



## THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

When Sir Walter Scott was on his deathbed he asked for "the book." When asked which book he responded, "Need you ask, *there is but one.*" Of course he was referring to the book of all books, the Bible. After almost 2,000 years the Bible is still number one on the best-seller list. The author of this tract is heartily and unashamedly is an advocate of the plenary, verbal inspiration of the Bible. This is what makes it *the* book (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pe. 1:20-21; Gal. 1:11-12). The Bible is a library of 66 books written by 40 different writers over a period of 1600 years. "The Greeks called a book *biblos*. The word *Bible* is derived from its plural *ta biblia*, 'the books,' and the Greek word for library *bibliotheke* meant a container for such a book."<sup>1</sup> Scripture means "a writing" rendering the Latin *scriptura* and the Greek *graphe*. The term is used some fifty times in the New Testament for some or all of the Old Testament.<sup>2</sup> God has spoken to man by both *revelation* and by *inspiration*. **Revelation** is with reference to God's making known his will to his creation, man. **Inspiration** refers to the proper receiving and transmission (passing on) of that revelation.

Of course, most of us will need a *translation* of the Scriptures since most do not read the original languages in which God's Word was written. By *translation* is meant "a rendering from one language into another; also: the product of such a rendering."<sup>3</sup>

### INSPIRED MEN

**God inspired men to write the original Biblical documents, i.e., the autographs** (Genesis through Revelation; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21). As one writer correctly stated:

"The Bible in its entirety is God's written Word to man, free of error in its original autographs, wholly reliable in history and doctrine. Its divine

inspiration has rendered the Book infallible (incapable of teaching deception) and inerrant (not liable to prove false or mistaken). Its inspiration is plenary (extending to all parts alike), verbal (including the actual language form), and confluent (product of two free agents, human and divine). *Inspiration* involves *infallibility* as an essential property, and infallibility in turn implies *inerrancy*. This threefold designation of Scripture is implicit in the basic thesis of Biblical authority."<sup>4</sup>

Faithful Christians reject the *apocrypha* (15 books) and *pseudepigrapha* (52 writings) as inspired documents. Apocrypha, meaning *things that are hidden* and pseudepigrapha, meaning *writings falsely attributed* did not attain canonical status — that is, the rule of inspiration.

### THE INSPIRED WRITINGS PRESERVED

**God providentially preserved the inspired writings in the form of manuscripts, translations and other representatives** (Mt. 24:35). By *preserve* is meant: "To keep safe from injury, harm, or destruction: PROTECT."<sup>5</sup>

"The preservation and transmission of the Bible from the time that it was written until the present involves two areas of study. The study of the process by which the documents (66 in all) were written, used, collected into groups, and elevated to the authoritative place that they occupy today is called the study of the *canon*. The other is the process of preserving in writing and translations the text of the documents. This is the study of *text and versions*."<sup>6</sup>

Some divide the history of the text of the Bible into two periods. 1) "From the time the documents were written until the time of printing (A.D. 1453)," and 2) "From that date until the present."<sup>7</sup>

"The invention of printing was very important for the transmission of the text of the Bible. Before that date, the only way that a person could have a copy of any written work was to make a copy (or have it made) by hand, letter by letter. This was slow and often expensive. Some have calculated that the cost of one complete Bible made by a professional scribe in the fourth century would equal the salary of a member of the Roman legion

for forty years."<sup>8</sup>

### THE TRANSLATION OF THE INSPIRED WORD

The original language of the Old Testament was Hebrew except for a few passages in Aramaic (Ezra 4:8-6:18; 7:12-26; Dan. 2:4b-7:28; Jer. 10:11; and two words in Gen. 31:47).<sup>9</sup> The original language of the New Testament was *Koine* Greek. "The word *Koine* is a transliteration of the Greek word which means *common*."<sup>10</sup> This was the universal language (everyday language) of the Roman Empire during the Hellenistic Greek period (about 300 B.C. to A.D. 600).

### THE BIBLE WE HAVE TODAY

**The Biblical writings (books) were compiled together into a modern-day binder, having been arranged in a proper order and divided into chapters and verses.** One writer stated that about A.D. 300 all 66 books were *published* in a single volume.<sup>11</sup> In ancient times papyri and parchment (*vellum*, animal skin) scrolls were used by the Jews and the Romans. Also, "Christians, perhaps as early as the first century, began to use the codices form, that is, the folding of several sheets of papyrus or parchment in a book form. This had several advantages. Both sides of the pages could be used; it was more compact; and above all one could more readily find Scripture references. When Paul was in prison in Rome, he requested 'the books but especially the parchments' (2 Tim. 4:13). The books were probably scrolls of the Old Testament. On the other hand, the parchments were probably parchment codices, possibly of his notes and letters."<sup>12</sup> The **Chapter Divisions** in our modern-day Bibles were "probably made by Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, England, who died in 1228, although sometimes they have been attributed to Cardinal Hugo (died 1263) who used them in the preparation of a concordance to the Latin Vulgate. . . The modern **Verse Divisions** were first made by Robert Stephanus (Stephens) of Paris, a printer, for his Greek New Testament published in 1551."<sup>13</sup> In the Bible there are 1,189 chapters, 31,172 verses and 560 words in italics. Italicized words (first appearing in the Geneva N.T. and Bible, 1557-60) were added by the translators who sought to aid us in our understanding of the sense of the text and are not in the original text."<sup>14</sup>

## YOU CAN BELIEVE THE BIBLE IS GOD'S INSPIRED WORD BECAUSE OF:

- Its Profound and Rational Doctrine
- The Unity and Consistency of its Teaching
- The Purity of its Ethics
- Its Relevancy to Human Needs
- Its Historical Trustworthiness
- Its Scientific Accuracy
- Its Fulfilled Prophecy

(the above outline was taken from Homer Hailey's *Internal Evidences of Christianity*. EVIDENCE QUARTERLY, Ferrell Jenkins, Ed., 491 E. Woodsdale Ave., Akron, OH 44301. 1964. Reprinted in 1968. pgs. 14-28).

### Its Profound and Rational Doctrine

Those things which are revealed can (and should) be understood by finite man, while those things not fully explained (or not explained at all) cannot be known by finite man. A person can understand the simple teaching of the Bible concerning salvation from sin, while the unrevealed things belong to God, the infinite being of the universe (Isa. 35:8; Eph. 3:4; Deut. 29:29). The doctrines of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, miracles, sin, redemption, resurrection, the judgment day, heaven and hell are but a few of the sublime subjects one would expect to dignify the divine written revelation of deity.

### The Unity and Consistency of its Teaching

The theme of the entire Bible is that of redemption from sin through Jesus Christ. As early as Genesis 3:15 in the Old Testament God prophesied that *the seed woman* would bruise the head of the serpent (Satan). The New Testament writers reveal that Jesus was that seed of *woman* (not seed of *man*; Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit and not by the agency of a human male) who would destroy Satan and his works (Luke 1:31, 34-35; Gal. 3:16; 4:4; I Jn. 3:8; Mt. 25:41). Such unity and consistency implies a book of supernatural origin.

Bible skeptics who have pointed a critical finger at the text of the Bible in claiming contradictions in certain statements have always been proven to be in error. An author who believed in the unity and consistency of the statements in the Bible wrote an entire book offering solutions to the faulty claims of the critics. John Haley's book which bears the date of 1874 (reprinted in 1977) was entitled, *Alleged Discrepancies Of The Bible*. The book of 473 pages