Ten Reason Why I Believe The Bible Is The Word Of God

by R. A. Torrey

Ten Reason Why I Believe The Bible Is The Word Of God by R. A. Torrey is a timeless Christian classic that will help strengthen your faith in God and His Word. The book was originally published in 1898 by the Fleming H. Revell Company (New York). The book text and these files are Public Domain. Please distribute copies of this electronic book to others so they may be blessed also. [Adam Woeger, *Editor*]

Introduction

I was brought up to believe that the Bible was the Word of God. In early life I accepted it as such upon the authority of my parents, and never gave the question any serious thought. But later in life my faith in the Bible was utterly shattered through the influence of the writings of a very celebrated, scholarly and brilliant sceptic. I found myself face to face with the question, *Why* do you believe the Bible is the Word of God?

I had no satisfactory answer. I determined to go to the bottom of this question. If satisfactory proof could not be found that the Bible was God's Word I would give the whole thing up, cost what it might. If satisfactory proof could be found that the Bible was God's Word I would take my stand upon it, cost what it might. I doubtless had many friends who could have answered the question satisfactorily, but I was unwilling to confide to them the struggle that was going on in my own heart; so I sought help from God and from books, and after much painful study and thought came out of the darkness of scepticism into the broad daylight of faith and certainty that the Bible from beginning to end is God's Word. The following pages are largely the outcome of that experience of conflict and final victory. I will give Ten Reasons why I believe the Bible is the Word of God.

FIRST, *on the ground of the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

Many people accept the authority of Christ who do not accept that of the Bible as a whole. We all must accept His authority. He is accredited to us by five Divine testimonies: by the testimony of the Divine life He lived; by the testimony of the Divine words He spoke; by the testimony of the Divine works He wrought; by the Divine attestation of the resurrection from the dead; and by the testimony of His Divine influence upon the history of mankind. But if we accept the authority of Christ we must accept the authority of the Bible as a whole. He testifies definitely and specifically to the Divine authorship of the whole Bible.

We find His testimony as to the Old Testament in Mark 7:13. Here He calls the law of Moses the "Word of God." That, of course, covers only the first five books of the Old Testament, but in Luke 24:27 we read, "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in *all the Scriptures* the things concerning Himself," and in the forty-fourth verse He said, "All things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses and in the prophets and the Psalms." The Jews, divided the Old Testament into three parts-the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms-and Christ takes up each of these parts and sets the stamp of His authority upon it. In John 10:35 Christ says, "The Scripture cannot be broken," thereby teaching the absolute accuracy and inviolability of the Old Testament. More specifically still, it possible, in Matthew 5:18, Jesus says, "One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." A jot is the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet-less than half the size of any other letter, and a tittle is the merest point of a consonant-less than the cross we put on a "t,"-and Christ here declares that the Scripture is absolutely true, down to the smallest letter or point of a letter. So if we accept the authority of Christ we must accept the Divine authority of the entire Old Testament.

Now, as to the New Testament. We find Christ's endorsement of it in John 14:26, "The Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Here we see that not only was the teaching of the Apostles to be fully inspired, but also their recollection of what Christ Himself taught. We are sometimes asked how we know that the Apostles correctly reported what Jesus said-"may they not have forgotten?" True, they might forget, but Christ Himself tells us that in the Gospels we have, not the Apostles' recollection of what He said, but the Holy Ghost's recollection, and the Spirit of God never forgets. In John 16:13, 14, Christ said that the Holy Ghost should guide the Apostles into "all the truth," therefore in the New Testament teaching we have the whole sphere of God's truth. The teaching of the Apostles is more complete than that of Jesus Himself, for He says in John 16:12, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He shall guide you into *all the truth.*" While His own teaching had been partial, because of their weakness, the teaching of the Apostles, under the promised Spirit, was to take in the whole sphere of God's truth.

So if we accept the authority of Christ we must accept that of the whole Bible, but we must, as already seen, accept Christ's authority.

SECOND, *on the ground of its fulfilled prophecies.*

There are two classes of prophecies in the Bible-first, the explicit, verbal prophecies, second, those of the types.

In the first we have the definite prophecies concerning the Jews, the heathen nations and the Messiah. Taking the prophecies, regarding the Messiah as an illustration, look at Isaiah 53, Mic. 5:2, Dan. 9:25-27. Many others might be mentioned, but these will serve as illustrations. In these prophecies, written hundreds of years before the Messiah came, we have the most explicit statements as to the manner and place of His birth, the manner of His reception by men, how His life would end, His resurrection and His victory succeeding His death. When made, these prophecies were exceedingly improbable, and seemingly impossible of fulfilment; but they were fulfilled to the very minutest detail of manner and place and time. How are we to account for it? Man could not have foreseen these improbable events-they lay hundreds of years ahead-but God could, and it is God who speaks through these men.

But the prophecies of the types are more remarkable still. Everything in the Old Testament-history, institutions, ceremonies-is prophetical. The high priesthood, the ordinary priesthood, the Levites, the prophets, priests and kings, are all prophecies. The tabernacle, the brazen altar, the laver, the golden candlestick, the table of shewbread, the veil, the altar of incense, the ark of the covenant, the very coverings of the tabernacle, are prophecies. In all these things, as we study them minutely and soberly in the light of the history of Jesus Christ and the church, we see, wrapped up in the ancient institutions ordained of God to meet an immediate purpose, prophecies of the death, atonement, and resurrection of Christ, the day of Pentecost, and the entire history of the church. We see the profoundest Christian doctrines of the New Testament clearly foreshadowed in these institutions of the Old Testament. The only way in which you can appreciate this is to get into the Book itself and study all about the sacrifices and feasts, etc., till you see the truths of the New Testament shining out in the Old. If, in studying some elementary form of life, I find a rudimentary organ, useless now, but by the process of development to become of use in that animal's descendant, I say, back of this rudimentary organ is God, who, in the earlier animal, is preparing for the life and necessities of the animal that is to come. So, going back to these preparations in the Bible for the truth that is to be clearly taught at a later day, there is only one scientific way to account for them, namely, He who knows and prepares for the end from the beginning is the author of that Book.

THIRD, *on the ground of the unity of the book.*

This is an old argument, but a very satisfactory one. The Bible consists of sixty-six books, written by more than thirty different men, extending in the period of its composition over more than fifteen hundred years; written in three different languages, in many different countries, and by men on every plane of social life, from the herdman and fisherman and cheap politician up to the king upon his throne; written under all sorts of circumstances; yet in all this wonderful conglomeration we find an absolute unity of thought.

A wonderful thing about it is that this unity does not lie on the surface. On the surface there is oftentimes apparent contradiction, and the unity only comes out after deep and protracted study.

More wonderful yet is the organic character of this unity, beginning in the first book and growing till you come to its culmination in the last book of the Bible. We have first the seed, then the plant, then the bud, then the blossom, then the ripened fruit.

Suppose a vast building were to be erected, the stones for which were brought from the quarries in Rutland, Vermont; Berea, Ohio; Kasota, Minnesota, and Middletown, Connecticut. Each stone was hewn into final shape in the quarry from which it was brought. These stones were of all varieties of shape and size, cubical, rectangular, cylindrical, etc., but when they were brought together every stone fitted into its place, and when put together there rose before you a temple absolutely perfect in every outline, with its domes, sidewalls, buttresses, arches, transepts-not a gap or a flaw anywhere. How would you account for it? You would say:

"Back of these individual workers in the quarries was the master-mind of the architect who planned it all, and gave to each individual worker his specifications for the work."

So in this marvelous temple of God's truth which we call the Bible, whose stones have been quarried at periods of time and in places so remote from one another, but where every smallest part fits each other part, we are forced to say that back of the human hands that wrought was the Master-mind that thought.

FOURTH, *on the ground of the immeasurable superiority of the teachings of the Bible to those of any other and all other books.*

It is quite fashionable in some quarters to compare the teachings of the Bible with the teachings of Zoroaster, and Buddha, and Confucius, and Epictetus, and Socrates, and Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, and a number of other heathen authors. The difference between the teachings of the Bible and those of these men is found in three points-

First, the Bible has in it nothing but truth, while all the others have truth mixed with error. It is true Socrates taught how a philosopher ought to die; he also taught how a woman of the town ought to conduct her business. Jewels there are in the teachings of these men, but (as Joseph Cook once said) they are "jewels picked out of the mud."

Second, the Bible contains *all* truth. There is not a truth to be found anywhere on moral or spiritual subjects that you cannot find in substance within the covers of that old Book. I have often, when speaking upon this subject, asked anyone to bring me a single truth on moral or spiritual subjects, which, upon reflection, I could not find within the covers of this book, and no one has ever been able to do it. I have taken pains to compare some of the better teachings of infidels with those of the Bible. They indeed have jewels of thought, but they are, whether they knew it or not, stolen jewels, and stolen from the very book they ridicule.

The *third* point of superiority is this: the Bible contains more truth than all other books together. Get together from all literature of ancient and modern times all the beautiful thoughts you can; put away all the rubbish; put all these truths that you have culled from the literature of all ages into one book, and as the result, even then you will not have a book that will take the place of this one book.

This is not a large book. I hold in my hand a copy that I carry in my vest pocket and yet in this one little book there is more of truth than in all the books which man has produced in all the ages of his history. How will you account for it? There is only one rational way. This is not man's book, but God's book.

FIFTH, *on the ground of the history of the book, its victory over attack.*

This book has always been hated. No sooner was it given to the world than it met the hatred of men, and they tried to stamp it out. Celsus tried it by the brilliancy of his genius, Porphyry by the depth of his philosophy; but they failed, Lucian directed against it the shafts of his ridicule, Diocletian the power of the Roman empire; but they failed. Edicts backed by all the power of the empire were issued that every Bible should be burned, and that everyone who had a Bible should be put to death. For eighteen centuries every engine of destruction that human science, philosophy, wit, reasoning or brutality could bring to bear against a book has been brought to bear against that book to stamp it out of the world, but it has a mightier hold on the world to-day than ever before.

If that were man's book it would have been annihilated and forgotten hundreds of years ago, but because there is in it "the hiding of God's power," though at times all the great men of the world have been against it, and only an obscure remnant for it, still it has fulfilled wonderfully the words of Christ, though not in the sense of the original prophecy, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away."

SIXTH, *on the ground of the character of those who accept and of those who reject the book.*

Two things speak for the divinity of the Bible-the character of those who accept it, and, equally, the character of those who reject it. I do not mean by this that every man who professes to believe the book is better than every man that does not, but show me a man living an unselfish, devoted life, one who without reservation has surrendered himself to do the will of God, and I will show you a man who believes the Bible to be God's Word. On the other hand, show me a man who rejects the Divine authority of that book, and I will show you a man living a life of greed, or lust, or spiritual pride, or self will.

Suppose you have a book purporting to be by a certain author, and the people best acquainted with that author say it is his, and the people least acquainted with him say it is not; which will you believe? Now, the people best acquainted with God say the Bible is His book; those who are least acquainted with God say it is not. Which will you believe?

Furthermore, as men grow better they are more likely to accept the Bible, and as they grow worse they are more likely to reject it. We have all known men who were both sinful and unbelieving, who by forsaking their sin lost their unbelief. Did any of us ever know a man who was sinful and believing, who by forsaking his sin lost his faith? The nearer men live to God the more confident they are that the Bible is God's Word; the farther they get away from Him the more confident they are that it is not.

Where is the stronghold of the Bible? In the pure, unselfish, happy home. Where is the stronghold of infidelity? The gambling hell, the drinking saloon and the brothel. If a man should walk into a saloon and lay a Bible down upon the bar, and order a drink, we should think there was a strange incongruity in his actions, but if he should lay any infidel writing upon the bar, and order a drink, we would not feel that there was any incongruity.

SEVENTH, *on the ground of the influence of the book.*

There is more power in that little book to save men, and purify, gladden and beautify their lives, than in all other literature put together-more power to lift men up to God. A stream never rises higher than its source, and a book that has a power to lift men up to God that no other book has, must have come down from God in a way that no other book was.

I have in mind as I write a man who was the most complete victim of strong drink I ever knew; a man of marvelous intellectual gifts, but who had been stupefied and brutalized and demonized by the power of sin, and he was an infidel. At last the light of God shone into his darkened heart, and by the power of that book he has been transformed into one of the humblest, sweetest, noblest men I know to-day.

What other book would have done that? What other book has the power to elevate not only individuals but communities and nations that this book has?

EIGHTH, *on the ground of the inexhaustible depth of the book.*

Nothing has been added to it in eighteen hundred years, yet a man like Bunsen, or Neander, cannot exhaust it by the study of a lifetime. George Müller read it through more than one hundred times, and said it was fresher every time he read it. Could that be true of any other book?

But more wonderful than this-not only individual men but generations of men for eighteen hundred years have dug into it and given to the world thousands of volumes devoted to its exposition, and they have not reached the bottom of the quarry yet. A book that man produces man can exhaust, but all men together have not been able to get to the bottom of this book. How are you going to account for it? Only in this way-that in this book are hidden the infinite and inexhaustible treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God.

A brilliant Unitarian writer, in trying to disprove the inspiration of the Bible, says: "How irreligious to charge an infinite God with having written His whole Word in so small a book." He does not see how his argument can be turned against himself. What a testimony it is to the divinity of this book that such infinite wisdom is stored away in so small a compass.

NINTH, *on the ground of the fact that as we grow in knowledge and holiness we grow toward the Bible.*

Every thoughtful person when he starts out to study the Bible finds many things with which he does not agree, but as he goes on studying and growing in likeness to God, the nearer he gets to God the nearer he gets to the Bible. The nearer and nearer we get to God's standpoint the less and less becomes the disagreement between us and the Bible. What is the inevitable mathematical conclusion? When we get where God is, we and the Bible will meet. In other words, the Bible was written from God's standpoint.

Suppose you are traveling through a forest under the conduct of an experienced and highly recommended guide. You come to a place where two roads diverge. The guide says the road to the left is the one to take, but your own judgment passing upon the facts before it sees clear evidence that the road to the right is the one to take. You turn and say to the guide,

"I know you have had large experience in this forest, and you have come to me highly recommended, but my own judgment tells me clearly that the road to the right is the one we should take, and I must follow my own judgment. I know my reason is not infallible, but it is the best guide I have."

But after you have followed that path for some distance you are obliged to stop, turn around and go back and take the path which the guide said was the right one.

After a while you come to another place where two roads diverge. Now the guide says the road to the right is the one to take, but your judgment clearly says the one to the left is the one to take, and again you follow your own judgment with the same result as before.

After you had this experience forty or fifty times, and found yourself wrong every time, I think you would have sense enough the next time to follow the guide.

That is just my experience with the Bible. I received it at first on the authority of others. Like almost all other young men, my confidence became shaken, and I came to the fork in the road more than forty times, and I followed, my own reason, and in the outcome found myself wrong and the Bible right every time, and I trust that from this time on I shall have sense enough to follow the teachings of the Bible whatever my own judgment may say.

TENTH, *on the ground of the direct testimony of the Holy Spirit.*

We began with God and shall end with God. We began with the testimony of the second person of the Trinity, and shall close with that of the third person of the Trinity.

The Holy Spirit sets His seal in the soul of every believer to the Divine authority of the Bible. It is possible to get to a place where we need no argument to prove that the Bible is God's Word. Christ says, "My sheep know my voice," and God's children know His voice, and I know that the voice that speaks to me from the pages of that Book is the voice of my Father. You will sometimes meet a pious old lady, who tells you that she knows that the Bible is God's Word, and when you ask her for a reason for believing that it is God's Word she can give you none, She simply says:

"I know it is God's Word."

You say: "That is mere superstition."

Not at all. She is one of Christ's sheep, and recognizes her Shepherd's voice from every other voice. She is one of God's children, and knows the voice which speaks to her from the Bible is the voice of God. She is above argument.

Everyone can have that testimony. John 7:17 (R.V.) tells you how to get it. "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God." Just surrender your will to the will of God, no matter where it carries you, and you will put yourself in such an attitude toward God that when you read this book you will recognize that the voice that speaks to you from it is the voice of the God to whom you have surrendered your will.

Some time ago, when I was speaking to our students upon how to deal with sceptics, there was in the audience a graduate of a British University who had fallen into utter scepticism. At the close of the lecture he came to me and said:

"I don't wish to be discourteous, sir, but my experience contradicts everything you have said."

I asked him if he had followed the course of action that I had suggested and not found light. He said that he had. Stepping into another room I had a pledge written out running somewhat as follows:

"I believe there is an absolute difference between right and wrong, and I hereby take my stand upon the right, to follow it wherever it carries me. I promise earnestly to endeavor to find out what the truth is, and if I ever find that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, I promise to accept Him as my Savior and confess Him before the world."

I handed the paper to the gentleman and asked him if he was willing to sign it. He answered, "Certainly," and did sign it. I said to him:

"You don't know there is not a God, and you don't know that God doesn't answer prayer. I know He does, but my knowledge cannot avail for you, but here is a possible clew to knowledge. Now you have promised to search earnestly for the truth, so you will follow this possible clue. I want you to offer a prayer like this: 'Oh, God, if there be any God, and thou dost answer prayer, show me whether Jesus Christ is thy Son, and if you show me He is, I will accept Him as my Savior and confess Him before the world.'"

This he agreed to do. I further requested that he would take the Gospel of John and read in it every day, reading only a few verses at a time slowly and thoughtfully, every time before he read asking God to give him light. This he also agreed to do, but he finished by saying, "There is nothing in it." However, at the end of a short time, I met him again, and he said to me, "There is something in that." I replied, "I knew that." Then he went on to say it seemed just as if he had been caught up by the Niagara river and had been carried along, and that before long he would be a shouting Methodist.

A short time ago I met this gentleman again, and he said to me that he could not understand how he had been so blind, how he had ever listened to the reasoning which he had; that it seemed to him utterly foolish now. I replied that the Bible would explain this to him, that the "natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God," but that now he had put himself into the right attitude towards God and His truth, everything had been made plain. That man, who assured me that he was "a very peculiar man," and that methods that influenced others would not influence him, by putting himself into the right attitude towards God, got to a place where he received the direct testimony of the Holy Ghost that this Bible is God's Word; and, any one else can do the same.