

**BIBLE INSPIRATION:
ITS REALITY
AND NATURE**

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Bible inspiration: its reality and nature by J. C. Ryle

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BY THE

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BIBLE INSPIRATION.

2 TIMOTHY III. 16.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God."

How was the Bible written?—"Whence is it? From heaven, or of men?"—Had the writers of the Bible any special or peculiar help in doing their work?—Is there anything in the Bible which makes it unlike all other books, and therefore demands our respectful attention?—These are questions of vast importance. They are questions to which I wish to offer an answer in this volume. To speak plainly, the subject I propose to examine is that deep one, *the inspiration of Scripture.* U

believe the Bible to have been written by inspiration of God, and I want others to be of the same belief.

The subject is *always important*. It is the very keel and foundation of Christianity. If Christians have no Divine book to turn to as the warrant of their doctrine and practice, they have no solid ground for present peace or hope, and no right to claim the attention of mankind. They are building on a quicksand, and their faith is vain. We ought to be able to say boldly, "We are what we are, and we do what we do, because we have here a book which we believe to be the Word of God."

The subject is one of *peculiar importance* in the present day. Infidelity and scepticism abound everywhere. In one form or another they are to be found in every rank and class of society. Thousands of Englishmen are not ashamed to say that they regard the Bible as an old obsolete Jewish book, which has no special claim on our *faith and obedience*, and that it contains many

inaccuracies and defects. Myriads who will not go so far as this are wavering and shaken in their belief, and show plainly by their lives that they are not quite sure the Bible is true. In a day like this the true Christian should be able to set his foot down firmly, and to render a reason of his confidence in God's Word. He should be able by sound arguments to meet and silence the gainsayer, if he cannot convince him. He should be able to show good cause why he thinks the Bible is "from heaven, and not of men."

The subject without doubt is a *very difficult* one. It cannot be followed up without entering on ground which is dark and mysterious to mortal man. It involves the discussion of things which are miraculous, and supernatural, and above reason, and cannot be fully explained. But difficulties must not turn us away from any subject in religion. There is not a science in the world about which questions may not be asked which no one can answer. It is poor philosophy to say we will

believe nothing unless we can understand everything! We must not give up the subject of inspiration in despair because it contains things "hard to be understood." There still remains a vast amount of ground for study which is plain to every common understanding. Reader, I invite you to occupy this ground with me to-day, and to hear what I have got to say on the Divine authority of God's Word.

In considering the subject before us, there are two things which I propose to do:—

I. In the first place, I shall try to show the general truth, *that the Bible is given by inspiration of God.*

II. In the second place, I shall try to show *the extent to which the Bible is inspired.*

I trust that all who read this volume will take up the subject in a serious and reverent spirit. This question of inspiration is no light one. It involves *tremendously grave consequences.* If the Bible is

not the Word of God and inspired, the whole of Christendom for 1800 years has been under an immense delusion ;—half the human race has been cheated and deceived, and churches are monuments of folly,—If the Bible is the Word of God and inspired, all who refuse to believe it are in fearful danger ;—they are living on the brink of eternal misery. No man, in his sober senses, can fail to see that the whole subject demands most serious attention.

I. In the first place, I propose to show the general truth,—*that the Bible is given by inspiration of God.*

In saying this, I mean to assert that the Bible is utterly unlike all other books that were ever written, because its writers were specially inspired, or enabled by God, for the work which they did. I say that the Book comes to us with a claim which no other book possesses. It is stamped with Divine authority. In this respect it stands