however, is in the mental approach of the critic. Inspiration does not involve dictation. Indeed the one would exclude the other. The typist who takes letters “dictated” by another would hardly claim to be “inspired”. According to the individual writers of the Holy Scriptures, they were “moved by the Holy Ghost”, “the Spirit entered into them”, “the Spirit of the Lord spake by them”, and enabled them to speak, “not in words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth”.

**Old Testament Miracles**

Modern scholars are often sceptical about the miracles and marvels of the Bible, and invite us to dismiss these narratives as pious folklore. The temptation of our first parents, the flood, the destruction of Sodom and the fate of Lot’s wife, the burning bush, the plagues which prepared for the Exodus, the crossing of the Red Sea, the manna, the Brazen serpent, Balaam’s ass, the collapse of the walls of Jericho, the history of Jonah and Daniel among the lions – such events as these stand out from the pages of the Old Testament and are either received with reverent wonder, or repudiated with incredulous contempt.
These miracles of the Old Testament are regarded as hindrances to the acknowledgement of the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures, but it cannot be denied that they all enjoy confirmation and express citation in the New Testament. One or other of the Apostles, or our Lord Himself, appeals to or explains every one of these mysterious and supernatural events. It is clear therefore that men must either acknowledge the Bible as a whole, or reject it as a whole. There is no middle course. Those who reject the deluge, reject also the testimony of our Lord and of Peter and Paul to the historical reality of that event. Men who reject the story of the dumb ass speaking with a man’s voice, reject also the authority of the Apostle Peter who refers to this miracle in 2 Peter 2.16. Those who dismiss Jonah and the great fish as a diverting allegory, also dismiss the authority of the Incarnate Son of God who referred to Jonah’s experience as historical and prophetic of Himself.

The New Testament in harmony with the Old Testament

The New Testament stands committed irrevocably to the Old. Every book of the Bible stands committed to all the other books. Not only does our Lord quote the whole collection of writings as the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms – or simply as “the Scripture”, and so set His seal upon it all as inspired and true, but He and His apostles seem to single out the very events which seem most likely to be challenged by unbelief, and use these in such a way as to make escape from their historical reality impossible. In this way it appears that God has laid His hand upon these miracles to vindicate their truth and to ensure that they should remain as an essential part of the fabric of His Revelation.

When we begin to investigate the structure of the Bible with this in view we are more and more astonished at the amount of systematic quotation and allusion. The fabric is perfectly designed and
closely woven, so that no single thread is out of place or redundant. Balaam’s story in Numbers is alluded to in Deuteronomy, Joshua, Micah, Nehemiah, Peter, Jude and John. The Exodus, with its accompanying marvels, finds mention in Joshua, Judges, Job and Psalms, in Amos, Isaiah, Micah, Hosea, Jeremiah and Daniel, in Kings, Samuel and Nehemiah – and repeatedly in the New Testament. The evangelists quote one another very often, and the Epistles quote the Gospels more than fifty times. Peter quotes Paul again and again.

**Genesis and Daniel confirmed by the New Testament**

In the present century rationalistic scholars delight to refer to the allegorical character of the beginning of Genesis, but we find upwards of thirty references in the New Testament to the first two chapters of Genesis. Certain parts of Daniel have incurred suspicion on the part of those who cannot believe that prophecy can anticipate history, but the Lord Jesus Christ quotes from the very passages of Daniel that modern sceptics reject. Thus the sacred writers plainly say – We stand or fall together. They reach forth their hands and hold each other fast. They recognise one another’s voices, interpret one another’s thoughts and adopt one another’s sayings, and among them stands the Son of God to seal their testimony with the authority of His own.

**Our Lord’s Testimony to the Old Testament**

With the New Testament in our hands we are enabled to witness the Master Himself as He habitually handles those earlier Scriptures and everywhere confirms their truth. He accepts the prophecies of His ancient servants, beginning from Moses, and declares them all to be fulfilled in Himself. He lays His finger on many incidents of the sacred history and confirms them all, from the first page
of the Bible down to the days of Elijah and Elisha. He does not merely allude to the deluge, but expressly declares concerning the men of Noah’s time, that “the flood came and took them all away”. He weighs the guilt of Capenaum against that of Sodom, and corroborates the history of the destruction of the cities of the plain. “Remember” – He says – “Remember Lot’s wife”

The serpent in the wilderness, the miracle of the manna, and Jonah in the great fish are cited by Him as true history. The temptation of Eve, the crossing of the Red Sea, the water flowing from the smitten rock, the walls of Jericho, Balaam’s ass – all these are confirmed by Paul and Peter. Not only has the seal of Christ and the Apostles been applied to the Old Testament in general, but particular parts of it have been carefully sought out and placed beyond the reach of cavil by separately receiving the same Divine impression.

Besides quoting from each other the New Testament writers quote from the writers of the Old – interpreting their dark sayings, applying their minute details, appropriating their very phraseology. A wonderful sympathy and harmony exists between the various writers. They were so numerous and so diverse, and extended over such a long period of time, and yet there is through them all a striking similarity of subject, allusion and illustration, and uniformity of theme which characterises them all.

The Source and the Subject are Divine

The reason for all this and the explanation of it all is that these many writers drew from the same pure fountain of Divine inspiration. There was but one Divine Providence which overruled their various disclosures, and it was divinely ordered that their many books should finally be all united in one. The Bible reveals a oneness of purpose which is discoverable in every book and which could have been imposed upon the whole varied collection of books only by a
power and wisdom infinitely higher and greater than that of man. Christ – His eternal glorious Person, His offices, His attributes and His gracious work of atonement and redemption – Christ is the unifying subject of them all.

The Bible professes to be inspired by the Holy Spirit, and in this respect it differs from all other books known to exist. It delivers long messages from God, each being prefaced by an impressive intimation of its divine origin – “Thus saith the Lord”. The word “inspiration” does not occur often in the Bible, but the language of human writers is repeatedly and expressly ascribed to God. The Old Testament is not only emphatically authorised by the Lord Jesus Christ, but it is exclusively claimed by Him as bearing witness throughout to the events of His incarnation. Should not the testimony of the Eternal Son command absolute agreement and endorsement from ourselves?

**The extent of Inspiration**

We must therefore expose the inconsistency of those who while pretending to admit the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures still contend that the Scriptures contain faults and inaccuracies. By what authority can one claim that some parts of the Bible are trustworthy and some are not? We know of no list prepared by modern scholarship to guide the reader through this perplexity. One will exclude natural philosophy from the sphere of inspiration; another will exclude historical facts which do not involve points of faith or practice; while another will affirm that the reasoning of the writers was their own. One will contend that there was no inspiration when the writer was dealing with common everyday occurrences, or when writers made slips of memory in matters of no consequence. Another asserts that common history, chronology and genealogy may be removed from the sphere of inspiration—and so on ad infinitum.
But one is entitled to ask – Why? Why should the inspired writer become uninspired when alluding to natural phenomena? Is the Creator not qualified to speak about “natural” or created things and to inspire His servants to write about them? If the history, numbers, chronology and genealogies are all untrustworthy, can we have any confidence in the first seventeen books of the Old Testament and the first five of the New? How much of the Prophets will remain if we eliminate their history and their reasoning and their allusions to the common occurrences of everyday life? We have no warrant for assuming that the Bible contains any mistakes whatever, in matters of science or history or of any other kind. Where does Truth begin and falsehood end in such a record as rationalistic scholarship offers us, and with what measure of honesty could such an imperfect and erring record be called “The Word of God”? The Bible teaches us nothing about “degrees of inspiration” – it tells us that it is all inspired. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.”

**The language of the Holy Ghost**

We gain nothing by speculating how much is to be assigned to the “human element” and how much to the “divine element”. It is the Word of God. We must not be impatient of this divine mystery. We cannot thrust ourselves between the Almighty and those whom He inspired and discover just how He accomplished His end. We must be content to be told by Him that all is “God-breathed”. The Bible is a Book equally inspired by God’s Spirit throughout. The language of the Holy Ghost is infallible. We dare not look for errors in a collection of writings whose one Author is God. We dare not even acknowledge the possibility of the occurrence of just a few, a very few statements unconnected with religion or morals, which might be exceptions to the rule.
“The Written and Incarnate Word”

In the mystery of His own Divine Person we discern a solemn analogy which usefully illustrates the unique character of the written Word. In the one Person of Christ there is a perfect union of the Divine and Human nature. In Revelation 19.13 He is named “The Word of God”, and that name may have been intended to remind us of the parallel which subsists between the written and Incarnate Word. It is undeniable that the Word written stands out among books as the Word Incarnate stood out among men – quite alone. In its offices and in its reception at the hands of men; in its difficulties and in its perfections; in its appearance of weakness, and in its real power; the Gospel may be illustrated by a reference to the history of Him whose life, and death and resurrection are there set forth. There is a striking parallel between the Divine and Human element in the Scriptures and the union of the Divine and Human natures in the Son of God.

How did it fare with the Incarnate Word? Was His divine nature ever absent? Was it ever present in less than full measure? Was He any less the Son of God when He thirsted at the well, than when He stilled the storm? If He was the Lord’s anointed when He summoned Lazarus from the grave, was He any less the anointed of Jehovah when a moment before He was seen to weep? The crucified One was the Son of God, the Prince of Life, the Lord of Glory, God Himself, manifest in the flesh. From the manger to the cross He was without sin, faultless, free from error, small or great.

Apply this to the written Word by way of analogy. Acknowledge that this also is Divine, equally inspired by the Holy Spirit throughout, and that it is nowhere destitute of the attribute of inspiration, that it is everywhere faultless and infallible, from the alpha to the omega of it. There was no sin or imperfection in our Lord’s humanity – nor is there error or inaccuracy in the written Word.
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We cannot explain how those two perfect natures co-existed in the Person of the Word Incarnate. Neither can we discern how in the written Word there can coexist the human and divine, so indissolubly joined together by God that man cannot put them asunder. The Saviour appeared to some not altogether unlike the sons of men. It was for this reason that they marvelled at His works. So it is with the Bible. The various books may remind us of the different characters of their various human authors. But as God was present wherever Jesus of Nazareth was, so God’s Spirit is present everywhere in Scripture, permeating its every word and letter. The subject matter varies from place to place: here a narrative, there a prophecy proclaiming itself to come from the very mouth of the Almighty.

In the same way the works of the Incarnate Son differed, being at one time to all appearances like the actions of ordinary men, and at another time clear displays of Divine power, a laying bare of the Almighty arm. The essential truth is this, that God was invariably and universally present with and in the Incarnate Word, and that God is invariably and universally present with the written Word. It is infallible throughout because it is throughout Divine. Low humanitarian views of Christ prevail where low views of inspiration are in vogue. Those who deny the inspiration of the Scriptures are always ready to doubt the deity of Christ.

The infallibility and inerrancy of the Word

We claim for the Bible the attribute of absolute infallibility because we believe the Bible to be divinely inspired and we cannot believe that error of any kind proceeds from God. We believe that this inspiration extends to the words of the Bible, as without words there could be no Scripture. We have no authority to limit the extent of inspiration, but we have explicit authority for assuming the words to be inspired, as important Scripture lessons hinge upon the quotation of a single word. Although the division into chapters and verses was the work of men,
there is no logical standing ground between the outright rejection of the Bible, and an admission that it is all the Word of God, divinely inspired in the contents of its chapters and paragraphs, in its sentences and words, syllables and letters. The Scriptures constitute a perfect and infallible whole and must be held to be perfect and infallible in all the minutest points.

“Diminish not a word.”

**L. GAUSSEN:**

**Testimony of the Apostles**

Consider what use is made by the Apostles themselves of the Word of God, and the terms in which they quote it. How attentively they weigh every word; with what religious assurance they often insist on a single word, in order to deduce from it the most serious consequences, and the most fundamental doctrines. For ourselves, we confess that nothing more strongly impresses us than this view of the subject; nothing has beget in us so deep and firm a confidence in the entire inspiration of the Scriptures.

If we were conscious of any need on our part of having our belief of this truth fortified, we feel sure that we need not go far in search of evidence. It would be enough for us to inquire what the Holy Scriptures were in the view of God’s apostles, and how far they understood its language to be inspired. What, for example, were Paul’s sentiments on the subject? For we make no pretension to be more enlightened divines than the twelve apostles. Cleaving to the dogmatical theology of Peter and the exegetical theology of Paul, among all the systems ever broached on the inspiration of the Scriptures, theirs is what we have decidedly resolved to prefer.

Hear, then, the Apostle Paul when he quotes them and proceeds to comment upon them. Mark with what reverence the apostle dwells
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upon their most minute expressions, and with what confidence he ex-
pects the submission of the Church, while he notes the use of such a
word rather than of such another, with what studiousness and affection
he presses every particle of a sentence in his hands until the last drop of
meaning has drained out from it!

Among the many examples we might adduce, let us confine our-
selves, for brevity’s sake, to the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Hebrews 2.8: See how after quoting these words, “Thou hast put all
things in subjection under His feet”, the sacred author argues from the
authority of the word “all”.

Hebrews 2.12: In quoting from the 22nd Psalm he argues from the
expression “my brethren”, that the Son of God behoved to put on the
nature of man.

Hebrews 12.27: In quoting the Prophet Haggai, Paul argues from the
words “once more” – “Yet once more”.

Hebrews 8.8-13: In quoting Jeremiah 31.31, he argues from the word
“new”.

Hebrews 7: He makes use successively of the words of the 110th Psalm,
deducing from them the very highest doctrines: “The Lord hath sworn.
… He hath sworn by Himself. … Thou art a priest. … Thou art a
priest for ever. … Thou art a priest after the order of Melchisedek. …
King of Righteousness. … King of Salem”. The exposition of the doc-
trines contained in these words will be found to occupy three whole
chapters – the 5th, 6th and 7th.

A Searching Question

But here I pause. Can we fail to conclude from such examples, that
in the view of the Apostle Paul, the Scriptures were inspired by God,
even to their most minute expressions? Let each of us then place him-
self in the school of the man to whom had been given by the Spirit of
God the knowledge of the mystery of Christ, as to a holy apostle and
prophet. O ye who read these lines, to what school will ye attach
yourselves? to that of the apostles, or to that of the doctors of this age?
“If any man take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God
shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city,
and from the things that are written in this Book” (Revelation 22.19).

The Testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ

But let us for an instant turn from the apostles and let us go to the
Master. Let us inquire of Him what the Scriptures were in His view.
And here is the grand question. The doctrine of a plenary and entire
inspiration is taught as clearly in Scripture as that of the resurrection of
the dead. This ought of itself to be enough for us. Still we would listen
to our blessed Lord Himself, and learn the lesson from His own lips.
How did the Lord Jesus Christ appeal to the Holy Bible? What were
His views of the letter of the Scriptures? What use did He make of
them, He who is their object and inspirer, beginning and end, first and
last? He whose Holy Spirit, says Peter, animated all the prophets of the
Old Testament, Who was in heaven in the bosom of the Father at the
same time that He was seen here below dwelling among us and preach-
ing the gospel to the poor? We do not hesitate to say that were any
modern writer to quote the Bible, as Jesus did, with a view to deducing
from it any doctrine, he would forthwith have to be ranked among the
most zealous partisans of the doctrines we are now defending.

An Instructive Example

I am asked – What is your view of the Holy Letters? I answer, What
did my Master think of them? How did He appeal to them? What use
did He make of them? What were their smallest details in His eyes?

Ah! speak to these enquirers Thyself, Eternal Wisdom, Uncreated
Word, Judge of judges. As we repeat to them the declarations of Thy
mouth, show them the majesty in which the Scriptures appeared to
Thee, the perfection Thou didst recognise in them, that everlasting
stability which Thou didst assign to their smallest iota, and that imperishable destiny that will outlast the universe, after the very heavens and earth have passed away!

We are not ashamed to say that, when we hear the Son of God quote the Scriptures, we become docile believers in their divine inspiration – we need no further testimony. All the declarations of the Bible are, no doubt, equally divine; but this example of the Saviour of the world has settled the question for us at once. This proof requires neither long nor learned researches; it is grasped by the mind of a child as powerfully as by that of a doctor. Should any doubt assail your soul, the tone of His voice, as Jesus Himself talks of the Scriptures, will quell your scruples.

Follow our Lord in the days of His flesh. With what serious and tender respect does He constantly hold in His hands “the volume of the Book”, to quote every part of it and to note even its shortest verses! See how one word, one single word, whether of a Psalm or of an historical book, has for Him the authority of a law. Mark with what confident submission He receives the whole Scripture, without ever contesting its sacred canon; for He knoweth that salvation cometh of the Jews and that under the infallible providence of God, “to them were committed the oracles of God”. From His childhood to the grave, and from His rising again to His disappearance in the clouds, He bears about with Him the Bible, Moses, the Psalms and the Prophets. He quotes them, He explains them, verse by verse, and word by word.

J. URQUHART

A Fully Inspired Bible

“Verbal Inspiration” is a convenient phrase for expressing the constant belief of the Church of Christ that the words of the Bible have been placed there with the will and intention of the Spirit of God.
This means that somehow – how, no man can say – the Spirit of God so filled and so guided the spirit of man, that each word was placed upon the page of the sacred autograph with Divine purpose. Each word, that is to say, was God’s Word. This is not a human theory regarding the origin of Scripture; it is a Divine description. The Apostle tells us that the things which the Spirit of God revealed to him, he did not speak “in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth”, but in the words “which the Holy Ghost teacheth” (1 Corinthians 2.13).

This has been the understanding of the churches all through the ages. It is recognised by every believing preacher and student of the Bible. He takes his Greek and Hebrew lexicons, and diligently seeks to fix the precise meaning of each word in the passage with which he is dealing. When he is convinced that he has determined the exact sense of each, he feels that he has before him the very thought of the Spirit of God.

**Absolute Accuracy**

It may be that we have in a certain place the report of some utterance of man; it may be of an enemy of God, and not the utterance of God Himself. But it is God’s report of what the man said – a report on the absolute accuracy of which we may fully rely. This does not by any means exclude the human factor – the instrumentality of man – in inspiration. The Spirit of God raised the man into co-operation with Himself. The man was there, with all his faculties quickened and expanded, and the expression of his personality is stamped upon that work of his, which has been built into the Bible, as clearly as upon any other work he ever did. But God was in the work, as well as man. God was in the work, directing and inspiring the whole.


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Not “Verbal Dictation”

Many writers act rashly in their treatment of this claim for a fully inspired Bible. They say that “verbal inspiration” is a contradiction in terms: and that, if the men were not left free to choose their own words, there could be no inspiration whatever. They accordingly label this belief “verbal dictation”, as if it represented the Bible to have been given like a letter, which a merchant dictates to his clerk. This is really to forget, or to deny, the supernatural element in the Scripture. Inspiration is a miracle. We can no more say how that miracle was performed than we can explain how the bread grew as it passed from hand to hand among the multitudes, and fed five thousand men, besides women and children, from a few small loaves. That the bread had so grown was beyond question. The reality of the miracle was proved by the renewed strength of a previously fainting multitude, and the twelve baskets of fragments which remained from that God-given feast. But how the miracle was performed, who will presume to say?

In such a matter we are face to face with the inscrutable working of God. We are equally confronted with that inscrutable working in inspiration. How God’s Word was uttered by human lips we cannot tell, but that the miracle has been performed no man can deny. The proof is there in the feast in the wilderness. Once more famished men are fed by those who of themselves can produce no provision. There is bread in the desert, which no man could have furnished.

Inspiration a fact, not a theory

It is futile, therefore, to suggest that we believe in “verbal dictation”, or to enumerate various theories of inspiration. There are diverse theories of gravitation, as there are of other natural laws. The theories may be wrong: not one of them may be correct; but the facts remain. Those who are foolish enough to have theories of
inspiration, may find themselves discredited, but their failure no more affects the fact of inspiration, than the mistakes made by a man afflicted with colour-blindness alter the hues of the flowers. The Scripture itself explains all that can be understood by us on this side of eternity. It assures us that the theory of the merely human origin of any part or scrap of the Bible is a gigantic blunder.

**Immediate Divine Authority**

“The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man” (2 Peter 1.21). That is, no words have been put on the page of Holy Scripture which are due merely to a man’s desire to serve God or to aid his fellow men. That is not the nature or the law of prophecy. It came not at any time – it never came in any instance – from man’s willingness to exhort, to upbraid, or to speak. Here, on the contrary, is the true origin of the Bible, “Holy men of God spake as they were moved – as they were borne along – by the Holy Ghost”. Their thoughts turned hither and thither, not under the impulse of their own feeling, their own judgment, or their own genius, but under the impulse of the Holy Ghost.

To that doctrine the Scripture commits itself, and with that doctrine it is consistent everywhere. The words are God’s words. Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Malachi, may be the speakers whose words men heard, or the writers whose hands first traced the words we now read on the sacred page. But the words are God’s words in quite as true and full a sense as they are theirs. In every case “God spake unto the fathers by the prophets”. By those statements the Bible stands or falls. The claim for a full and pervading inspiration, which is nothing short of a distinct and immediate Divine authorship, is not merely our theory or belief – it is the teaching of Scripture itself.
A general vague belief that the Bible is an inspired Book is common among Christians. Many, no doubt, could not explain what they mean, but whether men know it or not, their belief is well-founded. It rests on a collection of facts which no intelligent, educated and honest-minded man can deny.

(a) *There is an extraordinary depth, fulness, and richness in the contents of the Bible, which is supernatural and above man.* There is a complete gulf between it and any other book that ever was written. It throws more light on a vast number of most important subjects than all the other books in the world put together. It boldly handles matters which are beyond the reach of man, when left to himself. It treats of things which are mysterious and invisible – the soul, the world to come, and eternity, depths which man has no line to 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 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 necessities of dying men, and meets the cravings of conscience by revealing a Saviour.
alone explains the state of things which we see in the world around us. There are many things on earth which a natural man cannot explain. The Bible can tell him that the world lieth in wickedness and that it is vain to look for perfection in the present order of things. The Bible will tell him that neither laws nor education can change man’s heart. That human nature is fallen, and that the world he works in is full of sin. The Bible will tell him that a time of perfect knowledge, perfect justice, perfect happiness, and perfect peace, is coming, but the Bible will tell him that this time shall not be brought in by any power but that of Christ coming to earth again.

Now all these are things which men could find nowhere except in the Scriptures. We have probably not the least idea how little we should know about these things if we had not the Bible. We hardly know the value of the air we breathe, and the sun which shines on us, because we have never known what it is to be without them. We do not value the truths upon which I have just now been dwelling, because we do not realise the darkness of men to whom these truths have not been revealed.

(b) It is another fact that 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 in which there are not some contradictions and discrepancies. But it is not so with the Bible. Here is a long book written by not less than thirty different persons. The writers were men of every rank and class in society. One was a lawgiver. One was a warlike king. One was a peaceful king. One was a herdsman, one had been a publican, another a physician, another a Pharisee, two were fishermen. They lived at intervals over a period of fifteen hundred years, and many of them never saw each other face to face – and yet there is a perfect harmony among these writers! 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 never detect any real contradiction or contrariety of view.

(c) 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 was, the writers of Scripture produced a book which even at this day is utterly unrivalled. With all our boasted attainments in science and art and learning, we can produce nothing in literature that can be compared with the Bible. Even at this very hour in the present century, the Book stands entirely alone. There is a strain and style and a tone of thought about it which separates it from all other writings. There are no weak points, motes, flaws or 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 written on every page. To talk of comparing the Bible with other “sacred books”, so called, such as the Koran or the Book of Mormon, is positively absurd. You might as well compare the sun with a rush light, or the Koh-i-noor Diamond with a bit of glass. To talk of the inspiration of the Bible as differing only in degree from that of such writings as those of Homer, Shakespeare or Milton is simply foolish. There is a gulf between the Bible and any other book which no man can fathom. Turning from Scripture to other works, you are in a new atmosphere, and feel like one who has exchanged gold for base metal, and heaven for earth.

(d) It is another fact that 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 before the world for more than 1800 years, the busiest and most changeful period the world has ever seen. During this period the greatest discoveries have been made in science, and the greatest alterations in the ways and customs of our human society. There is hardly a thing in which faults and weak points have not been discovered, and hardly an institu-
tion which has not been through a process of reforming, amending, 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 – perfect, fresh, and complete, as it did when it was written many centuries ago. The march of intellect never overtakes it. The wisdom of wise men never gets beyond it. The science of philosophers never proves it wrong. The discoveries of travellers never convict it of mistakes.

Are the islands of the Pacific laid open? Nothing is found that in the slightest degree contradicts the Bible account of man’s heart. Are the ruins of Nineveh and Egypt ransacked and explored? Nothing is found that overturns one jot or tittle of the Bible’s historical statements. How shall we account for this fact, that so large a book, handling such a vast variety of subjects, should be found so free from erroneous statements? There is only one account to be given of the fact, – the Bible was written by inspiration of God.

(e) It is another fact that there is in the Bible an extraordinary suitableness to the spiritual wants 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, but the Bible suits all. It is the book of the poor and unlearned no less than of the rich and the philosopher, and it is equally valued by the converted in every part of the world.

It is the only Book, moreover, which seems always fresh, and evergreen and new. For many centuries it has been studied and prayed over by millions of private Christians, and expounded, explained and preached upon by thousands of ministers. “Fathers”, “Schoolmen”, Reformers, Puritans, and modern divines, have in-
The Divine Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures

cessantly dug down into the mine of Holy Scripture, and yet never exhausted it. It is a well never dry, and a field which is never barren. It meets the hearts and minds and consciences of Christians in the present century as fully as it did those of 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 the things of God, and the last to which the old man clings as he leaves the world. In short, it suits all ages, ranks, climates, minds, conditions. It is the one Book which suits the world.

(f) Last, but not least, it is a great fact that the Bible has had a most extraordinary effect on the condition of those nations in which it has been known, taught and read. Which are the churches and religious bodies on earth which are producing the greatest results by spreading light and dispelling darkness? Those which make much of the Bible, and teach it and preach it as God’s Word. The Romanist, the Neologian, the Socinian, the Deist, the sceptic, or the friends of mere secular teaching, cannot show us spiritually renewed lives throughout the world as the fruit of their principles. We only can do that who honour the Bible and reverence it as God’s Word. Let that fact also be remembered. He that denies the inspiration of the Bible, let him explain that fact if he can.

I place these six facts about the Bible before my readers, and ask them to consider them well. Upon any other principle than that of supernatural and divine inspiration, those six facts appear to me inexplicable and unaccountable. The men who wrote the Bible 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 unrivalled! How can this be explained? 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 us was written by inspiration of God.
In the present materialistic age the people of God are constantly challenged as to whether they have an infallible source from which they may derive sure knowledge of the purposes and works of the Almighty. The Protestant answer to this question is that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, having been given by inspiration of God, are the only and all sufficient rule of faith and judge of controversies.

Inspiration is that divine influence which, accompanying the sacred writers equally in all they wrote, secured the infallible truth of their writings in every part, both in idea and in expression, and determined the selection and distribution of their material according to the divine purpose.

Plenary inspiration is a divine influence full and sufficient to secure its end. The end secured is the perfect infallibility of the Holy Scriptures in every part, as a record of fact and doctrine, both in thought and verbal expression; so that although they come to us through the instrumentality of the minds, hearts, imaginations, consciences and wills of men, they are nevertheless in the strictest sense the Word of God.

The Holy Scriptures themselves claim to be the Word of God as a whole – “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God” – and never hint at different degrees of authority for their several portions. The perfect accuracy and agreement of so many authors, of various ages and nations, which we find in the Holy Scriptures, itself demands the assignment of a supernatural cause.
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.

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.