

11. The Inditing of the Scriptures

The Word of God exists in three forms, namely, (1) as *personal*, that is, as the Logos Himself, who became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:1-14); (2) as *spoken* or *communicated* by word of mouth, and (3) as *written* (or *printed*) for permanent preservation and utility. In whichever of these forms it exists, however, it is the *living* Word of God.

[John 1:40]: In him [Christ] was life; and the life was the light of man. [John 14:6]: I am the way, and the truth, and the life. [John 6:63, again the words of Jesus]: It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life. [Acts 7:38]—our fathers who received living oracles to give unto us. [Heb. 4:12]—for the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. [1 Thess. 2:13]—we also thank God without ceasing, that, when ye received from us the word of the message, even the word of God, ye accept it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe.

The Word of God expresses the Thought and Will of God. The communication of the Thought of God to man, by means of the Word of God, is one form of revelation; in fact, this is what the term *revelation*, as commonly used, signifies. As has been stated heretofore, however, revelation occurred *first* in the form of those historical events which took place by Divine ordination in the process of the actualization of the Eternal Purpose of God; and *then* in the inspired record of those events, together with the inspired *interpretation* (as a part of the record) of the significance of those events. This record, both of the events and of the interpretation of their import, constitutes the Scriptures.

The mode whereby Divine Thought was communicated to men is designated in Scripture *inbreathing* or *inspiration*, which is distinctively a work of the Holy Spirit. Now inspiration may be only the heightening of man's natural faculties to recall truth previously communicated or to receive new truth about to be communicated; but in most cases it is more than these things: *it includes the actual communication of new truth*. Jesus, for example, said to the men who were to become His Apostles, John 14:26—"But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said

unto you." Again, John 16:13—"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth; for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come." The content of such a communication of *new Truth*, that is, new to the recipient, is a revelation.

"No prophecy of scripture," writes Peter, "is of private interpretation." That is to say, inspired men progressively indited the Scriptures; hence, only inspired men in later times were qualified to interpret the predictions set forth by their predecessors. The Apostle then adds: "For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:20-21). Thus whether men "spoke" by word of mouth or in writing, to communicate Divine Truth to men, they spoke by—that is, by inspiration of—the Spirit. Therefore, the inditing of the Scriptures was another effect of the Spirit's work of prophetic inspiration. Scripture is more than just literature: it is *God-breathed literature* (cf. 1 Cor. 2:12-15). The presence and power of the Holy Spirit in it, and expressed through it, sets the Bible apart from all other books, makes it indeed and in truth **THE BOOK**.

The writers of many parts of the Old Testament canon are not certainly known to us. We may be certain, however, that they were among those holy men of old who were "moved by the Holy Spirit." As a matter of fact, it was precisely because certain men did possess the Spirit's gift of inspiration that they were designated *prophets*, the one Scripture term which, as we have seen, embraces all those persons who were used as instrumentalities of Divine revelation. With respect to the books of the New Testament canon, of course, the authorship of the great majority of them is clearly indicated, either specifically in the salutation of the book itself, as in the case of the Pauline epistles, or by conclusive internal and external evidence.

It is not my intention to enter here into a discussion of the critical theories of the authorship of the books of the Old Testament. These theories are for the most part made up of conjecture; and of conjecture based almost exclusively on internal evidence. This internal evidence, moreover, is largely of the character of supposed differences, differences which are read into the text by the ultra-analytical mentalities which

have subjected it to such microscopic analysis: the kind of mentality which I have described heretofore as that which is unable to see the forest for the trees. It is astonishing to note the extremes of absurdity to which these guessers will go who approach the study of the Bible predisposed in their own minds to dissect it, as medical students dissect a corpse in a laboratory, and to utterly disregard its claim to authorship by the one Spirit of God. The result is that they set passages, and even clauses and phrases, in opposition to one another, where no such opposition exists; as a matter of fact they constantly identify incompleteness with discrepancy, insisting that any two statements about any one subject must be given in precisely the same phraseology; if one little phrase happens to be lacking in either passage, that is a sign to them that the authors are at variance. This business of "scrapping the Scriptures" seems to have become the favorite sport of critics and "exegetes." They never take the pains to look for unity and harmony in the Bible; indeed it is doubtful that they would be capable of recognizing harmony even where it exists, so bent are they upon looking for the opposite. These critical theories, moreover, such as, for example, the Documentary Theory of the Hexateuch, have no *external* evidence of any consequence to support them. Yet they are exploited with gusto by the intelligentsia simply because they bear the trademark of the "most modern scholarship." We are reminded, however, that just three or four decades ago the critics were swallowing, with the same reckless abandon, numerous conflicting theories of multiple origins of the text of Homer,—theories which today are quite generally in disrepute. Think, too, of the many theories which came out of Germany, from the time of Schleiermacher down to the beginning of the first World War, of the authorship, sequence and schema of the Dialogues of Plato, all of them based on guess-work pure and simple and all of them in conflict with one another. The great majority of these theories strike us today as utterly without foundation. And certainly we can recall how as late a writer as Shakespeare was "manhandled" by these emaciated academicians with their high-powered intellectual lenses,—lenses which, if I may be permitted to speak facetiously and in a mixed metaphor, are prone to disclose "bugs" that simply are not there. As a matter of fact, no greater absurdities are to be found anywhere in

literature than in the works setting forth the "conclusions" of textual critics. Many of these "conclusions" are second only to the tales of Baron Munchausen.

It is interesting, however to trace the development of the canon as indicated in the books of the Old Testament themselves. This I shall attempt to do briefly. In the book of Genesis, we read of certain institutions and laws which were ordained by Divine authority for the infancy of the race: for example, the positive law of sacrifice (Gen. 4:1-8), which no doubt included the ordination of the distinction between clean and unclean animals (Gen. 7:2-3); the law against murder, including the *lex talionis* (Gen. 9:5-6; 4:11-15); and the law against the eating of living flesh, i.e., flesh "with the blood thereof" (Gen. 9:4).

[However, there is no record in the book of Genesis of anyone having written these laws into a book; hence the natural inference is that all such primitive laws were communicated orally to the patriarchs and handed down thereafter by tradition from father to son.] [In writing the book of Genesis, Moses may have made use of previously existing records, although there is no evidence anywhere of his having done so. We must remember that Moses was one of the truly great prophets of ancient times, hence that the entire content of the book of Genesis could easily have been communicated to him directly by inspiration of the Spirit.] [We do read, however, in Exo. 17:14, that, following the victory of Israel over the Amalekites] Jehovah said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book (or 'the book') and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. [Obviously, then, at about the time he assumed the leadership of the children of Israel, Moses began the writing of a book. Again, in Exo. 24:3-4, we read]: And Moses came and told the people all the words of Jehovah, and all the ordinances: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which Jehovah hath spoken we will do. *And Moses wrote all the words of Jehovah,* and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the mount, etc. ["All the words of Jehovah," in this passage, evidently takes in all that Jehovah had communicated to Moses, through the Spirit, while Moses was in the holy Mount. And in verse 7 of the same chapter, we read that Moses] *took the book of the covenant,* and read it in audience of the people: and they said, All that Jehovah hath spoken will we do, and be obedient. [Evidently, then, Moses had written "all the words of Jehovah" in a book entitled the "book of the covenant." Of course this book was not yet completed; it was, in fact, in the process of being written.] [Again, in Num. 33:1-2, we are told]: These are the journeys of the children of Israel, when they went forth out of the land of Egypt by their hosts under the hand of Moses and Aaron. *And Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys by the commandment of Jehovah;* and these are their journeys according to their goings out, etc. [Is there any reason for assuming that this history of the Exodus and subsequent wanderings of the Israelites, as written

down by Moses, was not incorporated into the Book of the Covenant? The natural inference, when the Bible is allowed to speak for itself, is precisely the opposite, namely, that all these matters were included in the one book which Moses was in the process of inditing throughout his entire life.] [Cf. Deut. 28:58-61: here Moses is speaking to the generation succeeding that which he had led out of Egypt]: If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, JEHOVAH THY GOD, then Jehovah will make thy plagues wonderful . . . Also every sickness, and every plague, which is not written in *the book of this law*, then Jehovah will bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed. [Deut. 29:20-21—here again Moses is speaking, and to the same assembly; concerning the man whose heart turns away from Jehovah to serve the gods of other nations, he says]: Jehovah will not pardon him . . . all the curse that is *written in this book* shall lie upon him . . . and Jehovah will set him apart unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of *the covenant that is written in this book of the law*. [On the other hand, Deut. 30:9-10]: Jehovah thy God will make thee plenteous in all the work of thy hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy ground, for good . . . if thou shalt obey the voice of Jehovah thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in *this book of the law*; if thou turn unto Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul.

Was this Book of the Law a different writing from the Book of the Covenant? What reason is there for thinking so? Is it not more reasonable to think that this was the same book which Moses had been inditing all along? Doesn't the phrase, "the covenant that is written in this book of the law," justify such a conclusion? We all know that there was but *one* covenant between God and the Seed of Abraham, the Old Covenant which was instituted with Abraham himself (Gen. 17:1-14) and later enlarged into a national covenant, under Moses, at Sinai. We know, too, that the Law was the very essence of this national covenant; that is to say, it was essentially a Covenant of Law. As a matter of fact, it is designated the Law (as distinguished from the Covenant of Grace) throughout the apostolic writings (*vide* especially the Epistle to the Romans).

Now, what became of this Book of the Covenant or Book of the Law when Moses died? The answer is given clearly in three passages, namely, (a) Deut. 17:18-19, (b) Deut. 31:9-13, and (c) Deut. 31:24-26.

[In the first of these passages, we read that every king of Israel was obligated, by Divine command, at his accession and as a part of the ceremony of coronation, to write in his own hand a copy of this book of the law for his own guidance in ruling the people]: And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that *he shall*

write him a copy of this law in a book, out of that which is before the priests and Levites; and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life; that he may learn to fear Jehovah his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them [cf. the coronation of Joash, 2 Ki. 11:12, 2 Chron. 23:11]. [Thus it is evident that at least a copy of the original document written by Moses (the original itself appears to have become lost for several centuries) was placed in the hand of each king at his accession to the throne. In Deut. 31:9-18, we learn that Moses ordained that the content of the book should be read aloud to the assembled people every seven years at the Feast of Tabernacles]: And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, that bare the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, and unto all the elders of Israel. And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the set time of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, when all Israel is come to appear before Jehovah thy God in the place where he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Assemble the people, the men and women and the little ones, and thy sojourner that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear Jehovah your God, and observe to do all the words of this law; and that their children, who have not known, may hear, and learn to fear Jehovah your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over the Jordan to possess it. [Nor is there anything incredible in this Mosaic injunction: the entire Torah or Pentateuch could easily have been read aloud in a single day. Besides, the phrase "the law," in this particular text, may have had reference only to what we know as the book of Deuteronomy, which alone contains an epitome of the whole Pentateuch; or, what seems more likely, only to the list of curses and blessings recorded in Chapters 27-29 of the book of Deuteronomy.] [Again, in Deut. 31:24-26, we are told that this Book written by Moses was put by the side of the ark of the covenant of Jehovah—that is, either within the Ark itself or in a receptacle at the side of the Ark—for permanent safekeeping]: And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites, that bare the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it by the side of the ark of the covenant of Jehovah your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee.

Thus the book which Moses wrote was preserved in the Holy of Holies itself, where it was guarded by the awful Majesty of God's Presence. Moreover, as Adam Clarke puts it: "As the law was properly a covenant or contract between God and the people, it is natural to suppose that there were two copies of it, that each of the contracting parties might have one; therefore one was laid up beside the Ark; this was the Lord's copy: another was given to the priests and Levites; this was the people's copy."¹

[At the death of Moses, Joshua took over the leadership of the children of Israel. Hence, in Jehovah's solemn charge to the new leader,

1. Adam Clarke, *Commentary, in loco.*

we read the following, Josh. 1:8]—This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt mediate thereon day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. [Again, in Josh. 8:30-35, we read that Joshua inscribed the Decalogue (or again it may have been the list of curses and blessings recorded in Deut. 27-29) upon stones at Mount Ebal (according to the Septuagint, at Mount Gerizim, the two peaks were separated only by a narrow valley, Deut. 27:11-14) in the presence of the people, and there read the essential content of the Book of the Law (or at least the aforesaid list of curses and blessings) publicly]: Then Joshua built an altar unto Jehovah, the God of Israel, in mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of Jehovah commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in *the book of the law of Moses*, an altar of unhewn stones, upon which no man had lifted up any iron [cf. Exo. 20:25]; and they offered thereon burnt-offerings unto Jehovah, and sacrificed peace-offerings. . . . And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessing and the curse, according to all that is written in *the book of the law*. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the assembly of Israel, and the women, and the little ones, and the sojourners that were among them. [Obviously, these acts of Joshua at Ebal were in compliance with the command of Moses, as recorded in the twenty-seventh chapter of Deuteronomy. The phrase here, "the blessing and the curse," can have reference only to the content of chapters 27-29 of Deuteronomy. This surely is evidence that what we know today as the book of Deuteronomy was at that time a part of the writing of Moses.] [Again, in the twenty-fourth (last) chapter of the book of Joshua, we find the account of the renewal of the Covenant at Shechem. And in verses 25-26 we read as follows]: So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. *And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God*; and he took a great stone, and set it up there under the oak tree that was by the sanctuary of Jehovah. [Certainly this passage gives us every reason to believe that Joshua took up the writing of the chronicles of Israel at the point where Moses discontinued his writing, and kept on adding to what Moses had written (the method of all ancient chroniclers). A great ado has been made, for instance, over the thirty-fourth chapter of Deuteronomy, the account of the death and burial of Moses. Moses, it is charged, could hardly have written his own "obituary." This charge, of course, has no foundation; *by inspiration Moses* could just as easily have written of future as of past events. But is it necessary to think that he wrote the account of his own death and burial? Is it not more reasonable to think, rather, that Joshua added the last chapter of Deuteronomy, and then went on with the writing of the book which bears his name?].

We hear nothing further of this Book of the Law *as such* (there are references to "the law," of course, throughout the entire Old Testament, and especially in the Psalms; cf. especially Psalms 119) until we come to Second Kings 14:5-6, where we read the following respecting Amaziah, King of Israel: "And it came to pass, as soon as the kingdom was

established in his hand, that he [Amaziah] slew his servants who had slain the king his father: but the children of the murderers he put not to death; according to that which is written in *the book of the law of Moses*, as Jehovah commanded, saying, The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children be put to death for the fathers; but every man shall die for his own sin" (cf. Deut. 24:16). But in the sixth chapter of Second Samuel we read that David brought the Ark of the Covenant on a new cart to Jerusalem, and there "set it in its place in the midst of the tent which David had pitched for it" (v. 17). In the eighth chapter of First Kings, moreover, we have the account of Solomon's installation of the Ark in its proper position in the Holy of Holies of the new Temple, preparatory to the ceremonies of dedication of that great structure. In 1 Kings 8:9 we read that, at that time, "there was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone which Moses put there at Horeb" (cf. Deut. 10:1-6). What, in the meantime, had become of the original Book of the Law? We are not informed in the Scriptures, hence have no means of knowing for a certainty. As we have seen, however, one autographed copy could easily have remained in the custody of the priests, and probably did so, while the Ark itself was being bandied about in earlier days, first captured by the Philistines and then restored by them to the Israelites (1 Sam. 4-6). But we must not forget that, although the fate of the original writing by Moses which had been placed "by the side of the Ark," remains a mystery, there must have been several copies of the book extant, copies which had been made by and for the Judges and later for the Kings. That such copies were extant, even as late as the reign of Hezekiah in Judah, is evident. Hezekiah, it will be remembered, instituted a great reformation in Judah, to reclaim his people from paganism. "For," we read, "he clave to Jehovah; he departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which Jehovah commanded Moses" (2 Ki. 18:6).

This brings us to one of the most interesting incidents recorded in the entire Old Testament, namely, the discovery of "the book of the law in the house of Jehovah," in the reign of Josiah (date, 621 B.C.), the account of which occurs in the twenty-second chapter of Second Kings. It will be remembered that between the reigns of Hezekiah and Josiah, two of the

most wicked kings in the whole history of Judah, Manasseh and Amon, had occupied the throne; when Josiah began his reign, at the age of eight, the nation was wholly given over to idolatry. Then, in the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign, the incident occurred which prompted the last great religious reformation in Judah. We read as follows:

And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of Jehovah [that is, in the rubbish of the Temple, which had been desecrated by Manasseh and Amon]. And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan, and he read it. And Shaphan the scribe came to the king . . . and told the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king, and it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of *the book of the law*, that he rent his clothes. And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Micaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah the king's servant, saying, Go ye, inquire of Jehovah for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found; for great is the wrath of Jehovah, that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us. [Now, obviously, to "inquire of Jehovah," in this instance, was to inquire of a person gifted with prophetic inspiration. Hence, we read]: So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and Anchor, and Shaphan, and Asaiah, went unto *Huldah the prophetess* . . . and they communed with her. And she said unto them, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel: Tell ye the man that sent you unto me, Thus saith Jehovah, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read. Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the work of their hands, therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and it shall not be quenched. But unto the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of Jehovah, thus shall ye say to him: Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel: as touching the words which thou hast heard, because thy heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before Jehovah, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me: I also have heard thee, saith Jehovah. Therefore, behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the evil which I will bring upon this place. And they brought the king word again. And the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem. And the king went up to the house of Jehovah, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great: and he read in their ears all the words of *the book of the covenant* which was found in the house of Jehovah. And the king stood by the pillar, and made a covenant before Jehovah, to walk after Jehovah, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and all his soul, to confirm the words of this covenant that were written in this book: and all the people stood to the covenant [2 Kings 2:28—23:3].

Now the important question is, What was this "book of the law" (2 Ki. 22:8)? (Note that it is also designated "the book of the covenant," (2 Ki. 23:2). According to the Graf-Wellhausen (Documentary) Theory, it was what we know as the book of Deuteronomy ("the Deuteronomic Code," "D"), and was *currently* written by priests of the "nationalist party," who were seeking to restore the oldtime worship of Jehovah, and concealed in the rubbish of the Temple, *designedly* to be found there at the proper moment—at Josiah's attainment of his maturity, perhaps—by Hilkiyah the priest (who must himself have been a party to the scheme) but to produce the religious reformation which it obviously did engender in Judah. In other words, it was a "pious fraud," written by contemporaries and attributed to Moses, in order to give to it the authoritative appeal to the king and his people which it had to have in order to produce the results desired by its authors. On the basis of this theory, Hilkiyah took the book to Shaphan the scribe and fooled him with it; then Shaphan took it to Josiah the king and fooled him with it; and finally Hilkiyah and Shaphan and others, at the king's command, took the book to Huldah the prophetess—a *prophetess*, mind you—and deceived her with it. Was even the Spirit Himself, the source of prophetic inspiration, a party to the deception? Obviously, proponents of this theory necessarily reject the operation of the Spirit *in toto*; it is inconceivable that the inspiration of the Spirit should have been associated with a fraudulent document. As a matter of fact, the most obvious characteristic of these critical theories is either their complete disregard or outright rejection of the work of the Spirit in giving us the Scriptures. They scarcely seem to realize that there is a Holy Spirit.

Now it would be inappropriate in this connection to take up the arguments which are put forward in support of this specious theory. However, there is one argument against it, which, in my opinion, outweighs all the points commonly advanced to support it, namely, the fact that in the entire Pentateuch as we know it the name of Jerusalem does not occur. This fact is *prima facie* evidence, it seems to me, that the Torah or Pentateuch as a whole was pre-Davidic in its origin.

What, then, was the Book of the Law or Book of the Covenant which was found in the rubbish of the Temple in the reign of Josiah? That the book, whatever it was, made a

tremendous impact upon the ecclesiastical and political leaders of Judah cannot be denied. Could the remembrance of the content of the Book of the Law (*i.e.*, the entire Torah) have become so obscured during the intervening years from the death of Hezekiah to the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah—a period of some seventy-five years—as to cause the rediscovery of the book to make such a profound impression as that which is indicated by the Scripture account? That, certainly, is possible. Those intervening years were years of great wickedness and almost complete apostasy from the original faith of Israel, and experience proves that both truth and righteousness can be lost in an astonishingly short time. *Suppose, however, that this Book of the Law was one of the original writings of Moses himself* (that is, in his own hand)—would not this fact have fully accounted for the consternation, and corresponding reformation, which the rediscovery of the book precipitated. At any rate, from the texts previously cited from the book of Joshua, it seems apparent that the content of what is now designated the book of Deuteronomy was already incorporated into the writing of Moses *before* that document was placed by the side of the Ark of the Covenant for safe-keeping. I see no valid reason, therefore, for rejecting the traditional view that the Torah or Pentateuch as we know it, in so far as its essential content is concerned, came from the hand of Moses; and that this was the Book of the Law discovered by Hilkiah in the rubbish of the Temple in Josiah's reign.

Incidentally, it is also a part of the so-called "standard" critical theory of the Old Testament canon that the Book of the Law which was read by Ezra to the assembled people at the time of the Restoration (Neh. 8) was, in parts of it at least, also a new book (designated the Priestly Code). It is alleged likewise that this Code was written by contemporary authors, that is, at some time during the Captivity. However, since the book which Ezra read publicly is expressly described as "the book of the law of Moses, which Jehovah had commended to Israel" (Neh. 8:1) it becomes evident that, under the critical hypothesis, this too was a "pious fraud," a contemporary work palmed off on the people as clothed with Mosaic authority. Whatever elements of truth there may be in these various hypotheses, of one thing we can be sure: the Holy

Spirit had nothing to do with such "goings on" as postulated by these theorists. *If the Holy Spirit had anything to do with the production of the Old Testament Scriptures, all notions of "pious fraud" must be rejected. There is no middle ground here.*

Now we have already noted that Joshua took over the task of writing the chronicles of Israel at the point where Moses discontinued his writing. And in I Sam. 10:25, we are told that the writing was continued by the prophet Samuel: "Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in the book, and laid it up before Jehovah" (cf. Deut. 31:26). Moreover, it is a matter of history that Samuel himself founded the school of the prophets at Naioth (1 Sam. 19:18-24), and that other such schools flourished at Beth-el and Gilgal (somewhere near Jericho) under Elijah and Elisha (2 Kings 2:3, 5). In these schools picked young scholars were trained in the understanding and exposition of the Law. Moreover, these institutions continued to exist throughout the entire period of the monarchy, that is down to the time of the Captivity, and probably later. Among the "men of God" who were trained in such schools were Nathan, Elijah, Elisha, and in all probability, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and many of the minor prophets. Undoubtedly many of the books of the Old Testament after the time of Samuel were works of the men who were trained in these schools. King David defended his own prophetic inspiration in no uncertain terms, 2 Sam. 23:1, 2—"David the son of Jesse saith . . . The Spirit of Jehovah spake by me, And his word was upon my tongue." The inspiration of the book of Proverbs is also clearly indicated in Prov. 1:23, where Wisdom (perhaps the Logos Himself) is represented as saying to the author: "Behold, I will pour out my spirit upon you; I will make known my words unto you." As for the books of the Hebrew Prophets, for the most part each of them bears its own Divine imprimatur: "The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem," etc. (Isa. 1:1); "the words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiyah . . . to whom the word of Jehovah came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon," etc. (Jer. 1:1-2); "now it came to pass . . . as I was among the captives by the river Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God" (Ezek. 1:1-2); "the word of Jehovah that came unto Hosea," etc. (Hos. 1:1); "the word of Jehovah that came to Joel," etc. (Joel 1:1); "the

word of Jehovah came unto Jonah" (Jon. 1:1); "the word of Jehovah that came to Micah" (Mic. 1:1), etc. Some such formula, or its equivalent, is stamped upon each of the prophetic books from Isaiah to Malachi. Moreover, the inspiration of all the Old Testament prophets, including Moses and David, is repeatedly affirmed throughout the apostolic writings, in which it is made very clear that the same Holy Spirit who inspired the Old Testament writings was also the source of the inspiration vouchsafed the apostles and prophets of the New Covenant (1 Pet. 1:10-12). These scriptures have already been indicated in previous chapters; hence there is no need to repeat them here. "For no prophecy [revelation] ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:21). And even though the writers of some of the Old Testament books remain unidentified, we may safely assume them to have been included among those holy men of old who were moved by the Holy Spirit. Prophetic inspiration included not only the oral communication of Divine Truth, but its embodiment in permanent form as well in the inditing of the Scriptures.

Among the Jews themselves the Old Testament Scriptures that we know were divided into three main parts, namely: (1) *The Law (Torah)* or five books of Moses (although our five separate books were one continuous book in the Hebrew Scriptures), otherwise known as the Pentateuch; (2) *The Prophets*, subdivided into (a) The Former Prophets (first half): Joshua, Judges, Samuel (one book, not divided into two books as we have it), Kings (also one book); and (b) The Latter Prophets (last half): Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Book of the Twelve Prophets (our Minor Prophets); (3) *The Writings (Hagiographa)*: Psalms, Proverbs, Job, The Five Rolls (Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther), Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah (one book), and Chronicles (one book). Jewish tradition has it, of course, that the Old Testament canon was given its final form by Ezra at Jerusalem about 444 B.C. There is some doubt, however, that the entire canon of the Hagiographa was fully determined at that time. Certain information given us in the Apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus or "The Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach" is quite illuminating in this connection. The translator, a grandson of the author, says, in the Prologue, that he had come into Egypt

"in the eight and thirtieth year of Euergetes the king" (that is, 132 B.C.) and soon thereafter had found a copy of this book written by his grandfather, one Jesus the son of Sirach. The translator also states, in the Prologue, that his grandfather had "much given himself to the reading of *the law, and the prophets, and the other books of our fathers.*" He goes on to say that things spoken in Hebrew had not the same force when translated into other tongues, and then adds: "and not only these, but *the law itself, and the prophecies, and the rest of the books,* have no small difference, when they are spoken in their original language." Now the grandson having discovered the book soon after 132 B.C., the date of his grandfather's writing of the book must have been a short time after 200 B.C. Hence, "the law, and the prophets, and the rest of the books" must undoubtedly have been in existence at that date. But we do not know precisely what the phrases, "the other books of our fathers," and "the rest of the books," included. Moreover, in chapters 44-50 of this book of Ecclesiasticus, the author, in one of the most eloquent passages in literature, gives us a roll of the great men of Israel. It is interesting to note that he presents this list of heroes in precisely the order in which we have them in the Old Testament Scriptures. He names, in chronological order, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Caleb, "the judges" (46:11), Samuel, Nathan, David, Solomon, Rehoboam, Jero-boam, Elijah, Elisha, Hezekiah, Isaiah, Josiah, Ezekiel, Zerub-babel, Nehemiah, and "the twelve prophets" (49:10). At the end of chapter 49, he names Enoch, Joseph, Shem, Seth, and Adam: "Shem and Seth were glorified among men; And above every living thing in the creation is Adam" (49:16). Moreover, his accounts of the works of these personages correspond precisely with our Old Testament records. This is fairly conclusive evidence that The Law and The Prophets existed about 200 B.C. as distinct *collections*, and that some, and probably all, of the separate books of the Hagiographa were in existence at that date also. As a matter of fact, they were probably all in existence, but had not as yet been gathered into one grouping or volume. Now, turning to the New Testament Scriptures, we find explicit references to "the law" (or "the law of Moses") and "the prophets" (Matt. 5:17, 7:12, 11:13, 22:40; Luke 24:27; Acts 13:15, 24:14, 28:23; Rom. 3:21, etc.). We

find many explicit references also to the Psalms (Psa. 2, Acts 13:33; Psa. 16, Acts 2:27; Psa. 22, Matt. 27:34-36; Psa. 69, John 19:28ff.; Psa. 110, Matt. 22:43-45; Psa. 118, Matt. 21:42, etc., etc.). And in Luke 24:44, we read of Jesus saying to His Apostles: "These are my words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in *the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms*, concerning me." From all the foregoing citations, we draw the following conclusions: (1) that, in addition to The Law and The Prophets, there were other sacred writings extant at the time of Jesus; (2) that, whereas the collections known respectively as The Law and The Prophets were fixed at the time of Jesus and the Apostles, the *collection* known as the Hagiographa was not yet fully determined. There are echoes of The Writings scattered throughout the New Testament, notably of the Psalms, as we have seen, also of Proverbs (e.g., 2 Pet. 2:22), Daniel (Matt. 24:15), Job (Jas. 5:11), etc. Evidently, however, the books were known separately, and had not yet been established as a collection to be known as the Hagiographa. This, in fact, appears to have been done by the decisions of a council of the rabbins held at Jamnia (the ancient Jabneh, seven miles southwest of Tiberias) at some time between A.D. 90 and 118. This Council decided in favor of the canonicity of Canticles, Ecclesiastes, and Esther, over which there was some controversy, and closed the Old Testament canon. None of these facts, however, militates against the affirmation of the Apostle Peter that no prophecy or revelation ever came by the will of man, but "men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit."

So much for the Old Testament Scriptures. The inspiration of the apostles and prophets who indited the New Testament Scriptures has already been fully discussed.¹

"The natural man," writes Paul, "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2:14). That is to say, the Truth of God respecting man's origin, nature and destiny—the Truth respecting God's Plan of Redemption for man—is either *breathed into* man by the Spirit of God, or it remains forever concealed from the human understanding. The *uninspired* man is utterly incapable of apprehending "the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2:10); these are communicated to men only by the Holy Spirit. These mysteries (the Eternal Purpose of God, the

1. *Vide* Part VIII, Section 6.

Mystery of His Will) have been communicated to men through divinely chosen human instrumentalities, who have, in turn, recorded them in permanent form in the Scriptures to be preached unto all the nations for the obedience of faith. This progressive revelation was begun through holy men of old inspired by the Spirit; it was continued through Jesus Himself who possessed the Spirit without measure; it was completed and concluded through the Apostles, who were guided into all the Truth by the same Holy Spirit. Both *historical* and *documentary* revelation came to an end with the Apostles. With the writing of the New Testament Scriptures, all things that pertain unto life and godliness were given (2 Pet. 1:3); the faith was *once for all* delivered unto the saints (Jude 3). There was nothing more to be revealed. *No human being could add one iota of moral and spiritual truth to the completed body of Divine Truth presented in Scripture.* But man's possession of this Truth is the result solely of the Spirit's gift of inspiration.

Was this communication of Divine Truth, through successive ages and "by divers portions and in divers manners," a communication *through the medium of words*? To this question I reply: How otherwise could it have been communicated? *Is there any other known way by which thought is ever communicated, by which indeed it can be communicated, from one person to another, except by the medium of words or language?* Even the communication of thought by *suggestion* from one subconscious mind to another subconscious mind is through the instrumentality of words. The words need not be uttered aloud; they may be spoken subvocally or "in the mind"; but the result is the same when two subconscious minds are *en rapport*,—thought is communicated, will is made known.

"The Spirit breathes where he pleases, and thou hearest his voice, but thou knowest not whence he cometh, nor whither he goeth; thus it is that every one is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). That is to say, *a man is born of the Spirit by hearing and obeying the voice of the Spirit, breathing as He pleases or wills through inspired men.* I am convinced that this is the correct rendering of this passage. The Revised Version (following the Authorized) gives the passage as follows: "The wind bloweth where it will, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but

knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is everyone that is born of the Spirit." But what justification is there for rendering *pneuma* "wind" in the first sentence of this text, but "Spirit" in the last sentence? What ground is there for giving *pneuma* a meaning in the first sentence of this text that it has in no other instance of the more than two hundred and seventy times the word occurs in the New Testament? It is not the word used in Acts 2:2, as one would expect if it signified "wind"; the word used for "wind" in Acts 2:2 is *pnœe*.) Moreover, can volition legitimately be ascribed to wind (*thelei*); that is, can wind rightly be said to "will" anything? On the other hand, if *pneuma* means here what it means elsewhere in the New Testament, then this passage is harmony with all those other Scriptures which affirm the eminent activity of the Holy Spirit in regeneration (John 1:12-13) and in sanctification (Rom. 8:9-11; 1 Cor. 3:16, 6:19; Gal. 5:16-25; 1 John 2:20, etc.).

"The Spirit breathes where he pleases," that is, into a human instrumentality; whenever this happens, a revelation is made. In Acts 9:1, we read that Saul of Tarsus was "breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord." How was Saul doing this? In words, obviously. Does not the Spirit likewise breathe eternal Truth into man's mind through the medium of words? And every man on this earth who is born of the Spirit, is so born, or re-born, by hearing and obeying the words of the Spirit which have been breathed into inspired men and communicated by them in turn to all mankind. Cf. Acts 11:13-14, Peter's account of the experience of Cornelius: "He [Cornelius] told how he had seen the angel standing in his house, and saying, Send to Joppa, and fetch Simon, whose surname is Peter: *who shall speak unto thee words, whereby thou shalt be saved, thou and all thy house.*" The Apostle Peter possessed the baptismal measure of the Spirit's powers and influences; hence the words spoken by him were spoken by inspiration of the Spirit and were sufficient to beget a new spiritual life in the hearts of those who received them. Cf. Acts 2:41—"They then that received his word were baptized; and there were added together in that day about three thousand souls."

The Spirit's inbreathing, writes John Owen, implies three things, namely (1) the inspiration of the minds of the prophets

with the knowledge and apprehension of the truths committed to them, (2) the suggestion of words in which to properly clothe the truths communicated, and (3) the guidance of their hands in setting down the words suggested.

He says: Some think from the variety of style observable in the Scriptures, that the substance only was given them, and that the words were left to their own abilities. I shall only say, that this variety arises chiefly from the variety of subjects treated of, and can give no countenance to the profaneness of this opinion. For the Holy Ghost does not put a force on the minds of men, but acts on them agreeably to their nature, endowments and qualifications. The words therefore which he suggests, and causes them to use, are such as are familiar to themselves. We grant that they used their own abilities in the choice of words; but the Holy Spirit, who is more intimate to the minds and skill of men than they themselves, so guided them, that the words they fixed on were as directly and certainly from him, as if they had been spoken to them by an audible voice. Otherwise they could not be said to speak as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, nor could their writing be of divine inspiration. Hence, in the original, great senses and significations often depend on a single letter, as in the change of Abram's name to Abraham; and our Savior affirms that every apex and iota of the law is under the care of God (Matt. 5:18).¹

From the point of view of the medium of revelation, inspiration is indeed a difficult term to define. To formulate a dogma of inspiration, to which no reasonable objection can be offered, is well-nigh impossible. I shall not attempt to do so here. Suffice it to say, however, that the Scriptures make it clear that in many cases inspired men give utterance to words whose significance they themselves did not comprehend. This can mean only that in such cases they were acting simply as mouth-pieces of the Spirit; they were giving utterance to the very language which the Spirit was putting upon their lips. "No prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." How did they speak? *In words*, and oftentimes in words designed to be fully intelligible only to future generations, hence only partially intelligible to those who first received them by prophetic inspiration. This, says the Apostle explicitly, was true of the prophets of olden times who told beforehand of the salvation that would be provided for men through Christ Jesus. Concerning this salvation, he says, "the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: *searching what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when he testified beforehand the*

1. John Owen, *op. cit.*, 78.

sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them." That is, they were themselves searching into the meaning of the words to which they were giving expression. "To whom it was revealed." the Apostle goes on to say, "that not unto themselves, but unto you, did they minister these things, which now have been announced unto you through them that preached the gospel unto you by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven: which things angels desire to look into" (1 Pet. 1:10-12). That is, these ancient prophets were given to understand that the (Messianic) statements to which they were giving expression had significance primarily for subsequent generations, and only secondarily for themselves and for the contemporary generations to whom they were severally speaking. If this means anything at all, it means that these holy men of old were acting merely as mouthpieces of the Holy Spirit. The same is true of Simon Peter when he first voiced the formula of the Christian Creed: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16). This great truth of Christianity was flashed upon his mind directly from Heaven, obviously in the very words to which he gave utterance; certainly this is what is implied in Jesus' immediate response, v. 17—"Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven" (i.e., my Father who is in heaven hath revealed it unto thee). The same is true, again, of the Apostles on the Day of Pentecost: "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4). That is, they not only spoke with foreign tongues—tongues with which they themselves were not familiar; but they spoke without realizing the full import of what they were saying. This can only mean that the Spirit was speaking by them; they were as men in a state of hypnosis; they were completely *en rapport* with the Mind of the Spirit and were uttering the very words which He was putting upon their lips. Call this "verbal inspiration," if you will; this was certainly the manner in which all the essential truths pertaining to human redemption were made known to man: *they were made known in words*. It is all very well to say that only the "substance" of the truth was communicated by inspiration, but I challenge anyone to show how even the "substance" of a truth can be communicated from one person to another except by words.

THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH: REVELATION

[2 Pet. 1:21]—Men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit. [They did not speak *from themselves*, but *from God*. They spoke the words of God. Note how explicit the following Scriptures are on this point: 2 Sam. 23:1-3]: David the son of Jesse saith . . . *The Spirit of Jehovah spake by me, And his word was upon my tongue.* The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, etc. [Mark 12:36]—*David himself said in the Spirit*, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet [Psa. 110:1]. [Acts 1:16]: It was needful that the scripture should be fulfilled, *which the Holy Spirit spake before by the mouth of David* concerning Judas, etc. [Psa. 69:25, 109:8]. [Acts 4:25]—O Lord . . . *who by the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of our father David thy servant did say*, Why did the Gentiles rage, And the peoples meditate a vain thing? etc. [Psa. 2:1-2]. [Heb. 3:7ff.]—Wherefore, *even as the Holy Spirit saith*, Today if ye shall hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, etc. [In all these passages, the voice of the Spirit is recognized in the voice of the psalmist.] [Again, Acts 28:5ff.]: *Well spake the Holy Spirit through Isaiah the prophet unto your fathers*, saying, Go thou unto this people, and say, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand, And seeing ye shall see, and shall in no wise perceive," etc. [Isa. 6:9-10]. [Acts 6:10, concerning Stephen]: And they were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake. [Acts 8:29]—*And the Spirit said unto Philip*, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. [Acts 10:19, 20]—And while Peter thought on the vision, *the Spirit said unto him*, Behold, three men seek thee. But arise, and get thee down, and go with them, nothing doubting: for I have sent them. [Cf. Peter's own account of the same incident later, Acts 11:11, 12]: And behold, forthwith three men stood before the house in which we were, having been sent from Caesarea unto me. *And the Spirit bade me go with them*, making no distinction. [Acts 13:1, 2]: Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers . . . and as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, *the Holy Spirit said*, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. [Acts 21:4]: And having found the disciples, we tarried there seven days; and *these said to Paul through the Spirit*, that he should not set foot in Jerusalem. [Acts 21:11]—And coming to us, and taking Paul's girdle, he [the prophet Agabus] bound his own feet and hands, and said, *Thus saith the Holy Spirit*, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. [Note that in most of these passages, what the Holy Spirit said is given in His own words; that is, the voice of the Spirit sounded forth in the voice of the prophet in some cases; in others, the Spirit Himself is said to have spoken, evidently in articulate audible words.] [Again, 1 Tim. 4:1]—*But the Spirit saith expressly*, [and then what the Spirit says, follows in these words]: that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, etc. [Here the Spirit is speaking, and speaking in the words indited, through the Apostle Paul]. [And again, seven times the sovereign, glorified Christ says, in the Apocalypse, through John the Beloved]: He that hath an ear, let him hear *what the Spirit saith to the churches* [Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22; and what the Spirit said to the churches is given, in words, in the accompanying seven messages to the seven churches respectively named]. [And the Advocate (Paraclete) on earth, the Holy Spirit, answers to the Advocate above, the

THE ETERNAL SPIRIT—HIS WORD AND WORKS

sovereign Christ: to the voice of Heaven saying]—Write, blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth, [the response is heard]—*Yea, saith the Spirit*, that they may rest from their labors, for their works follow with them [Rev. 14:13]. [Surely these passages are sufficient evidence that what the Spirit says to men is communicated to them *in words*].

As A. J. Gordon puts it:

And what is it to speak? Is it not to express thought in language? The difference between thinking and saying is simply the difference of words. Therefore, if the Holy Ghost *saith* we are to find in the *words* of Scripture the exact substance of what he saith. Hence verbal inspiration seems absolutely essential for conveying to us the exact thought of God. And while many affect to ridicule the idea as mechanical and paltry, the conduct and method of scholars of every shade of belief show how generally it is accepted. For, why the minute study of the *words* of Scripture carried on by all expositors, their search after the precise shade of verbal significance, their attention to the minutest details of language, and to all the delicate coloring of mood and tense and accent? The high scholars who speak lightly of the theory of literal inspiration of the Scriptures by their method of study and exegesis are they who put the strongest affirmation on the doctrine which they deny."¹

The same idea of the Spirit's communication of Divine Truth *in words* is clearly set forth in the injunction of Jesus to the Twelve at the time He first called them and sent them forth, Matt. 10:16-20: "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to councils, and in their synagogues they will scourge you; yea and before governors and kings shall ye be brought for my sake, for a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. *But when they deliver you up, 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 that speaketh in you.*" Language could hardly be any plainer than this. Again, in His conversation with the Eleven (Judas having already departed from them) in the Upper Room on the night of His betrayal, Jesus spoke to them in similar vein, saying: "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you" (John 16:13-14). If these statements

1. A. J. Gordon, *The Ministry of the Spirit*, 171-172.

mean anything at all mean, they surely mean that the Spirit was to take *the words* of Christ and deliver them to the Apostles for proclamation unto all mankind. And let it not be forgotten that Jesus Himself emphatically declared that His *words* "are spirit, and are life" (John 6: 63). Now the words of Christ express the Mind of Christ. Say what we will, the *substance* of thought is communicated in language, and if the language is varied, the substance of the thought—the idea itself—is pretty apt to be modified.

It strikes me that the Apostle Paul (or, to speak precisely, that the Holy Spirit Himself, through the Apostle Paul) gives us "the conclusion of the whole matter"—that is, the true doctrine of inspiration—in such clear terms as to leave no room for further controversy, in 1 Cor. 2: 6-16. "We [the Apostles] speak wisdom," says he, "among them that are full-grown: yet a wisdom not of this world, nor of the rulers of this world, who are coming to nought: but *we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden*, which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory: which none of the rulers of this world hath known: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; but as it is written, Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not. And which entered not into the heart of man, Whatsoever things God prepared for them that loved him. *But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit*: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God. *But we [the Apostles] received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual words.*" How could language be any more explicit than this? The mysteries of God are communicated to men, not in words which man's wisdom teaches, but in words which the Spirit teaches; that is to say, *not in the nomenclature of human philosophy, but in the nomenclature of the Spirit of God,—a nomenclature in which, says the Apostle, spiritual realities are properly designated by spiritual words, that is, by words chosen and communicated to inspired men by the Holy*

Spirit Himself. I fail to see how the doctrine of inspiration could be stated more clearly. The Apostle then concludes as follows: "Now the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, and he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct him? *But we have the mind of Christ.*" Who indeed has known, who indeed *could* know, the Mind of Christ but those who have received the *words* of Christ as communicated by the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of inspired men? Hence declares the Apostle again, 1 Thess. 2:13—"We thank God without ceasing, that, when ye received from us the word of the message, even the word of God, ye accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe." The Word of Christ is, of course, the Word of God. Jesus Himself said to the Eleven (the Apostles), John 16:15—"All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine; therefore said I, that he [the Holy Spirit] taketh of mine, and shall declare it unto you." Again, John 7:16, 17—"My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself."

The nomenclature of the Spirit—"the words which the Spirit teaches"—is unique. It abounds in words and phrases which are utterly foreign to all the books of "natural religion," and equally foreign to the works of human philosophy, except of course as human philosophers themselves have appropriated the Spirit's nomenclature, which they have done oftentimes seemingly without realizing it. The nomenclature of the Spirit is so refreshing, so constructive, so "human." Just call the roll of these mighty words and phrases of the Spirit: "Father," "Son," "Holy Spirit," "Logos," "angel," "grace," "mercy," "compassion," "longsuffering," "faith," "hope," "light," "life," "love," "atonement," "holiness," "redemption," "salvation," "regeneration," "justification," "remission of sins," "forgiveness," "sanctification," "glorification," "righteousness," "justice," "judgment," "eternal life," "heaven," "hell," "incorruption," "immortality," "the poor in spirit," "the meek," "they that hunger and thirst after righteousness," "the city which hath foundations," "the holy city Jerusalem," "a new heaven and a new

earth," "a river of water of life," "the lake of fire and brimstone," etc. Where do we find such vivid word pictures as those presented to us in the nomenclature of the Spirit? Where can we find words of such sublime significance for man except in the Scriptures of the Spirit, or perchance in the writings of men who have borrowed them from the Scriptures? The vast majority of ideas embodied in, and expressed by, these words were utterly unknown to man until they were communicated to him by inspiration of the Spirit of God.

No wonder, then, that Paul exhorted Timothy, the young preacher who was his son in the Gospel, as follows: "Hold the pattern of sound [literally, 'healthful'] words which thou hast heard from me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 1:13). That is to say, the nomenclature of the Spirit is spiritually healthful; the sincere milk of the Word is, in fact, the source of spiritual health. How important it is, therefore, to "hold the pattern of healthful words,"—to call Bible things by Bible names, to combine "spiritual things with spiritual words," that is, to express spiritual realities in the very words selected by the Spirit Himself! Think how, by way of contrast, human theology has become corrupted—veritably loaded down—with words taken over from Greek philosophy, and with words and terms coined from the Greek by Christian theologians; words and terms which do not occur in Scripture at all! "Substance," "accident," "potency," "act," "essence," "existence," "homo-ousianism," "herero-ousianism," "eternal generation," "eternal procession," "total depravity," "original sin," "unconditional election and reprobation," "miraculous conversion," "immaculate conception," "sacrament," "eucharist," "miracle of the mass," "venial sin," "mortal sin," "extreme unction," "purgatory," "real presence," "second blessing," "final perseverance," "clergy," "laity," "apostolic succession," "the historic episcopacy," "pre-millennialism," "post-millennialism," and the Lord alone knows how many more unscriptural expressions, all of which have served only to add confusion to confusion in the history of Christian doctrine. Think, too, of the great number of denominational names of purely human origin by which the different parties of Christendom persist in distinguishing themselves from one another. The tragedy of the situation is that beliefs and attitudes regarding these speculative matters have been imposed upon Chris-

tians as tests of fellowship, a business which has nullified the prayer of our Lord that His people might be *one* in Him, "even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us; that the world may believe that thou didst send me" (John 17:20-21). Naturally there can never be Christian unity on these highly theoretical matters; men will never be able to see eye to eye on such questions; certainly the Head of the Church could not expect them to do so. These are matters of *opinion*; they are not matters of *faith* at all; nor are they any part of the Gospel of Christ. The Gospel consists of three facts (historical facts, if you please), three very plain commands, and three equally clear promises. The three facts are "that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:1-4). The three commands are: believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, repent, and be baptized (Acts 16:31, 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 22:16; Rom. 10:9-10; Gal. 3:27, etc.) The three promises of the Gospel are remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and eternal life (Acts 2:38, Rom. 6:23). These are the simplicities of the New Testament, the truths essential to man's salvation. All the other matters enumerated above are the problems of human theology; true, they are perfectly legitimate for purposes of study and meditation, when held only as matters of opinion; they are not, however, the essentials of the Christian faith. There is but one Creed of the Church of Christ,—a Person, Christ Himself; or, according to the Scriptural formula, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matt. 16:16, John 20:30-31). "I am the way," said Jesus Himself, "and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). "Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon a rock. . . . And every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand" (Matt. 7:24-27). Systematic theology is, after all, but the product obtained by straining the sincere milk of the Word through the human intellect, and not infrequently this product is exceedingly blue and thin and un-nourishing. Had churchmen throughout the ages only heeded the apostolic injunction to hold the pattern of sound words, to call Bible

things by Bible names, surely there would not be the confusion which exists at present. As a matter of fact, there never can be any well-founded hope for the reunion of Christendom until this unscriptural lingo, and what it stands for, is subordinated to the simplicities of the Gospel of the grace of God.

To the general view of inspiration which has been put forward here, it will be objected, no doubt (1) that quotations from the Old Testament which occur in the New are rarely given in precisely the same words, and (2) that the obvious individuality of each of the inspired writers precludes the view that he was merely acting, so to speak, as a stenographer. To the former objection it may be replied, in the first place, that since the Holy Spirit directed the writing of both books, He had the sovereign right to alter the language from one to the other, if He saw fit to do so; and that indeed such modifications of language appear actually to have been made for the sake of clarity in the second setting. For example, Isa. 59:20 reads: "And a Redeemer will come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression to Jacob." This is quoted, in Rom. 11:26, as follows: "There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer; He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." Again, we read in Amos 9:11—"In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen," etc. This is given in Acts 15:16 as follows: "After these things I will return, And I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen; And I will build again the ruins thereof, And I will set it up." Obviously these are inspired and intentional modifications of the original passages for the express purpose of clarifying their significance in their New Covenant setting. In the second place, it is a matter of common knowledge that *a truth does not always have to be expressed in precisely the same words*. While it is usually true, of course, that modification of language is equivalent to modification of the thought that is being expressed, such is not always the case by any manner of means. We have concrete examples of this fact in the New Testament itself. To "believe on the Lord Jesus" (Acts 16:31), for example, is equivalent to believing that "Jesus is Lord" (Rom. 10:9), or that He is "both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36), or that He is "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16, John 20:31). Similarly, to "proclaim Christ" (Acts 8:5), to "preach Jesus" (Acts 8:35), to "preach good tidings concerning the kingdom of God, and

the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 8:12), to "preach the word" (Acts 8:4), to "speak the word of the Lord" (Acts 16:32), to "preach the kingdom of God and teach the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 28:31), to "give witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 4:33)—all these phrases are descriptive of the proclamation of the same essential message. Again, to be baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ" or by the authority of Christ (Acts 2:38, 10:48), or to be baptized "into the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:5), is equivalent to being baptized "into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19), for the obvious reason that Christ subsumes in His own Person, throughout the present Dispensation, all the authority and power of the Godhead (Matt. 28:18, 1 Cor. 15:20-28). To read contrasting viewpoints and meanings into these various phrases is sheer nonsense,—just the kind of nonsense which only hair-splitting textual critics dare indulge.

As for the second objection, namely, that the view of inspiration presented here does not allow for the evident individuality of the several Scripture writers—that is, for their individual idiosyncracies and characteristic expressions—I would reply that the objection is ill-founded in that it assumes the existence of a claim which no one actually makes. No one contends that prophetic inspiration destroys human individuality *in toto*. True it is, of course, that there are numerous instances in Scripture in which inspired men gave utterance to words, in a sense mechanically, that is, they were acting merely as mouthpieces of the Spirit, as in the cases previously cited, namely, in many of the Messianic predictions (1 Pet. 1:10-12), in Peter's first voicing of the Good Confession (Matt. 16:16), and in the preaching of the Apostles on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4). In these cases, undoubtedly, the inspired persons were only giving expression to the very words which the Holy Spirit was putting in their minds and upon their lips. In the main, however, and especially with reference to the inditing of the Scriptures, prophetic inspiration meant only that the individuality of the inspired writer was subordinated to the individuality of the Holy Spirit. To repeat one of Owen's statements: "We grant that they used their own abilities in the choice of words; but the Holy Spirit, who is more intimate to the minds and skill of men than they are themselves, so guided

them, that the words they fixed on were as directly and certainly from him, as if they had been spoken to them by an audible voice."¹ A. J. Gordon writes: "The style of Scripture is, no doubt, according to the traits and idiosyncracies of the several writers, as the light within the cathedral takes on its various hues from passing through the stained windows; but to say that the thoughts of the Bible are from the Spirit, and the language from men, creates a dualism in revelation not easy to justify; so that we may quote with entire approval the words of an eminent writer upon this subject: "The opinion that the subject-matter alone of the Bible proceeded from the Holy Spirit, while its language was left to the unaided choice of the various writers, amounts to that fantastic notion which is the grand fallacy of many theories of inspiration; namely, that two spiritual agencies were in operation, one of which produced the phraseology in the outward form, while the other created within the soul the conceptions and thoughts of which such phraseology was the expression, The Holy Spirit, on the contrary, as the productive *principle*, embraces the entire activity of those whom he inspires, rendering their language the *word of God*.'"¹ Again: "The constant recurrence of the same words and phrases in books of the Bible most widely separated in the time and circumstances of their composition, strongly suggests identity of authorship amid the variety of penmanship. The individuality of the writers was no doubt preserved, only that their individuality was subordinated to the sovereign individuality of the Holy Spirit. It is with the written word as with the incarnate Word. Because Christ is divine, he is more truly human than any whom the world has ever seen; and because the Bible is supernatural, it is natural as no other book which was ever written; its divinity lifts it above those faults of style which are the fruits of self-consciousness and ambition. Whether we read the Old Testament story of Abraham's servant seeking a bride for Isaac, or the New Testament narrative of the walk of the risen Christ with his disciples to Emmaus, the inimitable simplicity of the diction would make us think that we were listening to the dialect of the angels who never sinned in thought, and therefore cannot sin in style, did we not know rather that it is the

1. John Owen, *op. cit.*, 78.

1. A. J. Gordon, *op. cit.*, 175-176. The excerpt is from Lee, *The Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures*, 32, 33.

phraseology of the Holy Spirit.”² Dr. Gordon adds a simple but profoundly significant sentence from the pen of an eminent German theologian, which, in view of my inability to gain access to the original, I quote here, in italics, precisely as it has been given by Dr. Gordon in his most excellent little book: “*We can in fact speak with good reason of a language of the Holy Ghost. For it lies in the Bible plainly before our eyes, how the Divine Spirit, who is the agent of revelation, has fashioned for himself a quite peculiar religious dialect out of the speech of that people which forms its theatre.*”¹ Truly the men of God who gave us the Bible “spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit,” and they spoke, moreover, “not in words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth.”

The fruits of final prophetic inspiration, with its accompanying infallibility, were permanently embodied for us in the New Testament Scriptures. Again I quote from Dr. Gordon as follows: “It is very generally held that the order of apostles ceased with the death of those who had seen the Lord and companied with him until the day that he was received up. But the reason for this cessation has been too little considered. May we not believe that the apostles and their companions were commissioned to speak for the Lord *until the New Testament Scriptures, his authoritative voice, should be completed?* If so, in the apostolate, we have a provisional inspiration; in the gospel a stereotyped inspiration; the first being endowed with authority *ad interim* to remit sins, and the second having the authority *in perpetuum*. The New Testament, as the very mouthpiece of the Lord, pronounces forgiveness upon all in every generation who truly repent and believe on the Son of God [this author would say, rather, upon all who truly believe on the Son of God and repent of their sins]; and preachers in every age, with the Bible in their hand, are authorized to do the same declaratively. But when it is urged, as by Catholic writers, that this infallibility for teaching and absolution, which was committed to the apostles, has descended through a succession of ministers called the clergy, the answer seems to be, that this authority has not been perpetuated in any body of men apart from the Scriptures, but was transferred to the New

1. A. J. Gordon, *op. cit.*, 178. The sentence is from Rothe, *Dogmatics*, p. 238.

2. A. J. Gordon, *ibid.*, 177.

Testament, and lodged there for all time. Historically, at least, it seems to have been the fact, that as the apostles and prophets of the new dispensation disappeared, the Gospels and Epistles took their place, and that henceforth the divine authoritative voice of the Spirit could be distinctly recognized only in the written word. As coal has been called 'fossil sunlight,' so the New Testament may be called fossil inspiration, the supernatural illumination which fell upon the apostles being herein stored up for the use of the church throughout the ages."¹ Authority is either *primary* or *delegated*. Primary authority in religion is in God, of course. But God the Father delegated His Divine authority to His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, "whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds" (Heb. 1:2). The Son of God in turn, upon His return to the Father, delegated this Divine authority to the Apostles whom He sent out into the world as eye-witnesses of the fact that He had risen from the dead and as His ambassadors of reconciliation. At the same time, He sent the Holy Spirit upon them in baptismal measure to clothe them with infallibility or to insure them against error in proclaiming to the world the facts, commands and promises of the New Covenant. To indicate this Divine investiture with the proper authority, inspiration and infallibility, He "breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit; whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John 20:22-23). All this was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost and in the subsequent ministry of the Apostles. *I challenge anyone, however, to find the slightest bit of evidence anywhere in the New Testament that the Apostles ever conferred their Divine authority and infallibility upon any other man or group of men, or qualified, or even appointed, any other man or group of men to be their "successors."* The reason why such evidence is not forthcoming is obvious: Divine authority, inspiration, and infallibility all passed, with the death of the Apostles, into the New Testament Scriptures, where they reside to this day.

But, say those who would repudiate the New Testament norm or pattern of the Church, who would justify the numerous innovations brought into the Church by a self-constituted clergy (on the specious plea that the Church was divinely destined

1. A. J. Gordon, *op. cit.*, 167-168. Italics mine.

to "evolve" in harmony with the demands of each succeeding age), *the Church existed before the Book*. True, the Church existed before the New Testament canon was written and established. *But the Church did not exist before the Word of Christ existed*. For the Apostles' teaching (Acts 2.42) was the Word of Christ, communicated to them by the Holy Spirit (cf. again John 14.26, 16:13-15). As Jesus Himself explicitly stated, in His intercessory prayer to the Father on behalf of the Apostles, John 17:7, 8—"Now they know that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are from thee: *for the words which thou gavest me I have given unto them*: and they received them, and knew of a truth that I came forth from thee, and they believed that thou didst send me." "The words which thou gavest me I have given unto them." How did the Son communicate His words to the Apostles? Both personally, while He was with them in the flesh, and then, upon His return to the Father, through the Holy Spirit. The Apostles' teaching was the Word of Christ, and hence the Word of God. Of course that teaching was *oral* at the first, throughout the first century approximately of the Christian era. But it was the Word of Christ just the same, the same Word which the Apostles and their co-laborers committed to writing in the New Testament, to serve as a permanent Discipline for the administration of the Church on earth. *I repeat that the Word which was at the first delivered to the local churches orally by the Apostles, and the Word which was committed to writing by the same Apostles and their co-workers, in the Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament, was one and the same Word of Christ and Word of God*. (2 Cor. 5:19—"God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.") This Word existed and was being proclaimed by the Apostles, guided into all the truth by the Holy Spirit, from the very Day of the Spirit's advent and incorporation of the Body of Christ, the Day of Pentecost, A.D. 30 (Acts 2). To put forward the specious plea, in order to justify human innovations and the encroachments of human authority upon the Church of the living God, that "the Church existed before the Book," and therefore takes priority over the Book, is not only sheer presumption—it is sheer nonsense. Churchmen ought to know better.

"Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is

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in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). If Scripture is sufficient to furnish the man of God completely unto every good work, what more is needed?

12. Questions for Review of Part Eight