

THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE-- DEFINITION, EXTENT AND PROOF

In this paper the authenticity and credibility of the Bible are assumed, by which is meant (1), that its books were written by the authors to whom they are ascribed, and that their contents are in all material points as when they came from their hands; and (2), that those contents are worthy of entire acceptance as to their statements of fact. Were there need to prove these assumptions, the evidence is abundant, and abler pens have dealt with it.

Let it not be supposed, however, that because these things are assumed their relative importance is undervalued. On the contrary, they underlie inspiration, and, as President Patton says, come in on the ground floor. They have to do with the historicity of the Bible, which for us just now is the basis of its authority. Nothing can be settled until this is settled, but admitting its settlement which, all things considered, we now may be permitted to do, what can be of deeper interest than the question as to how far that authority extends?

This is the inspiration question, and while so many have taken in hand to discuss the others, may not one be at liberty to discuss this? It is an old question, so old, indeed, as again in the usual recurrence of thought to have become new. Our fathers discussed it, it was the great question once upon a time, it was sifted to the bottom, and a great storehouse of fact, and argument, and illustration has been left for us to draw upon in a day of need.

For a long while the enemy's attack has directed our energies to another part of the field, but victory there will drive us back here again. The other questions are outside of the Bible itself, this is inside. They lead men away from the contents of the book to consider how they came, this brings us back to consider what they are. Happy the day when the inquiry returns here, and happy the generation which has not forgotten how to meet it.

I. DEFINITION OF INSPIRATION

1. Inspiration is not revelation. As Dr. Charles Hodge expressed it, revelation is the act of communicating divine knowledge to the mind, but inspiration is the act of the same Spirit controlling those who make that knowledge known to others. In Chalmer's happy phrase, the one is the influx, the other the efflux. Abraham received the influx, he was granted a revelation; but Moses was endued with the efflux, being inspired to record it for our learning. In the one case there was a flowing in and in the other a flowing out. Sometimes both of these experiences met in the same person, indeed Moses himself is an illustration of it, having received a revelation at another time and also the inspiration to make it known, but it is of importance to distinguish between the two.

2. Inspiration is not illumination. Every regenerated Christian is illuminated in the simple fact that he is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, but every such an one is not also inspired, but only the writers of the Old and New Testaments. Spiritual illumination is subject to degrees, some Christians possessing more of it than others, but, as we understand it, inspiration is not subject to degrees, being in every case the breath of God, expressing itself through a human personality.

3. Inspiration is not human genius. The latter is simply a natural qualification, however exalted it may be in some cases, but inspiration in the sense now spoken of is supernatural throughout. It is an endowment coming upon the writers of the Old and New Testaments directing and enabling them to write those books, and on no other men, and at no other time, and for no other purpose. No human genius of whom we ever heard introduced his writings with the formula, "Thus saith the Lord," or words to that

effect, and yet such is the common utterance of the Bible authors, No human genius ever yet agreed with any other human genius as to the things it most concerns men to know, and, therefore, however exalted his equipment, it differs not merely in degree but in kind from the inspiration of the Scriptures.

In its mode the divine agency is inscrutable, though its effects are knowable. We do not undertake to say just how the Holy Spirit operated on the minds of these authors to produce these books any more than we undertake to say how He operates on the human heart to produce conversion, but we accept the one as we do the other on the testimony that appeals to faith.

4. When we speak of the Holy Spirit coming upon the men in order to the composition of the books, it should be further understood that **the object is not the inspiration of the men but the books--** not the writers but the writings. It terminates upon the record, in other words, and not upon the human instrument who made it.

To illustrate: Moses, David, Paul, John, were not always and everywhere inspired, for then always and everywhere they would have been infallible and inerrant, which was not the case. They sometimes made mistakes in thought and erred in conduct. But however fallible and errant they may have been as men compassed with infirmity like ourselves, such fallibility or errancy was never under any circumstances communicated to their sacred writings.

Ecclesiastes is a case in point, which on the supposition of its Solomonic authorship, is giving us a history of his search for happiness "under the sun." Some statements in that book are only partially true while others are altogether false, therefore it cannot mean that Solomon was inspired as he tried this or that experiment to find what no man has been able to find outside of God. But it means that his language is inspired as he records the various feelings and opinions which possessed him in the pursuit.

This disposes of a large class of objections sometimes brought against the doctrine of inspiration-- those, for example, associated with the question as to whether the Bible is the Word of God or only contains that Word. If by the former be meant that God spoke every word in the Bible, and hence that every word is true, the answer must be no; but if it be meant that God caused every word in the Bible, true or false, to be recorded, the answer should be yes. There are words of Satan in the Bible, words of false prophets, words of the enemies of Christ, and yet they are God's words, not in the sense that He uttered them, but that He caused them to be recorded, infallibly and inerrantly recorded, for our profit. In this sense the Bible does not merely contain the Word of God, it is the Word of God.

Of any merely human author it is the same. This paper is the writer's word throughout, and yet he may quote what other people say to commend them or dispute them. What they say he records, and in doing so he makes the record his in the sense that he is responsible for its accuracy.

5. Let it be stated further in this definitional connection, **that the record for whose inspiration we contend is the original record--** the autographs or parchments of Moses, David, Daniel, Matthew, Paul or Peter, as the case may be, and not any particular translation or translations of them whatever. There is no translation absolutely without error, nor could there be, considering the infirmities of human copyists, unless God were pleased to perform a perpetual miracle to secure it.

But does this make nugatory our contention? Some would say it does, and they would argue speciously that to insist on the inerrancy of a parchment no living being has ever seen is an academic question merely, and without value. But do they not fail to see that the character and perfection of the God-head are involved in that inerrancy?

Some years ago a "liberal" theologian, deprecating this discussion as not worth while, remarked that it was a matter of small consequence whether a pair of trousers were originally perfect if they were now rent. To which the valiant and witty David James Burrell replied, that it might be a matter of small consequence to the wearer of the trousers, but the tailor who made them would prefer to have it understood that they did not leave his shop that way. And then he added, that if the Most High must train among knights of the shears He might at least be regarded as the best of the guild, and One who drops no stitches and sends out no imperfect work.

Is it not with the written Word as with the incarnate Word? Is Jesus Christ to be regarded as imperfect because His character has never been perfectly reproduced before us? Can He be the incarnate Word unless He were absolutely without sin? And by the same token, can the scriptures be the written Word unless they were inerrant?

But if this question be so purely speculative and valueless, what becomes of the science of Biblical criticism by which properly we set such store today? Do builders drive piles into the soft earth if they never expect to touch bottom? Do scholars dispute about the scripture text and minutely examine the history and meaning of single words, "the delicate coloring of mood, tense and accent," if at the end there is no approximation to an absolute? As Dr. George H. Bishop says, does not our concordance, every time we take it up, speak loudly to us of a once inerrant parchment? Why do we not possess concordances for the very words of other books?

Nor is that original parchment so remote a thing as some suppose. Do not the number and variety of manuscripts and versions extant render it comparatively easy to arrive at a knowledge of its text, and does not competent scholarship today affirm that as to the New Testament at least, we have in 999 cases out of every thousand the very word of that original text? Let candid consideration be given to these things and it will be seen that we are not pursuing a phantom in contending for an inspired autograph of the Bible.

II. THE EXTENT OF INSPIRATION

1. **The inspiration of scripture includes the whole and every part of it.** There are some who deny this and limit it to only the prophetic portions, the words of Jesus Christ, and, say, the profounder spiritual teachings of the epistles. The historical books in their judgment, and as an example, do not require inspiration because their data were obtainable from natural sources.

The Bible itself, however, knows of no limitations, as we shall see: "**All scripture is given by inspiration of God**" (<2 Tim 3:16>). The historical data, most of it at least, might have been obtained from natural sources, but what about the supernatural guidance required in their selection and narration? Compare, for answer, the records of Creation, the fall, the deluge, etc., found in Genesis with those recently discovered by excavations in Bible lands. Do not the results of the pick-ax and the spade point to the same original as the Bible, and yet do not their childishness and grotesqueness often bear evidence of the human and sinful mould through which they ran? Do they not show the need of some power other than man himself to lead him out of the labyrinth of error into the open ground of truth?

Furthermore, are not the historical books in some respects the most important in the Bible? Are they not the bases of its doctrine? Does not the doctrine of sin need for its starting point the record of the fall? Could we so satisfactorily understand justification did we not have the story of God's dealings with Abraham? And what of the priesthood of Christ? Dismiss Leviticus and what can be made of Hebrews? Is not the Acts of the Apostles historical, but can we afford to lose its inspiration?

And then, too, the historical books are, in many cases, prophetic as well as historical. Do not the types and symbols in them show forth the Saviour in all the varying aspects of His grace has not the story of Israel the closest relation as type and anti-type to our spiritual redemption? Does not Paul teach this in <1 Cor. 10:6-11>? And if these things were thus written for our learning, does not this imply their inspiration?

Indeed, the historical books have the strongest testimony borne to their importance in other parts of the Bible. This will appear more particularly as we proceed, but take, in passing, Christ's use of Deuteronomy in His conflict with the tempter. Thrice does He overcome him by a citation from that historical book without note or comment. Is it not difficult to believe that neither He nor Satan considered it inspired?

Thus without going further, we may say, with Dr. DeWitt of Princeton, that it is impossible to secure the religious infallibility of the Bible-- which is all the objector regards as necessary-- if we exclude Bible history from the sphere of its inspiration. But if we include Bible history at all, we must in the whole of it, for who is competent to separate its parts?

2. The inspiration includes not only all the books of the Bible in general but in detail, the form as well as the substance, the word as well as the thought. This is sometimes called the verbal theory of inspiration and is vehemently spoken against in some quarters. It is too mechanical, it degrades the writers to the level of machines, it has a tendency to make skeptics, and all that.

This last remark, however, is not so alarming as it sounds. The doctrine of the eternal retribution of the wicked is said to make skeptics, and also that of a vicarious atonement, not to mention other revelations of Holy Writ. The natural mind takes to none of these things. But if we are not prepared to yield the point in one case for such a reason, why should we be asked to do it in another?

And as to degrading the writers to the level of machines, even if it were true, as it is not, why should fault be found when one considers the result? Which is the more important, the free agency of a score or two of mortals, or the divinity of their message? The whole argument is just a spark from the anvil on which the race is ever trying to hammer out the deification of itself.

But we are insisting upon no theory-- not even the verbal theory-- if it altogether excludes the human element in the transmission of the sacred word. As Dr. Henry B. Smith says, "God speaks through the personality as well as the lips of His messengers," and we may pour into that word "personality" everything that goes to make it-- the age in which the person lived, his environment, his degree of culture, his temperament and all the rest. As Wayland Hoyt expressed it, "Inspiration is not a mechanical, crass, bald compulsion of the sacred writers, but rather a dynamic, divine influence over their freely-acting faculties" in order that the latter in relation to the subject-matter then in hand may be kept inerrant, i.e., without mistake or fault. It is limiting the Holy One of Israel to say that He is unable to do this without turning a human being into an automaton. Has He who created man as a free agent left himself no opportunity to mould his thoughts into forms of speech inerrantly expressive of His will, without destroying that which He has made?

And, indeed, wherein resides man's free agency, in his mind or in his mouth? Shall we say he is free while God controls his thought, but that he becomes a mere machine when that control extends to the expression of his thought?

But returning to the argument, if the divine influence upon the writers did not extend to the form as well as the substance of their writings; if, in other words, God gave them only the thought, permitting them to express it in their own words, what guarantee have we that they have done so?

An illustration the writer has frequently used will help to make this clear. A stenographer in a mercantile house was asked by his employer to write as follows:

"Gentlemen: We misunderstood your letter and will now fill your order."

Imagine the employer's surprise, however, when a little later this was set before him for his signature:

"Gentlemen: We misunderstood your letter and will not fill your order."

The mistake was only of a single letter, but it was entirely subversive of his meaning. And yet the thought was given clearly to the stenographer, and the words, too, for that matter. Moreover, the latter was capable and faithful, but he was human, and it is human to err. Had not his employer controlled his expression down to the very letter, the thought intended to be conveyed would have failed of utterance.

In the same way the human authors of the Bible were men of like passions with ourselves. Their motives were pure, their intentions good, but even if their subject-matter were the commonplaces of men,

to say nothing of the mysterious and transcendent revelation of a holy God, how could it be an absolute transcript of the mind from which it came in the absence of miraculous control?

In the last analysis, it is the Bible itself, of course, which must settle the question of its inspiration and the extent of it, and to this we come in the consideration of the proof, but we may be allowed a final question. Can even God Himself give a thought to man without the words that clothe it? Are not the two inseparable, as much so "as a sum and its figures, or a tune and its notes?" Has any case been known in human history where a healthy mind has been able to create ideas without expressing them to its own perception? In other words, as Dr. A. J. Gordon once observed: "To deny that the Holy Spirit speaks in scripture is an intelligible proposition, but to admit that He speaks, it is impossible to know what He says except as we have His Words."

III. PROOF OF INSPIRATION

1. The inspiration of the Bible is proven by the philosophy, or what may be called the nature of the case.

The proposition may be stated thus: The Bible is the history of the redemption of the race, or from the side of the individual, a supernatural revelation of the will of God to men for their salvation. But it was given to certain men of one age to be conveyed in writing to other men in different ages. Now all men experience difficulty in giving faithful reflections of their thoughts to others because of sin, ignorance, defective memory and the inaccuracy always incident to the use of language.

Therefore it may be easily deduced that if the revelation is to be communicated precisely as originally received, the same supernatural power is required in the one case as in the other. This has been sufficiently elaborated in the foregoing and need not be dwelt upon again.

2. It may be proven by the history and character of the Bible, i.e., by all that has been assumed as to its authenticity and credibility. All that goes to prove these things goes to prove its inspiration.

To borrow in part, the language of the Westminster Confession, "the heavenliness of its matter, the efficacy of its doctrine, the unity of its various parts, the majesty of its style and the scope and completeness of its design" all indicate the divinity of its origin.

The more we think upon it the more we must be convinced that men unaided by the Spirit of God could neither have conceived, nor put together, nor preserved in its integrity that precious deposit known as the Sacred Oracles.

3. But the strongest proof is the declarations of the Bible itself and the inferences to be drawn from them. Nor is this reasoning in a circle as some might think. In the case of a man as to whose veracity there is no doubt, no hesitancy is felt in accepting what he says about himself; and since the Bible is demonstrated to be true in its statements of fact by unassailable evidence, may we not accept its witness in its own behalf?

Take the argument from Jesus Christ as an illustration. He was content to be tested by the prophecies that went before on Him, and the result of that ordeal was the establishment of His claims to be the Messiah beyond a peradventure. That complex system of prophecies, rendering collusion or counterfeit impossible, is the incontestable proof that He was what He claimed to be. But of course, He in whose birth, and life, and death, and resurrection such marvelous prophecies met their fulfillment, became, from the hour in which His claims were established, a witness to the divine authority and infallible truth of the sacred records in which these prophecies are found.-- (The New Apologetic, by Professor Robert Watts, D.D.)

It is so with the Bible. The character of its contents, the unity of its parts, the fulfillment of its prophecies, the miracles wrought in its attestation, the effects it has accomplished in the lives of nations and of men, all these go to show that it is divine, and if so, that it may be believed in what it says about itself.

A. THE ARGUMENT FOR THE OLD TESTAMENT

To begin with the Old Testament:

(a) **consider how the writers speak** of the origin of their messages. Dr. James H. Brookes is authority for saying that the phrase, "Thus saith the Lord" or its equivalent is used by them 2,000 times. Suppose we eliminate this phrase and its necessary context from the Old Testament in every instance, one wonders how much of the Old Testament would remain.

(b) **Consider how the utterances of the Old Testament writers are introduced into the New.** Take <Matthew 1:22> as an illustration, "Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet." It was not the prophet who spoke, but the Lord who spoke through the prophet.

(c) **Consider how Christ and His apostles regard the Old Testament.** He came "not to destroy but to fulfill the law and the prophets" <Matt. 5:17>. "The Scripture cannot be broken" <John 10:35>. He sometimes used single words as the bases of important doctrines, twice in <Matthew 22>, at verses 31,32 and 42-45. The apostles do the same. See <Galatians 3:16, Hebrews 2:8,11> and <12:26-27>.

(d) **Consider what the apostles directly teach upon the subject.** Peter tells us that "No prophecy ever came by the will of man, but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (<2 Peter 1:21>, English Revised Version (1885)). "Prophecy" here applies to the word written as is indicated in the preceding verse, and means not merely the foretelling of events, but the utterances of any word of God without reference as to time past, present or to come. As a matter of fact, what Peter declares is that the will of man had nothing to do with any part of the Old Testament, but that the whole of it, from Genesis to Malachi, was inspired by God.

Of course Paul says the same, in language even plainer, in <2 Timothy 3:16>, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable." The phrase "inspiration of God" means literally God-breathed. The whole of the Old Testament is God-breathed, for it is to that part of the Bible the language particularly refers, since the New Testament as such was not then generally known.

As this verse is given somewhat differently in the Revised Version we dwell upon it a moment longer. It there reads, "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable," and the caviller is disposed to say that therefore some scripture may be inspired and some may not be, and that the profitableness extends only to the former and not the latter.

But aside from the fact that Paul would hardly be guilty of such a weak truism as that, it may be stated in reply first, that the King James rendering of the passage is not only the more consistent scripture, but the more consistent Greek. Several of the best Greek scholars of the period affirm this, including some of the revisers themselves who did not vote for the change. And secondly, even the revisers place it in the margin as of practically equal authority with their preferred translation, and to be chosen by the reader if desired. There are not a few devout Christians, however, who would be willing to retain the rendering of the Revised Version as being stronger than the King James, and who would interpolate a word in applying it to make it mean, "Every scripture (because) inspired of God is also profitable." We believe that both Gausson and Wordsworth take this view, two as staunch defenders of plenary inspiration as could be named.

B. THE ARGUMENT FOR THE NEW TESTAMENT

We are sometimes reminded that, however strong and convincing the argument for the inspiration of the Old Testament, that for the New Testament is only indirect. "Not one of the evangelists tells us that he is inspired," says a certain theological professor, "and not one writer of an epistle, except Paul."

We shall be prepared to dispute this statement a little further, but in the meantime let us reflect that the inspiration of the Old Testament being assured as it is, why should similar evidence be required

for the New? Whoever is competent to speak as a Bible authority knows that the unity of the Old and New Testaments is the strongest demonstration of their common source. They are seen to be not two books, but only two parts of one book.

To take then the analogy of the Old Testament. The foregoing argument proves its inspiration as a whole, although there were long periods separating the different writers, Moses and David let us say, or David and Daniel, the Pentateuch and the Psalms, or the Psalms and the Prophets. As long, or longer, than between Malachi and Matthew, or Ezra and the Gospels. If then to carry conviction for the plenary inspiration of the Old Testament as a whole, it is not necessary to prove it for every book, why, to carry conviction for the plenary inspiration of the Bible as a whole is it necessary to do the same?

We quote here a paragraph or two from Dr. Nathaniel West. He is referring to <2 Timothy 3:16>, which he renders, "Every scripture is inspired of God," and adds:

"The distributive word 'Every' is used not only to particularize each individual scripture of the Canon that Timothy had studied from his youth, but also to include, along with the Old Testament the New Testament scriptures extant in Paul's day, and any others, such as those that John wrote after him.

"The Apostle Peter tells us that he was in possession, not merely of some of Paul's Epistles, but 'all his Epistles,' and places them, canonically, in the same rank with what he calls 'the other scriptures,' i.e., of equal inspiration and authority with the 'words spoken before by the Holy Prophets, and the commandment of the Lord and Savior, through the Apostles.' <2 Peter 3:2,16>.

"Paul teaches the same co-ordination of the Old and New Testaments. Having referred to the Old as a unit, in his phrase 'Holy Scriptures,' which the revisers translate 'Sacred Writings,' he proceeds to particularize. He tells Timothy that 'every scripture,' whether of Old or New Testament production, 'is inspired of God.' Let it be in the Pentateuch, the Psalms, the Prophets, the Historical Books, let it be a chapter or a verse; let it be in the Gospels, the Acts, his own or Peter's Epistles, or even John's writings, yet to be, still each part of the Sacred Collection is God-given and because of that possesses divine authority as part of the Book of God."

We read this from Dr. West twenty years ago, and rejected it as his dictum. We read it today, with deeper and fuller knowledge of the subject, and we believe it to be true.

It is somewhat as follows that Dr. Gaussen in his exhaustive "Theopneustia" gives the argument for the inspiration of the New Testament.

(a) **The New Testament is the later, and for that reason the more important revelation of the two**, and hence if the former were inspired, it certainly must be true of the latter. The opening verses of the first and second chapters of Hebrews plainly suggest this: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son ... Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard" (<Heb 1:1>).

And this inference is rendered still more conclusive by the circumstance that the New Testament sometimes explains, sometimes proves, and sometimes even repeals ordinances of the Old Testament. See <Matthew 1:22-23> for an illustration of the first, <Acts 13:19-39> for the second and <Galatians 5:6> for the third. Assuredly these things would not be true if the New Testament were not of equal, and in a certain sense, even greater authority than the Old.

(b) **The writers of the New Testament were of an equal or higher rank than those of the Old.** That they were prophets is evident from such allusions as <Romans 16:25-27>, and <Ephesians 3:4-5>. But that they were more than prophets is indicated in the fact that wherever in the New Testament prophets and apostles are both mentioned, the last-named is always mentioned first (see <1 Cor. 12:28; Ephesians 2:20, Ephesians 4:11>). It is also true that the writers of the New Testament had a higher mission than those of the Old, since they were sent forth by Christ, as he had been sent forth by the Father (<John 20:21>). They were to go, not to a single nation only (as Israel), but into all the world (<Matthew 28:19>). They received the keys of the kingdom of heaven (<Matthew 16:19>). And they

are to be pre-eminently rewarded in the regeneration (<**Matthew 19:28**>). Such considerations and comparisons as these are not to be overlooked in estimating the authority by which they wrote.

(c) **The writers of the New Testament were especially qualified for their work**, as we see in <**Matthew 10:19-20; Mark 13:11; Luke 12:2; John 14:26**> and <**John 16:13-14**>. These passages will be dwelt on more at length in a later division of our subject, but just now it may be noticed that in some of the instances, inspiration of the most absolute character was promised as to what they should speak the inference being warranted that none the less would they be guided in what they wrote. Their spoken words were limited and temporary in their sphere, but their written utterances covered the whole range of revelation and were to last forever. If in the one case they were inspired, how much more in the other?

(d) **The writers of the New Testament directly claim divine inspiration.** See <**Acts 15:23-29**>, where, especially at verse 28, James is recorded as saying, "for it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things." Here it is affirmed very clearly that the Holy Spirit is the real writer of the letter in question and simply using the human instruments for his purpose. Add to this <**1 Corinthians 2:13**>, where Paul says: "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual," or as the margin of the Revised Version puts it, "imparting spiritual things to spiritual men." In <**1 Thessalonians 2:13**> the same writer says: "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the word of God." In <**2 Peter 3:2**> the apostle places his own words on a level with those of the prophets of the Old Testament, and in verses 15 and 16 of the same chapter he does the same with the writings of Paul, classifying them "with the other scriptures." Finally, in <**Revelation 2:7**>, although it is the Apostle John who is writing, he is authorized to exclaim: "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (<**Rev 2:7; 2:11; 2:17; 2:29; 3:6; 3:13; 3:22**>), and so on throughout the epistles to the seven churches.

C. THE ARGUMENT FOR THE WORDS

The evidence that the inspiration includes the form as well as the substance of the Holy Scriptures, the word as well as the thought, may be gathered in this way.

1. **There were certainly some occasions when the words were given to the human agents.** Take the instance of Balaam (<**Numbers 22:38; 23:12,16**>). It is clear that this self-seeking prophet thought, i.e., desired to speak differently from what he did, but was obliged to speak the word that God put in his mouth. There are two incontrovertible witnesses to this, one being Balaam himself and the other God.

Take Saul (<**1 Samuel 10:10**>), or at a later time, his messengers (<**1 Samuel 19:20-24**>). No one will claim that there was not an inspiration of the words here. And Caiaphas also (<**John 11:49-52**>), of whom it is expressly said that when he prophesied that one man should die for the people, "this spake he not of himself" (<**Jn 11:51**>). Who believes that Caiaphas meant or really knew the significance of what he said?

And how entirely this harmonizes with Christ's promise to His disciples in <**Matthew 10:19-20**> and elsewhere. "When they deliver you up take no thought (be not anxious) how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you" (<**Mt 10:19**>). Mark is even more emphatic: "Neither do ye premeditate, but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye, for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Spirit."

Take the circumstance of the day of Pentecost (<**Acts 2:4-11**>), when the disciples "began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." Parthians, Medes, Elamites, the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, in the parts of Libya about

Cyrene, the strangers of Rome, Cretes and Arabians all testified, "we do here them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God!" (<Acts 2:11>). Did not this inspiration include the words? Did it not indeed exclude the thought? What clearer example could be desired?

To the same purport consider Paul's teaching in <1 Corinthians 14> about the gift of tongues, "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue, in the Spirit speaketh mysteries, but no man understandeth him" (<1 Cor 14:2; 14:4>), therefore he is to pray that he may interpret. Under some circumstances, if no interpreter be present, he is to keep silence in the church and speak only to himself and to God.

But better still, consider the utterance of <1 Peter 1:10-11>, where he speaks of them who prophesied of the grace that should come, as "searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow, to whom it was revealed" (<1 Pet 1:11>), etc.

"Should we see a student who, having taken down the lecture of a profound philosopher, was now studying diligently to comprehend the sense of the discourse which he had written, we should understand simply that he was a pupil and not a master; that he had nothing to do with originating either the thoughts or the words of the lecture, but was rather a disciple whose province it was to understand what he had transcribed, and so be able to communicate it to others.

"And who can deny that this is the exact picture of what we have in this passage from Peter? Here were inspired writers studying the meaning of what they themselves had written. With all possible allowance for the human peculiarities of the writers, they must have been reporters of what they heard, rather than formulators of that which they had been made to understand."-- A. J. Gordon in "The Ministry of the Spirit," pp. 173,174

2. The Bible plainly teaches that inspiration extends to its words. We spoke of Balaam as uttering that which God put in his mouth, but the same expression is used by God Himself with reference to His prophets. When Moses would excuse himself from service because he was not eloquent, He who made man's mouth said, "Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say" (<Exodus 4:10-12>). And Dr. James H. Brookes' comment is very pertinent. "God did not say I will be with thy mind, and teach thee what thou shalt think; but I will be with thy mouth and teach thee what thou shalt say. This explains why, forty years afterwards, Moses said to Israel, 'Ye shall not add unto the word I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it.' (<Deut. 4:2>." (<Exo 4:12>)) Seven times Moses tells us that the tables of stone containing the commandments were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables (<Exodus 31:16>).

Passing from the Pentateuch to the poetical books we find David saying, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in my tongue" (<2 Samuel 23:1-2>). He, too, does not say, God thought by me, but spoke by me.

Coming to the prophets, Jeremiah confesses that, like Moses, he recoiled from the mission on which he was sent and for the same reason. He was a child and could not speak. "Then the Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold I have put My word in thy mouth" (<Jeremiah 1:6-9>).

All of which substantiates the declaration of Peter quoted earlier, that "no prophecy ever came by the will of man, but man spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." Surely, if the will of man had nothing to do with the prophecy, he could not have been at liberty in the selection of the words.

So much for the Old Testament, but when we reach the New, we have the same unerring and verbal accuracy guaranteed to the apostles by the Son of God, as we have seen. And we have the apostles making claim of it, as when Paul in <1 Corinthians 2:12-13> distinguishes between the "things" or the thoughts which God gave him and the words in which he expressed them, and insisting on the divinity of both; "Which things also we speak" (<1 Cor 2:13>), he says, "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth." In <Galatians 3:16>, following the example of His divine Master, he employs not merely a single word, but a single letter of a word as the basis of an argument for a

great doctrine. The blessing of justification which Abraham received has become that of the believer in Jesus Christ. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ" (<Gal 3:16>).

The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews bases a similar argument on the word "all" in <Hebrews 1:8>, on the word "one" in <1:11>, and on the phrase "yet once more" in <Hebrews 12:26-27>.

To recur to Paul's argument in Galatians, Archdeacon Farrar in one of his writings denies that by any possibility such a Hebraist as he, and such a master of Greek usage could have argued in this way. He says Paul must have known that the plural of the Hebrew and Greek terms for "seed" is never used by Hebrew or Greek writers to designate human offspring. It means, he says, various kinds of grain.

His artlessness is amusing. We accept his estimate of Paul's knowledge of Hebrew and Greek, says Professor Watts, he was certainly a Hebrew of the Hebrews, and as to his Greek he could not only write it but speak it as we know, and quote what suited his purpose from the Greek poets. But on this supposition we feel justified in asking Dr. Farrar whether a lexicographer in searching Greek authors for the meanings they attached to [spermata (grk 4690)], the Greek for "seeds," would not be inclined to add "human offspring" on so good an authority as Paul?

Nor indeed would they be limited to his authority, since Sophocles uses it in the same way, and Aeschylus. "I was driven away from my country by my own offspring" ([spermata])-- literally by my own seeds, is what the former makes one of his characters say.

Dr. Farrar's rendering of [spermata] in <Galatians 3:16> on the other hand would make nonsense if not sacrilege. "He saith not unto various kinds of grain as of many, but as of one, and to thy grain, which is Christ" (<Gal 3:16>).

"Granting then, what we thank no man for granting, that [spermata] means human offspring, it is evident that despite all opinions to the contrary, this passage sustains the teaching of an inspiration of Holy Writ extending to its very words."

3. But the most unique argument for the inspiration of the words of scripture is the relation which Jesus Christ bears to them. In the first place, He Himself was inspired as to His words. In the earliest reference to His prophetic office (<Deut. 18:18>), Jehovah says, "I will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak ... all that I shall command Him." A limitation on His utterance which Jesus everywhere recognizes. "As My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things" (<Jn 8:28>); "the Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak" (<Jn 12:49>); "whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak" (<Jn 12:50>); "I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me" (<Jn 17:8>), "the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life" (<John 6:63; 8:26,28,40; 12:49-50>).

The thought is still more impressive as we read of the relation of the Holy Spirit to the God-man. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor" (<Lk 4:18>); "He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments unto the apostles" (<Acts 1:2>); "the revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto Him" (<Rev 1:1>); "these things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand" (<Rev 2:1>); "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (<Luke 4:18; Acts 1:2; Rev. 1:1; 2:1,11>). If the incarnate Word needed the unction of the Holy Spirit to give to men the revelation He received from the Father in Whose bosom He dwells; and if the agency of the same Spirit extended to the words He spoke in preaching the gospel to the meek or dictating an epistle, how much more must these things be so in the case of ordinary men when engaged in the same service? With what show of reason can one contend that any Old or New Testament writer stood; so far as his words were concerned, in need of no such agency."-- The New Apologetic, pp. 67,68

In the second place He used the scriptures as though they were inspired as to their words. In <Matthew 22:31-32>, He substantiates the doctrine of the resurrection against the skepticism of the Sadducees by emphasizing the present tense of the verb "to be," i.e., the word "am" in the language of Jehovah to Moses at the burning bush. In <Matthew 22:42-45> He does the Same for His own Deity by

alluding to the second use of the word "Lord" in <Psalm 110>. "The LORD said unto my Lord ... If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" In <John 10:34-36>, He vindicates Himself from the charge of blasphemy by saying, "Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If He called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?"

We have already seen Him (in <Matthew 4>) overcoming the tempter in the wilderness by three quotations from Deuteronomy without note or comment except, "It is written." Referring to which Adolphe Monod says, "I know of nothing in the whole history of humanity, nor even in the field of divine revelation, that proves more clearly than this the inspiration of the scriptures. What! Jesus Christ, the Lord of heaven and earth, calling to his aid in that solemn moment Moses his servant? He who speaks from heaven fortifying himself against the temptations of hell by the word of him who spoke from earth how can we explain that spiritual mystery, that wonderful reversing of the order of things, if for Jesus the words of Moses were not the words of God rather than those of men? How shall we explain it if Jesus were not fully aware that holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit?"

"I do not forget the objections which have been raised against the inspiration of the scriptures, nor the real obscurity with which that inspiration is surrounded; if they sometimes trouble your hearts, they have troubled mine also. But at such times, in order to revive my faith, I have only to glance at Jesus glorifying the scriptures in the wilderness; and I have seen that for all who rely upon Him, the most embarrassing of problems is transformed into a historical fact, palpable and clear. Jesus no doubt was aware of the difficulties connected with the inspiration of the scriptures, but did this prevent Him from appealing to their testimony with unreserved confidence? Let that which was sufficient for Him suffice for you. Fear not that the rock which sustained the Lord in the hour of His temptation and distress will give way because you lean too heavily upon it."

In the third place, Christ teaches that the scriptures are inspired as to their words. In the Sermon on the Mount He said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (<Mt 5:17>).

Here is testimony confirmed by an oath, for "verily" on the lips of the Son of Man carries such force. He affirms the indestructibility of the law, not its substance merely but its form, not the thought but the word.

"One jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law." The "jot" means the yodh (y), the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet, while the "tittle" means the horn, a short projection in certain letters extending the base line beyond the upright one which rests upon it. A reader unaccustomed to the Hebrew needs a strong eye to see the tittle, but Christ guarantees that as a part of the sacred text neither the tittle nor the yodh shall perish.

The elder Lightfoot, the Hebraist and rabbinical scholar of the Westminster Assembly time, has called attention to an interesting story of a certain letter yodh found in the text of <Deut. 32:18>. It is in the word [teshiy (heb 7876)], to forsake, translated in the King James as "unmindful." Originally it seems to have been written smaller even than usual, i.e., undersized, and yet notwithstanding the almost infinite number of times in which copies have been made, that little yodh stands there today just as it ever did. Lightfoot spoke of it in the middle of the seventeenth century and although two more centuries and a half have passed since then with all their additional copies of the book, yet it still retains its place in the sacred text. Its diminutive size is referred to in the margin, "but no hand has dared to add a hair's breadth to its length," so that we can still employ his words, and say that it is likely to remain there forever.

The same scholar speaks of the effect a slight change in the form of a Hebrew letter might produce in the substance of the thought for which it stands. He takes as an example two words, [chalal (heb 2490)] and [halal (heb 1984)], which differ from each other simply in their first radicals. The "Ch" in Hebrew is expressed by one letter the same as "H," the only distinction being a slight break or opening in

the left limb of the latter. It seems too trifling to notice, but let that line be broken where it should be continuous, and "Thou shalt not profane the Name of thy God" in <Leviticus 18:21>, becomes "Thou shalt not praise the Name of thy God." Through that aperture, however small, the entire thought of the divine mind oozes out, so to speak, and becomes quite antagonistic to what was designed.

This shows how truly the thought and the word expressing it are bound together, and that whatever affects the one imperils the other. As another says, "The bottles are not the wine, but if the bottles perish, the wine is sure to be spilled." It may seem like narrow-mindedness to contend for this, and an evidence of enlightenment or liberal scholarship to treat it with indifference, but we should be prepared to take our stand with Jesus Christ in the premises, and if necessary, go outside the camp bearing our reproach.

IV. DIFFICULTIES AND OBJECTIONS

That there are difficulties in the way of accepting a view of inspiration like this goes without saying. But to the finite mind there must always be difficulties connected with a revelation from the Infinite, and it can not be otherwise. This has been mentioned before. Men of faith, and it is such we are addressing, and not men of the world, do not wait to understand or resolve all the difficulties associated with other mysteries of the Bible before accepting them as divine, and why should they do so in this case?

Moreover, Archbishop Whately's dictum is generally accepted, that we are not obliged to clear away every difficulty about a doctrine in order to believe it, always provided that the facts on which it rests are true. And particularly is this the case where the rejection of such a doctrine involves greater difficulties than its belief, as it does here.

For if this view of inspiration be rejected, what have its opponents to give in its place? Do they realize that any objections to it are slight in comparison with those to any other view that can be named? And do they realize that this is true because this view has the immeasurable advantage of agreeing with the plain declarations of Scripture on the subject? In other words, as Dr. Burrell says, those who assert the inerrancy of the scripture autographs do so on the authority of God Himself, and to deny it is of a piece with the denial that they teach the forgiveness of sins or the resurrection from the dead. No amount of exegetical turning and twisting can explain away the assertions already quoted in these pages, to say nothing of the constant undertone of evidence we find in the Bible everywhere to their truth.

And speaking of this further, are we not justified in requiring of the objector two things? First, on any fair basis of scientific investigation, is he not obliged to dispose of the evidence here presented before he impugns the doctrine it substantiates? And second, after having disposed of it, is he not equally obligated to present the scriptural proof of whatever other view of inspiration he would have us accept? Has he ever done this, and if not, are we not further justified in saying that it can not be done? But let us consider some of the difficulties.

1. There are the so-called discrepancies or contradictions between certain statements of the Bible and the facts of history or natural science. The best way to meet these is to treat them separately as they are presented, but when you ask for them you are not infrequently met with silence. They are hard to produce, and when produced, who is able to say that they belong to the original parchments? As we are not contending for an inerrant translation, does not the burden of proof rest with the objector?

But some of these "discrepancies" are easily explained. They do not exist between statements of the Bible and facts of science, but between erroneous interpretations of the Bible and immature conclusions of science. The old story of Galileo is in point, who did not contradict the Bible in affirming that the earth moved round the sun but only the false theological assumptions about it. In this way advancing light has removed many of these discrepancies, and it is fair to presume with Dr. Charles Hodge that further light would remove all.

2. There are the differences in the narratives themselves. In the first place, the New Testament writers sometimes change important words in quoting from the Old Testament, which it is assumed could not be the case if in both instances the writers were inspired. But it is forgotten that in the scriptures we are dealing not so much with different human authors as with one divine Author. It is a principle in ordinary literature that an author may quote himself as he pleases, and give a different turn to an expression here and there as a changed condition of affairs renders it necessary or desirable. Shall we deny this privilege to the Holy Spirit? May we not find, indeed, that some of these supposed misquotations show such progress of truth, such evident application of the teaching of an earlier dispensation to the circumstances of a later one, as to afford a confirmation of their divine origin rather than an argument against it?

We offered illustrations of this earlier, but to those would now add <Isaiah 59:20> quoted in <Romans 11:26>, and <Amos 9:11> quoted in <Acts 15:16>. And to any desiring to further examine the subject we would recommend the valuable work of Professor Franklin Johnson, of Chicago University, entitled "The Quotations in the New Testament from the Old."

Another class of differences, however, is where the same event is sometimes given differently by different writers. Take that most frequently used by the objectors, the inscription on the Cross, recorded by all the evangelists and yet differently by each. How can such records be inspired, it is asked.

It is to be remembered in reply, that the inscription was written in three languages calling for a different arrangement of the words in each case, and that one evangelist may have translated the Hebrew, and another the Latin, while a third recorded the Greek. It is not said that any one gave the full inscription, nor can we affirm that there was any obligation upon them to do so. Moreover, no one contradicts any other, and no one says what is untrue.

Recalling what was said about our having to deal not with different human authors but with one divine Author, may not the Holy Spirit here have chosen to emphasize some one particular fact, or phase of a fact of the inscription for a specific and important end? Examine the records to determine what this fact may have been. Observe that whatever else is omitted, all the narratives record the momentous circumstances that the Sufferer on the cross was THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Could there have been a cause for this? What was the charge preferred against Jesus by His accusers? Was He not rejected and crucified because He said He was the King of the Jews? Was not this the central idea Pilate was providentially guided to express in the inscription? And if so, was it not that to which the evangelists should bear witness? And should not that witness have been borne in a way to dispel the thought of collusion in the premises? And did not this involve a variety of narrative which should at the same time be in harmony with truth and fact? And do we not have this very thing in the four gospels?

These accounts supplement, but do not contradict each other. We place them before the eye in the order in which they are recorded:

This is Jesus THE KING OF THE JEWS.

THE KING OF THE JEWS.

This is THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Jesus of Nazareth, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

The entire inscription evidently was "This is Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews," but we submit that the foregoing presents a reasonable argument for the differences in the records.

3. There is the variety in style. Some think that if all the writers were alike inspired and the inspiration extended to their words, they must all possess the same style as if the Holy Spirit had but one style!

Literary style is a method of selecting words and putting sentences together which stamps an author's work with the influence of his habits, his condition in society, his education, his reasoning, his experience, his imagination and his genius. These give his mental and moral physiognomy and make up his style.

But is not God free to act with or without these fixed laws? There are no circumstances which tinge His views or reasonings, and He has no idiosyncrasies of speech, and no mother tongue through which He expresses His character, or leaves the finger mark of genius upon His literary fabrics.

It is a great fallacy then, as Dr. Thomas Armitage once said, to suppose that uniformity of verbal style must have marked God's authorship in the Bible, had He selected its words. As the author of all styles, rather does he use them all at his pleasure. He bestows all the powers of mental individuality upon His instruments for using the scriptures, and then uses their powers as He will to express His mind by them.

Indeed, the variety of style is a necessary proof of the freedom of the human writers, and it is this which among other things convinces us that, however controlled by the Holy Spirit, they were not mere machines in what they wrote.

Consider God's method in nature. In any department of vegetable life there may be but one genus, while its members are classified into a thousand species. From the bulbous root come the tulip, the hyacinth, the crocus, and the lily in every shape and shade, without any cause either of natural chemistry or culture. It is exclusively attributable to the variety of styles which the mind of God devises. And so in the sacred writings. His mind is seen in the infinite variety of expression which dictates the wording of every book. To quote Armitage again, "I cannot tell how the Holy Spirit suggested the words to the writers any more than some other man can tell how He suggested the thoughts to them. But if diversity of expression proves that He did not choose the words, the diversity of ideas proves that He did not dictate the thoughts, for the one is as varied as the other."

William Cullen Bryant was a newspaper man but a poet; Edmund Clarence Stedman was a Wall Street broker and also a poet. What a difference in style there was between their editorials and commercial letters on the one hand, and their poetry on the other! Is God more limited than a man?

4. There are certain declarations of scripture itself. Does not Paul say in one or two places "I speak as a man," or "After the manner of man?" Assuredly, but is he not using the arguments common among men for the sake of elucidating a point? And may he not as truly be led of the Spirit to do that, and to record it, as to do or say anything else? Of course, what he quotes from men is not of the same essential value as what he receives directly from God, but the record of the quotation is as truly inspired.

There are two or three other utterances of his of this character in the 7th chapter of 1 Corinthians, where he is treating of marriage. At verse 6 he says, "I speak this by permission, not of commandment" (**<1 Cor 7:6>**), and what he means has no reference to the source of his message but the subject of it. In contradiction to the false teaching of some, he says Christians are permitted to marry, but not commanded to do so. At verse 10 he says, "**Unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord**" (**<1 Cor 7:10>**), while at verse 12 there follows, "**but to the rest speak I, not the Lord**" (**<1 Cor 7:12>**). Does he declare himself inspired in the first instance, and not in the second? By no means, but in the first he is alluding to what the Lord spoke on the subject while here in the flesh, and in the second to what he, Paul, is adding thereto on the authority of the Holy Spirit speaking through him. In other words, putting his own utterances on equality with those of our Lord, he simply confirms their inspiration.

Time forbids further amplification on the difficulties and objections nor is it necessary, since there is not one that has not been met satisfactorily to the man of God and the child of faith again and again.

But there is an obstacle to which we would call attention before concluding- not a difficulty or objection, but a real obstacle, especially to the young and insufficiently instructed. It is the illusion that this view of inspiration is held only by the unlearned. An illusion growing out of still another as to who constitute the learned.

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