

CHAPTER 4

INSPIRATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The previous chapters have begun with a definition of the subject to be discussed. There was little, if any, problem with the terms being considered, and few would disagree with such procedure. However, the situation is not the same with this chapter (or Ch. 5 on miracles) and the word "inspiration".

It is not too much to assert that the real battleground is with this subject. Inspiration means different things to various people. Definitions and understanding are definitely not united (Cf. Pache, Ch. 5, 6; Pinnock, Introduction; Warfield, Pg. 105). Consider the following:

- a) For instance, if the Bible is actually from God, in the form(s) we now possess it (whether speaking of the Hebrew/Greek text, or some translation of it), and is thus an objective revelation from deity to humanity, then each and every person is under obligation, as is clearly stated in its pages, both to trust and obey. If it can be shown that God revealed his will in and through the Bible, in words and/or ways understandable but also authoritative, such fact is of great consequence.
- b) If, as some hold, the Bible is a collection of writings of men, who were "inspired" in the same general way as Homer, Shakespeare, et. al., then mankind stands in a different relationship to any teaching therein.

- c) However, if, as some hold, the said revelation only becomes God's Word when the hearer so feels, the case is different yet.
- d) Further, if said Bible is only authoritative in matters of faith and doctrine, but not in matters of fact and history, yet another relationship becomes true.
- e) A final and, really, the actual battleground (as Pinnock well points out in both his books), is the basis upon which we believe we come to knowledge. Hence, our philosophical positions and presuppositions must be clearly understood, since these may well determine our conclusions.

Hence, we refrain from defining the term, and its meaning for the (written) Bible, until later. We believe, as has often been pointed out (Cf. Geisler and Nix, Pg. 26; John Frame, Ch. 8, *God's Inerrant Word*), that the Bible must be totally considered, in and by itself, as to what it says about itself, before another step is taken. After all, it is with the Bible that we have to do — what it says, claims, teaches, etc. Surely the importance of the case is such that firsthand testimony is worthy of consideration. It will not do to bring upon its pages our own philosophical positions. The urgency of the issue precludes such.

The term is also important to the word "revelation". This word relates to a message from God revealing his will to mankind, which is claimed to have been produced through inspiration. The two terms, then, are distinct but vitally related. Revelation, as contained in the Bible, refers to that which came from God to man, which man would otherwise never have known. It is not from man, nor of man, but to man. More: it claims to be a product which came by means of inspiration of God, which inspiration guaranteed that the revelatory message was what God intended. Thus we have the relationship of the two words. The subsequent material will then be directly concerned with this study: what does the Bible actually teach about inspiration (from God) as such fact relates to the Bible, its authors and their message, and (ultimately) its readers. (Alan Stibbs writes well on this in *Revelation and the Bible*, Ch. 7, as does Frank Pack, *Pillars of Faith*, Ch. 9.)

I. Inspiration: An Inductive Study.

We begin our consideration of the subject with the pages of the Old Testament. At least two reasons for this are evident: a) it has

much to say for itself about its origin, and b) our understanding of Jesus, the apostles and the early church in their treatment of both it and the New Testament will be greatly enhanced by so doing. We refer the reader to several fine treatments of this subject, such as Gaussen, Ch. 11; Geisler and Nix, Chs. 2, 5, 6; Nicole, "New Testament Use of the Old," *Revelation and the Bible*; Pache, Chs. 1, 8, 10; Warfield, Ch. 3; Wenham, Chs. 1, 4.

A. THE OLD TESTAMENT VIEW OF ITSELF

1. DIRECT CLAIMS. "The word of the Lord came . . ." This expression and others like it (such as "God said," "the Lord spoke," "the writing of God," "thus says the Lord" affirm some 3,808 times (Pache, pg. 81) that the Old Testament is a product of God, through (various) people. We submit the following as illustrative of the point.

- a) Exodus 19:7 — "So Moses came and, calling the elders of the people, set before them all these words which God had commanded him."
- b) Leviticus 17:1-2 — "And Jehovah said to Moses, 'Say to Aaron and his sons, and to all the people of Israel, 'This is the thing that Jehovah has commanded.' ' ' "
- c) Numbers 12:6-8 — "And God said, 'Hear my words: If there is a prophet among you, I make myself known to him in a vision, or in a dream. But my servant Moses, he is entrusted with all my house, and with him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in dark speech. He beholds the form of the Lord. Why were you thus not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?' ' "
- d) Numbers 30:1 — "Moses said to the heads of the tribes of the people of Israel, 'This is what God has commanded.' ' "
- e) Deut. 10:1-2 — "Then the Lord said to me, 'Cut two tables of stone like the first. Then come up to me on the mountain, and make an ark of wood. I will then write on the tables the words that were on the first tables (which you broke). Put them in the ark.' ' "
- f) Joshua 20:1-2 — "Then God said to Joshua, 'Say to the people of Israel, "Select the cities of refuge, of which I spoke through Moses." ' ' "
- g) I Sam. 15:1-2 — "And Samuel said to Saul, 'The Lord sent me to anoint you as king over his people Israel; therefore

listen to the words of the Lord. Thus says the Lord of hosts, "I will punish Amalek for opposing Israel on the way, when they came up out of Egypt." ' ' "

- h) II Sam. 7:4-5 — "But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan, 'Go tell my servant David, "Thus says the Lord: Would you build a house for me to dwell in?" ' ' "
- i) I Kings 8:14-21 — "Then the king turned around, and blessed all the assembly of Israel, while they were standing. He said, 'Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who has fulfilled with his hand what he promised with his mouth to my father David, saying, "Since the day that I brought my people Israel out of Egypt, I chose no city in all the tribes of Israel in which to build a house, that my name might be there; but I chose David to be over my people Israel." It was in the heart of my father David to build a house for the Lord, the God of Israel. But he said to David my father, "It is in your heart to build a house for me. It is good that it is in your heart. However, you shall not build the house. Your son who shall be born to you shall build the house for my name." The Lord has now fulfilled his promise which he made; for I am in the place of my father David, and sit on Israel's throne, as the Lord promised, and, I have built the house for the name of the Lord, the God of Israel. I have provided a place for the ark, which contains the covenant of the Lord which he made with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt.' "

2. PROPHETS. Many of the books are from the prophets, who were called "seers" (I Samuel 9:8-9, Amos 7:14, etc.), a term describing those who received revelations from God. Further, the prophets invariably purport to speak for God, not for themselves. Consider Jeremiah 1:7 as an illustration (But the Lord said to me, "Do not say, 'I am but a youth'; for wherever I send you you shall go, and whatever I command you you shall speak"). Many times their utterance is also referred to as God's utterance, Dan. 9:11-12. The various prophets always considered that disobedience to their message was, in effect, disobedience to Jehovah. Consider Jeremiah, Ch. 25 in this light, or Daniel, Ch. 5. Often the prophets were told that they would be the mouth of God, as was Moses, Exodus 4:11-16; or were directly sent by God, as Isaiah, Ch. 6:1ff.; and Amos, Ch. 7:14-15. See also Ezra

1:1; Neh. 9:30; Zech. 7:12. The prophetic books were considered canonical, and authoritative, by the Jews for these reasons.

3. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS. It is the same with the rest who spoke for God, or wrote his message down. The message of God written was to be recopied by each king of Israel, so that the words of the Lord would always be available to the respective kings, and those over whom he ruled, Deut. 17:14-20.

Thus the Israelites were taught high respect for the "book of the Law" (a phrase that encompassed all of God's written word, as we shall see later), because it came through men who were known as prophets, through whom Jehovah spoke (Cf. Luke 24:25; Heb. 1:1) or others like them. When Josiah's workmen found the written word in the temple, II Chron. 34:15ff., Josiah trembled when he heard of it, because God had spoken, and Judah had not obeyed. That God brooked no disrespect for his spokesman or his spoken word is seen in his treatment of Aaron and Miriam, Num. 12; or Nadab and Abihu, Lev. 10.

The end result was that in Jesus' day, the Old Testament was treated as holy and sacred, spoken of as Scripture, having been uttered by the direction of God. The religion of Israel was essentially a religion of a book, their "torah" (law). So highly did they view it, that they considered books that were "canonical" (from God) as "defiling to the hands" (Cf. G.F. Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era*, Vol. I, pg. 243ff., Vol. III, pg. 65-66). As we shall see, the Jews viewed Genesis to Malachi as sacred books from God by New Testament times, even down to "jots" and "tittles" within it; and thus carefully "searched", and as carefully observed it, even to the tithing of garden herbs. "It is written" was the final court of appeal, because Judaism considered it as from Jehovah, regardless of its source, from Genesis to Malachi.

B. THE NEW TESTAMENT VIEW OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. JESUS. Paul expresses it as well as any in Hebrews 1:1-2, "God spoke . . . in these last days . . . by a Son (Jesus)." It is recorded that we are to "hear him (Jesus)," Matt. 17:5. Very well — what did Jesus say about the Old Testament? Among the many things, the following will illustrate the point (Consider Roger Nicole's excellent article, "New Testament Use of the Old Testament" in *Revelation and the Bible*, C.F.H. Henry, ed.): one has but to read little of the use by Jesus

of the Old Testament to clearly perceive what is expressed in John 10:35, "(The) Scriptures cannot be broken." Leaving exegesis of this text until later, Jesus invariably argues as if God had spoken in it, to the extent that he argued on the basis of tense (Mark 12:26); or on the meaning of one word (Mt. 12:36-37; Jn. 10:34); or that it was the basis for judgment (Jn. 5:45-47); or that it must be fulfilled (Mark 14:27; Lk. 24:25-27, 45-47). He is never portrayed in disagreement to it, though he often explains the application really intended (as in the Sermon on the Mount), or the result of ignorance and disobedience and the effects of such (Matt. 23:29-36). He thus noticeably holds it authoritative. As Nicole says, pg. 140-141:

"Jesus Christ himself provides a most arresting example in this respect. At the very threshold of his public ministry, our Lord, in his dramatic victory over Satan's threefold onslaught, rested his whole defense on the authority of three passages of Scripture. He quoted the Old Testament in support of his teaching to the crowds; he quoted it in his discussions with antagonistic Jews; he quoted it in answer to questions both captious and sincere; he quoted it in instructing the disciples who would have readily accepted his teaching on his own authority; he referred to it in his prayers, when alone in the presence of the Father; he quoted it in his resurrection glory, when any limitation, real or alleged, of the days of his flesh was clearly superseded. Whatever may be the differences between the pictures of Jesus drawn by the four Gospels, they certainly agree in their representation of our Lord's attitude toward the Old Testament: one of constant use and of unquestioning endorsement of its authority."

2, THE APOSTLES. Not less than Jesus, these men invariably considered the Old Testament as from God, and that without wavering. Matthew's gospel is replete with argumentation on this point. From Matt. 1:22-23, where the Lord spoke through Isaiah about a miraculous conception, to Ch. 27:3-10 in reference to the buying of a "potter's field," the events recorded are interwoven with now "it is written," then "thus it was fulfilled," etc.

John, though not extensively using the Old Testament as his fellow apostle Matthew, yet portrays the Old Testament in the same way as his Lord. Ch. 1:23 has John the Immerser claiming to be the fulfillment of Isaiah 40:1-3; 2:17 applies Psalms 69:9 to Jesus; 3:14-15 brings out the prophetic import of an historical event 1400 years earlier; 4:25-26 reveals Jesus claiming to be the fulfillment of (much) prophecy; 19:36 recounts the fulfillment of a Scriptural type (Ex. 12:46) and a promise from Jehovah (Ps. 34:20). Such are part of much more in the book.

Paul is not different. He, as soon as converted, began preaching Jesus as God's son, proving such from the Scriptures (Acts 9:21-22; 17:2-3). His epistles are instructive in his usage of the Holy Scriptures, giving much evidence of the same usage as those previous. Illustrative of such are these: Romans 1:2-3, where the Gospel concerning Jesus was prophesied; I Cor. 1:19 quotes Isa. 29:14 in regard to God's wisdom over man's; II Cor. 6:16-18, where several Old Testament texts are held out as a basis for the Christian's holiness; Gal. 3:6, which brings Gen. 15:6 to mind; Eph. 5:31, about God's plans for the marriage union found in Gen. 2:24. Such could be extensively multiplied.

Peter's two short epistles, while not so large in size as these above, yet carry rather identical traits. Ch. 1:10-12, 16, 24; 2:6, 7, 9, 10, 22; 3:10-12, 20 are examples of his constant appeal and/or usage of the Old Testament. The second epistle has the clearest expression in the New Testament of the means of inspiration for the Old Testament writers, 1:20-21; and various references to historical events in the Old Testament, as in 2:4-7, 3:5-6; etc.

So it is with the other writers within our New Testament: no equivocations, no fear of rebuttal from a higher source, no qualms about the authority of the text they quote from the Old Covenant.

The constant appeal to Old Testament texts and types as being fulfilled in their day and time (note Paul in Acts 13:15-41; James in Acts 15:13-19; Hebrews, Chs. 1-10) shows how inextricably they thought God was involved in said texts/types with what was then happening. God in (Israel's) history was a reality, but no less so than in their history, which would include what they wrote as well as that about which they wrote. Indeed, a stronger case for their usage and/or respect for what they quote and evidently consider to be divinely given would be hard to imagine. (The problems relative to the above position are discussed by Warfield in Ch. 4, which would be profitable to read on the point.)

3. SELECTED TEXTS. It will now be good to consider at some length, three New Testament texts that bear specifically on the question of New Testament views of the Old Covenant. Keep in mind the Jewish thinking regarding their "Bible" as the texts following are presented.

a. John 10:35b "Scripture cannot be broken." Jesus refers to Psalms 82:6 and says: 1) it is Scripture, and 2) it can't be broken. Leaving the discussion of the word "Scripture" until later, we ask,

what does "broken" mean? In its immediate usage, Jesus affirms that the Jews had never considered God in error to have labeled human judges (who represented God's justice) as gods. If so, then he, Jesus, could, even though a "man", fit into that category and not be a blasphemer. More, though a specific text is cited, it is considered but a part of a whole: Scripture. As Scripture possesses certain characteristics, so does all of its parts. They, and it, are marked by this: no one can break them, in the sense of proving them wrong or without force. Hence, though Jesus really did not consider himself merely a man (Cf. v. 30), or as just a human judge (he argued from lesser to greater), yet Scriptural usage of a word was so authoritative that the conclusion was self-evident. So, their conclusion that no one but God himself could be called "God" was wrong. This was said by Jesus with the knowledge that the "Scriptures" (i.e., "law") was common ground. We perceive that Scripture has permanent significance (Note Matt. 24:35; 1 Pet. 1:25; Isa. 40:8) as will be brought out again. It is of such nature that it is always true (hence, some New Testament passages have present tense "says" though referring to what had been said years past). Regardless of how we might view Jesus' use of this particular text, his position on the meaning and use of it is important. If a rather unimportant text be yet so understood and applied as Jesus did, not debated or criticized, we must appraise such understanding very carefully. For Jesus, apparently, (any and all) Scripture possessed such force that nothing could break it, whether we think of breaking it in the light of failure to do as was prophesied (read here Lk. 18:31) or prove it to be wrong. He considered that perfect trust was to be accorded the Scriptures, so much so that one erred by not knowing the Scriptures, Mt. 22:29; Mk. 12:24; because God's word was truth, Jn. 17:17, and knowledge of truth precluded error.

b. II Tim. 3:16 "All Scripture is caused by God." Such needs to be our understanding of this text as it refers to the writings in the Bible. Warfield's discussion on this text (pages 138-165) may be summarized this way, that the various writers in the Bible did not consider what they wrote as a human product subsequently endowed with some divine qualities by virtue of God's action, but rather a divine product through various writers. As he points out, the word "inspired" hardly does justice to the Greek term, because "inspired" implied something like an "inbreathing" by God, when

the original term is not so used nor thus to be understood. The text certainly does not refer to the effect of someone reading a text and having God "inspire" it or the person as he reads it. Paul's assertion is directed at the inherent quality possessed by (any) Scripture: it is from God, not from men. Examples of this would be Acts 1:16, "The Holy Spirit spoke by the mouth of David" or Heb. 3:7-8; 4:7, "As the Holy Spirit says, (through David) 'Today, when you hear his voice . . .'" Hence, as a result of such quality which the various texts possess, all of it is "profitable . . ." Since it is of God, not men (and in that sense we are to understand "inspired"), Paul advises Timothy not to leave off public reading of it (I Tim. 4:13), or to fail to preach it, rather than something else (II Tim. 4:1ff.).

We then consider this fact: nowhere will we find a degree, or degrees, of inspiration (as the word is above defined), but rather only the fact of such activity by God through men. Therefore, we who read the New Testament revelation may perceive various ways God has used to speak to us, but not deduce differing levels (or qualities) of inspiration.

The problem with which we struggle, as the reader may readily perceive, is our use of the term "inspire". We use it in an "uninspired" way, and apply it to people/writings more or less inspired. Such is not the Bible way. In fact, for any Hebrew, something from the "breath of God" was equivalent to being of God. For them, the word "wind/spirit" referred, among other things, to God. Read Job 37:10 and Psalms 33:6. God may have used several different writers, but none were more/less inspired to write what they wrote than the others who wrote.

c. II Peter 1:20-21 "... knowing this from the first, that no prophecy of Scripture came to be of the prophet's own understanding, nor was prophecy by man's will, but rather, the holy men spoke from God to mankind as they were borne along by the Spirit." Peter affirms this: God by the Spirit caused men, not only to write but to speak his message. The men in question, the prophets, were passive, "carried" along. These men could not but "speak what they . . . heard." Read Jeremiah 20:9; Amos 3:7-8 as examples. The verse spells out what John 10:35 and II Tim. 3:16 do not: the "how" of inspiration. The previous verses enunciated (some) results of inspiration. (Warfield observes that Peter: 1) denies any prophecy owed its origin to man, 2) rather all prophecy was from God, 3)

through the instrumentality of human authors. He further points up the fact that the Greek participle translated "borne" conveys the idea that the various writers were so under the power of the Holy Spirit that the things spoken/written were under, not the power of the men, but of the Spirit [pages 136-137].) Peter therefore rightly concludes that the word of prophecy was sure.

Considering then these three verses and their total testimony to the Old Testament, we conclude with Paul in Hebrews 1:1, "God spoke . . . unto the fathers by the prophets." Such was the force of those utterances of the Lord that God's very nature was implanted within them. Hence, all such words were with God's: a) authority, b) integrity, c) truthfulness, d) power, and e) wisdom. Whatever is classed among Scripture is thus of this nature, recognizing that the end product, the writings, came through men under the power of God.

We again are treated to the terms revelation and inspiration, which are not identical, but are vitally related. God's revelation was produced by (the means we know as) inspiration.

C. THE NEW TESTAMENT VIEW OF ITSELF.

John W. Wenham's statement is correct in his *Christ and the Bible* when he asserts that our faith in the Bible is based upon our faith in Christ (pg. 9). If the text is accurate and trustworthy, we must consider what Jesus taught about the nature of the Old Testament. As we study his statements, we come to this conclusion: he regarded the Old Testament as God's revealed word. Further, he taught authoritatively but also prophetically, and that especially in regard to the power that would be shared (by God) with his apostles, which power would enable them to reveal, with authority, his message, contained in the New Testament.

Hence, any study of the New Testament view of itself will start with what Jesus promised to the apostles, and the fulfillment of those promises. Then, the effect of the fulfillments and their bearing upon the message preached and written from the apostles. We have shown the view that Jesus had of the Scriptures then extant. Now we present what he promised to the apostles, with a short appraisal of what he taught concerning himself, or what others said. (Ref. Ch. 7 of Geisler and Nix, Ch. 2 of John Wenham; Ch. 2, J.N.D. Anderson.)

That Jesus considered his message and authority were from God is

patently evident on any first reading of the Gospels. He so taught, Matt. 5:17-20, 21-22, 27-28, 31-32; 9:1-6; 10:5-42; 11:25-30; 13:1-52; John 5:17-47; 6:27-58; 7:16-24; 12:44-50; etc.

People believed that he so spoke and so taught as is evident, not only from their expressions, but their reactions. Mt. 7:29; 8:5-13; Mark 4:41; Luke 9:1-10; 20:1-2 are examples of this.

Further proof is not needed in respect to Jesus himself.

1. WHAT JESUS PROMISED THE APOSTLES. Now we give attention to what he, at various times, promised the apostles, then the recorded fulfillment of such promises. Though there are several verses involved, we shall take the space to print them out before drawing conclusions from them. (Quotations are from New International Version, 1973, New York Bible Society International.)

- a) Matt. 10:17-20 — "But be on your guard against men; they will hand you over to the local councils and flog you in their synagogues. On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you."
- b) Matt. 11:25-27 — "At that time Jesus said, 'I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure. All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.' "
- c) Matt. 16:18-19 — "And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."
- d) Matt. 28:18-20 — "Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing

them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.' "

- e) Luke 10:16 — "He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me."
- f) Luke 10:22 — "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."
- g) Luke 24:46-49 — "He told them, 'This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.' "
- h) John 14:16-17 — "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, the Spirit of truth, to be with you forever. The world cannot accept this Counselor, because it neither sees him or knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you."
- i) John 14:26 — "But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."
- j) John 15:26-27 — "When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me; but you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning."
- k) John 16:7-15 — "But I tell you the truth; It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when

he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you."

- l) John 20:21-23 — "Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.' And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.'"
- m) Acts 1:7-8 — "He said to them: 'It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'"

From these Scriptures the following facts, among others, can be drawn regarding what Jesus promised the apostles:

- a) When arrested, do not worry. The Holy Spirit will speak through you. Both what is said and how it is said will be of the Spirit.
- b) God gave Jesus the sole right (authority) to any revelation. Jesus would reveal such by his own will.
- c) Jesus commissioned the apostles with the authority to reveal God's will, which revelation from God through the apostles was determinative for forgiveness or condemnation to any person.
- d) No limit on his authority; hence the right to send the apostles, to send them with an authoritative message, and to make promises of forgiveness, etc., to those trusting him through their message.
- e) The inherent unity that exists between the sender and the sent, with the resultant effects of authority, representation, etc.
- f) God's unlimited commission, especially in regard to revealing himself.

- g) The apostles were Jesus' witnesses, with the charge of proclaiming repentance and remission of sins to all nations by his authority (name), after they had received from God power to do so.
- h) God gave only the apostles the Spirit of truth (and not the world), to replace Jesus, their present counselor from God.
- i) The Holy Spirit, the Counselor to come, came by Jesus' authority (name), to: a) teach them everything, and b) remind them of what Jesus had taught.
- j) The Holy Spirit's mission was to witness to Jesus, through the apostles.
- k) Jesus is to be replaced by the Holy Spirit, who is to accomplish his work through the apostles, in regard to sin, righteousness, judgment, and in respect to testimony for Jesus, especially concerning guidance of the apostles into *all* truth as the Holy Spirit receives it, whether that truth be about past or future events, ultimately to glorify Jesus (who received all from God, and would give it to the Holy Spirit, who would give it to the apostles).
- l) The close relationship between Father/Son/apostles. The (promised) gift of the Holy Spirit, symbolized by Jesus' breathing, and the repeated fact of their connection between sins forgiven/not forgiven.
- m) The repeated promise of power to carry out the mission responsibility delegated to them by Jesus, with further explanation of procedures to follow.

It would be difficult to find a more complete provision for the apostles than is above presented. Jesus sent them with his personal authority, with every assurance of help, whether in thought, word, mental attitude or whatever. Their message would be founded upon truth as he had taught, or revealed in truth as the need arose. Let us now read the historical record in Acts to appraise how well Jesus kept his promises.

Luke presents the twelve, obedient to Jesus (Luke 24:49) waiting in Jerusalem for the "other" Counselor, the Holy Spirit. In keeping with Jesus' promises, Acts 2 details the following items:

- a) Holy Spirit came, 2:1ff.
- b) The twelve acted without anxiety or premeditation, and

God supplied by the means (other languages), the necessary wisdom (what to say), and the "how" in what they spoke. None of these could have been theirs by other means then available.

- c) What Jesus had done was brought to mind.
- d) Understanding of prophecy as it related to Jesus is evident.
- e) Truth yet unknown, as in v. 36, was theirs.
- f) Further revelation of God's will for salvation was given to them, as in v. 38.

Subsequent chapters in the book will reveal the same general ideas, plus others, so that we draw the conclusion in Hebrews 2:3-4, "how shall we escape if we ignore such great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also bore witness to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will." The same general facts are as true of Paul as of the original twelve apostles, as is evident in Luke's record of his activities, or from his own writings. As McGarvey well states,

"The sum of the evidence in Acts, concerning the fulfillment of the promises . . . is the sum of the promises made by Jesus. The two stand over against each other as sums of an equation; and they combine to show that there abode permanently in the apostles, and in some of their companions, a power of God's Holy Spirit equal to their perfect enlightenment and guidance in all that they sought to know and say; and that it did, as a matter of fact, guide their thoughts, their words, and the course of their missionary journeys. Not only so, it (the power through the Holy Spirit) enabled them to speak of things in heaven, on earth, and in the future, concerning which, without divine enlightenment, men can know nothing."

2. THE APOSTLES TESTIMONY. There are many implicit evidences that the several writers of our New Testament spoke/wrote with authority, and that such as no mere man could claim or possessed. One has but to read some of the religious works of the time to quickly discern why they were rejected and our 27 chosen instead. Not that the choosing of these 27 made them canonical instead of the other "also-rans" but rather that the difference is just that evident between what God wrote through men and what men wrote without God's help.

However, there are many explicit claims within the pages in question, and we now consider some of them.

The classic passage where the authority of the apostles' message is

taught, whether oral or written, is I Cor. 1:18-4:21. (A very similar text is Gal. 1:1-2:21 concerning apostolic authority.) This whole section has as its backdrop the apostle(s), his authority and message, contrasted to that of men. We begin in 1:18 with God's revealed message better than (any) man's, and not from men. (It is the power unto salvation, though considered foolish by men.) Paul came (2:1ff.), preaching that message he had received from God, which, v. 9, did not originate with men but, v. 10, with God, through the auspices of the Holy Spirit, and thence to the apostles, v. 11-12. Such was the Spirit's leading that, v. 13, their message of truth was combined in the Spirit's words, not theirs, since natural men do not so receive God's revelation, while the apostles do, v. 14-15, insomuch that it could be said that the apostles have the mind of Christ, v. 16. Chapter 3 continues contrasting Paul's message and ministry (with the help of Apollos) as an apostle, as God's fellow worker, v. 9, and Master builder, v. 10-11, who laid the only foundation (Cf. Eph. 2:20; 3:2-5) which can (should) be laid. It concludes with another warning and directive concerning God's wisdom versus man's. Chapter 4 picks up the apostles' relationship to God's message of wisdom again, since he (they) was a steward of it. Because of the authority of his message, in contrast to the (apparent) weakness of his position, vv. 8-13, they needed to give attention, since he could come with power, v. 19-20, or love, whichever they preferred, v. 21.

In these verses, we perceive the same clear description of a man under the Holy Spirit, with the resultant effects of confidence, authority, direction, truth, revelation, etc., as was evident in Acts 2 and following. Moreover, the Corinthians were to be in subjection to that message, since it came from an apostle, of Christ's, called to be such, Ch. 1:1.

Consideration of the remainder of the book will quickly underscore Paul's belief in his authority, as Ch. 5:1ff., 7:40 (which verse is hardly to be taken as expressing doubt, but rather as a gentle reminder of the obvious fact); 9:1; 11:17; 14:37 (which plainly teaches that what he was then writing was from God); 15:1; etc.

When we turn to the other books from Paul, all are begun by greetings from *Paul*, an *apostle*, or contain internally such testimony. Many contain explicit affirmations of that fact. For instance, Rom. 15:14-21; Gal. 1:6-12; II Cor. 12:7-13, 19; II Thess.

2:14-15; 3:14; etc. Note especially I Thessalonians 2:13, where Paul commends the brethren for receiving the message as one from God, ministered through men like Paul, yet with authority as if from God himself.

The same general tenor of thought runs through the epistles of Peter and John. These authors, though not writing as much as Paul, yet convey like sentiments.

Peter's epistles both begin with the declaration of being from an apostle. 1:10-12 reveals that the writer knows of the Holy Spirit's direction in the lives of contemporary messengers. 5:1 places the writer among those who companied with Jesus, as does the text in II Pet. 1:12-18. The authority of the apostle's word is highlighted in II Pet. 3:1-2.

John commences the first book with the affirmation that he was among the eyewitnesses. He mentions the Spirit as bearing witness, which was to be done through the apostles, of which he was one. The two small epistles are not so plain, but as previously shown, are probably from the apostle John. As for Revelation, the concluding chapter unveils what the book's writer thought of his work; which warns everyone not to add or subtract from the words of prophecy within the book. Within the Bible context, the word prophecy implies divinely given from God, and thus not to be changed by men, even as 22:18-19 testify. The fact that the writer's name is John, exiled on Patmos, who produces a prophecy, 1:3, and claimed to have been in the Spirit, 1:10, points to the apostle John.

Giving attention to the remainder of the authors, Mark, Luke, James and Jude, we present the following. None of the men explicitly claim or deny divine guidance in what they wrote. That the apostles could impart the power of the Spirit to others is a well-attested fact. These four men all were companions of apostles, Mark with Paul and Peter, Luke with Paul; James and Jude most likely with the apostles in Jerusalem. One of the most reasonable assumptions for the inspiration of the books is that the early church so accepted them. Another is that they convey the same general impression as those we know to be products of God. The characteristics of Matthew, John, and company seem also to be part and parcel of Mark, Luke, James and Jude. Acts 15 reveals that James was involved in a decision, with others, which was circulated in print, under the authority of the Holy

Spirit. It is not unreasonable to suppose his book could have been produced the same way.

However, should we be required to disclaim inspiration for any or all of these men, we still possess good accounts by uninspired men, which may be added to those which do claim inspiration. The writings in question then are as credible as any uninspired books, and to that extent useful. Our faith does not rest on the books from these four men. We conclude, however, with the distinct opinion that there is good evidence to consider them as inspired by God, and hence to be so treated.

The conclusion can be drawn, then, that Jesus promised the apostles the necessary power to speak/write the message of redemption as God willed; and that the promises were kept. The result: the written products from these men, and those who companied with them, were documents resulting from men writing under the supervision of the Holy Spirit. Hence, they are documents with authority of God, for "our admonition and learning."

D. TERMS

The discussion of terms has been left until now, since any conclusion about the various terms involved should be made after consideration of the general testimony found in the Bible. It is now time to present some terms, study their usage and various applications, then draw some conclusions relative to them. The following terms are of concern: it is written, Scripture, it says, law, prophecy, psalms. Some of these terms were extensively discussed by Warfield in Chs. 3, 5, 7, and by Geisler and Nix in Ch. 6, for which we give credit for their contributions.

1. "IT IS WRITTEN." This expression occurs over ninety times in the New Testament, generally with reference to the Old Testament. The following examples will show to what the users referred. (Quotations from New International Version.)

- a) Matt. 4:4 — "Jesus answered, 'It is written: Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "
- b) Matt. 4:7 — "Jesus also answered him, 'It is also written: Do not put the Lord your God to the test.' "
- c) Matt. 4:10 — "Jesus said to him, 'Away from me, Satan!

For it is written: Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.' "

- d) Matt. 11:10 — "This is the one about whom it is written: 'I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' "
- e) Matt. 26:31 — "Then Jesus told them, 'This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written: I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' "
- f) Mark 1:2 — "It is written in Isaiah the prophet: 'I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way.' "
- g) Mark 7:6-8 — "He replied, 'Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules made by men." You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men.' "
- h) Luke 19:45-46 — "Then he entered the temple area and began driving out those who were selling. 'It is written,' he said to them, 'My house will be a house of prayer; but you have made it a den of robbers.' "
- i) Luke 20:17-18 — "Jesus looked directly at them and asked, 'Then what is the meaning of that which is written: "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone"? Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed.' "
- j) John 2:17 — "His disciples remembered that it is written: 'Zeal for your house will consume me.' "
- k) Acts 7:42 — "But God turned away and gave them over to the worship of the heavenly bodies. This agrees with what is written in the book of the prophets: 'Did you bring me sacrifices and offerings forty years in the desert, O Israel?' "
- l) Acts 13:33 — "he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising Jesus from the dead. As it is written in the second Psalm: 'You are my Son; today I have become your Father.' "
- m) Acts 15:15 — "The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written: . . ."
- n) Rom. 1:17 — "For in the gospel a righteousness from God

is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith.' "

- o) Rom. 9:33 — "As it is written: 'See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.' "
- p) I Cor. 1:19 — "For it is written: 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.' "

As it may be seen, "it is written" carries a ring of authority because the expression hearkens back to the Old Testament. For the Jews, God had spoken in the Old Testament. Hence, to say, "it is written" was equal to saying the Old Testament says, or God says. Moreover, when we consider the various usages by Jesus, we can draw the clear deduction that he considered the Old Testament authoritative, whether the quote was from the Law (Mt. 4:4; Deut. 8:3), the Prophets (Mt. 21:13; Isa. 56:7; Jer. 7:11) or Psalms (John 10:34; Psalms 82:6). He attributes to the whole Old Testament, as do the apostles, the inherent quality of God-produced writings (none of them ever quote from the apocryphal books which some hold to be canonical). "It is written" has the tone: divine utterance.

2. "SCRIPTURE," (and related terms as Scriptures, holy/sacred Scripture, etc.) appears some fifty times in the New Testament. In every case when it refers to the Old Testament, the assumption is that appeal is being made to what is of authority, the court of last and ultimate authority. Examples (from NIV) of such are:

- a) Matt. 21:42 — "Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the Scriptures: "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes"?' "
- b) Mark 12:10 — "Haven't you read this Scripture: 'The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone;'" "
- c) Luke 4:21 — "and he said to them, 'today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.' "
- d) Luke 24:27 — "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself."
- e) John 17:12 — "While I was with them, I protected them

and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the child of hell so that Scripture would be fulfilled."

- f) Acts 17:2 — "As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures,"
- g) Rom. 4:3 — "What does the Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.' "
- h) Gal. 3:8 — "The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: 'All nations will be blessed in you.' "
- i) I Tim. 5:18 — "For the Scripture says, 'Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain,' and 'The worker deserves his wages.' "
- j) James 4:5 — "or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us tends toward envy,"

As we may easily discover, the term was used as a technical name for any or all of the Old Testament. Our New Testament speakers and writers simply continued the Jewish usage of these terms. Since the term was applied without discrimination, it appears that the New Testament writers considered the Old Testament a unit, perhaps specifically designated at times as law, etc., but still the well-known group of documents that had divine origin.

From this perspective, consider some special usages of the term. Rom. 16:26 has "prophetic Scripture" by which God's revelation was being made known. Though this text may have in sight the Old Testament, in the light of the book of Revelation, the general usage of "Scriptures" to apply to what God produced through men, New Testament writings cannot be ruled out. That this is demonstrably so is seen in II Pet. 3:16; where Peter refers to Paul's writings, not specifically identified, as part and parcel of what he calls "other Scriptures."

Drawing together the preceding discussions, where Jesus testifies to the character of the Old Testament as a God-given revelation, the application of the term "Scripture" to such revelation teaches us that in its use by Jesus, "Scripture" means a God-caused document. From this usage, the apostolic authors do not depart but use the term in the

same way. Paul says in Rom. 1:2, that God spoke through the prophets in the Holy Scriptures. He obviously has in mind the written documents. If this be true, any use of the term to other writings than the Old Testament implies that said writings fall into the same category as the Old Testament. We have cited Peter's application of the term to (some of) Paul's writings. Paul uses the term in I Tim. 5:18 and applies it to a text from Deut. 25:4; and a text from Luke's gospel, Ch. 10:7. We may then see this estimation of the relative value of each book. When we remember that Scripture is "inspired" of God, II Tim. 3:16, the conclusion is obvious.

Finally, such is the usage of the New Testament writers in mingling the terms "God" and "Scripture" that, in their minds, one is equal to the other. The following passages will bear testimony to this point:

- a) Rom. 9:17 — "For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: 'I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.'" (Compare Ex. 9:16)
- b) Gal. 3:8 — "The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: 'All nations will be blessed in you.'" (Compare Gen. 12:1-3)

The student will observe that both New Testament texts use the expression "Scripture". However, it was in fact God himself who spoke to Abraham, and God spoke through Moses (and Aaron) to the Pharaoh. Certainly neither Abraham nor Pharaoh could have read the texts in question, since they were not written at the time.

- a) Matt. 19:4-5 — "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh?'" (Compare Gen. 2:24)
- b) Acts 4:24-25 — "When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. 'Sovereign Lord,' they said, 'you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: "Why do the nations rage and the people plot in vain?"'" (Compare Ps. 2:1)

- c) Acts 13:34-35 — "The fact that God raised him from the dead, never to decay, is stated in these words: 'I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David.' So it is stated elsewhere: 'You will not let your Holy One undergo decay.' " (Compare Isa. 55:3)
- d) Heb. 1:6 — "And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, 'Let all God's angels worship him.' " (Compare Deut. 32:43; Ps. 104:4)
- e) Heb. 3:7 — "So as the Holy Spirit says: 'Today, if you hear his voice,' " (Compare Ps. 95:7)

Again the student will notice that the texts quoted are attributed to God, who spoke to man in various times and places. However, the Old Testament texts in the writer's mind do not indicate that it was God speaking, but rather others. Yet, the fact remains: God was actually behind the various utterances. Hence, the ideas "Scripture" and "God (said)" are synonymous in fact.

To summarize: "Scripture" meant documents of divine origin, carrying all the qualities of such a source, as true, authoritative, inerrant, infallible, etc.

3. "IT SAYS," and the related expressions, "Scripture says," "God says," are among the most used of all the terms we are considering. As they are seen in light of their usage, and in combination with former terms we have discussed, the conclusion becomes stronger that God has spoken in the Old and New Testaments.

It is also true, though, that various writers have argued over the supposed subject of the Greek verb form meaning "says", since it, when it is not expressed, may be translated as either he/it says. Context is therefore of significance here, since the antecedent of the pronoun (it/he) is to be found there. Some translations opt for "it", others for "he". Some of the places such expressions occur are:

- Acts 13:35 — where God is the antecedent
- Rom. 9:15 — where God is the antecedent
- Rom. 10:8 — where Scripture is the antecedent
- Rom. 15:10 — where Scripture is the antecedent
- I Cor. 6:16 — where Scripture is the antecedent
- I Cor. 9:10 — where God is the antecedent
- I Cor. 15:27 — where Scripture is the antecedent
- II Cor. 6:2 — where Scripture is the antecedent

| | | |
|-----------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Gal. 3:16 | — | where Scripture is the antecedent |
| Eph. 4:8 | — | where Scripture is the antecedent |
| Heb. 8:5 | — | where God is the antecedent |
| James 4:6 | — | where Scripture is the antecedent |

Generally, as noted, the subject of the verb forms in question is expressed. In some few instances, as those above, the context must be considered in order to decide the proper subject.

In such usages, however, we may catch the basic idea: either the Scripture or God is to be supplied as the subject. (Perhaps the occurrence in Eph. 5:14 is the only exception to this conclusion, where the source is rather unsure.) Certainly the example in Rom. 9:13-17 by Paul is clear, where "it is written," "(God) says," and "Scripture says" are used interchangeably. A similar context is Gal. 3:8-16, where "Scripture," "it is written," and "it says" are used the same way. Certainly the quote of verse 8 from Gen. 12:3 is from God, not the Scripture, though Moses later recorded it in Scripture. Even the appeal to Scripture in verses 11, 12, shows that just the citation of (any) Scripture text ends the discussion.

As Warfield well observes, the usage of verbs with indefinite subjects does not indicate any indifference, or that the one being quoted is unimportant. This is just common practice, in usages in the New Testament, as well as literature of the day. As before stated, it makes no special difference if we are to understand the indefinite (i.e., unexpressed) subject to be God or Scripture; the effect is the same.

4. "LAW", "PROPHETS" AND "PSALMS". These expressions are also evident in the pages of the New Testament as the various speakers and writers have occasion to use them. The word "law" is normally understood to have reference to the five books of Moses, as Mt. 19:7; Mk. 7:10; Lk. 2:22; 24:47; Jn. 1:45 indicate. However, the word law is broader than the Pentateuch, though including it, as Matt. 5:17-18 (where law and prophets = law), Jn. 10:34 (Ps. 82:6); 15:25 (Ps. 69:4); Acts 25:8; Rom. 10:4 (where the Old Testament is in view as also in Gal. 2:16, 21; 3:2); 1 Cor. 14:21 (Isa. 28:11-12); etc. The same general usage of "the Law and the prophets" is seen, as in Matt. 7:12; Lk. 16:16, 29, 31; 24:27; Acts 13:15; 24:14; 26:22. As far as the Jews were concerned, their body of canonical documents was such because they came through men who were God's

spokesmen, i.e., God's prophets. Hence, the term prophet, though sometimes used to mean someone like Isaiah or Jeremiah, also included such as Abraham, Moses and others, all of which were, by virtue of being a prophet, men "borne by the Holy Spirit" to speak/write the message of God. As far as the word "Psalm" is concerned, it only occurs in reference to a Scripture text (though many references are made to Psalms in general, without use of the name) in the following places: Lk. 20:42; 24:44; Acts 1:20; 13:33, 35. The source in view is invariably the book of Psalms, with exception of Luke 24:44. It may be also in Jesus' mind here. However, in the Hebrew canon, the book of Psalms stood at the head of a section which included more books, such as Proverbs, Job, Daniel, I and II Chronicles, etc., and was called "the Writings." Therefore, the three separate designations used by Jesus probably included all the Old Testament as we know it.

Other designations could be considered, but these will suffice to show that the Old and New Testaments are interwoven with a common thread: "from God." We find no distinction made between the inherent nature (that of God-produced books) between either group of documents. We now can draw some general conclusions about the subject of inspiration and its meaning for us today.

II. Inspiration and the Bible

Any attempt to state the effect of inspiration upon the Bible must deal with several areas within it. Though we have summarized somewhat in the above page, it will yet be helpful to deal specifically with the following matters.

A. EFFECTS OF INSPIRATION

The Bible generally asserts the fact of inspiration without always specifying the results thereof. However, these facts are to be considered:

- a) The written or spoken word, as it came through men (considered to be) inspired, was accepted as if God himself was giving the message. Note here I Thess. 2:13.
- b) In contradistinction to No. a, anything not from inspired men was treated as from man. Perhaps Paul's expression in Gal. 1:6-9 as it relates to his message, is timely: (N.I.V.) "I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one

who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel — which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!" Paul puts in stark contrast an inspired message and the message from men uninspired. The first is from God, the second is not; hence, listen to the one and ignore the other.

- c) Jesus, the apostles, and others of their nature, always handled any text having come through men inspired as if God had said it, and it thus embodied all the characteristics of God himself. As John 17:17b says, "(God's) Word is truth."
- d) Jesus promised the apostles, John 16:7-15, that they would be guided into all truth, which promise doubtless included that which they would write. Assuming that his promises were kept, the products of the men would reflect what Jesus promised.
- e) Peter's affirmation, II Pet. 1:20-21, comes as close to describing the "how" of inspiration as any text we have, and also brings to our attention the result of inspiration; the trustworthiness of any message. Therefore, "if God said it, I believe it, that settles it." As Warfield observes, page 153, the Biblical writers, and everyone else, did (should) approach the Scriptures, not as a human product breathed into by the Holy Spirit, but rather as a "divine product produced through the instrumentality of men."

The above ideas represent the basic understanding of the Bible writers and the church in general from Bible times until recent times. We present, as a summary, this paragraph from Warfield:

"The Church, then, has held from the beginning that the Bible is the Word of God in such a sense that its words, though written by men and bearing indelibly impressed upon them the marks of their human origin, were written, nevertheless, under such an influence of the Holy Ghost as to be also the words of God, the adequate expression of His mind and will. It has always recognized

that this conception of co-authorship implies that the Spirit's superintendence extends to the choice of the words by the human authors (verbal inspiration), and preserves its product from everything inconsistent with a divine authorship — thus securing, among other things, that entire truthfulness which is everywhere presupposed in and asserted for Scripture by the Biblical writers (inerrancy). Whatever minor variations may now and again have entered into the mode of statement, this has always been the core of the Church doctrine of inspiration. And along with many other modes of commending and defending it, the primary ground on which it has been held by the Church as the true doctrine is that it is the doctrine of the Biblical writers themselves, and has therefore the whole mass of evidence for it which goes to show that the Biblical writers are trustworthy as doctrinal guides. It is the testimony of the Bible itself to its own origin and character as the Oracles of the Most High, that has led the Church to her acceptance of it as such, and to her dependence on it not only for her doctrine of Scripture, but for the whole body of her doctrinal teaching, which is looked upon by her as divine because drawn from the divinely given fountain of truth."

B. INERRANCY AND INFALLIBILITY

These terms are somewhat separate, yet necessarily involved with any discussion of them, or of inspiration.

Inerrancy has to do with the Bible's nature in respect to error/truth. Actually, we deal with the nature of God when we deal with his word. It is a necessary conclusion that if God does not lie, neither can his word. If the attitude of Jesus and the apostles be honestly considered, they certainly held to an inerrant Bible. If we accept Jesus' deity, and resulting authority, we can do no less.

1. INERRANCY. It does not guarantee that all which is in the Bible is easily understood, or even understood at all, nor does it promise that it will always record what we think it should or with what we agree. It does summarize one facet of God's word, namely, that it is to be accepted, in its original autographs, as containing total truth, including no errors. It means that the original Biblical text had integrity to the point that it was entirely trustworthy. If it was not, the case is lost, because the fact will be that the very part concerning salvation, or any other doctrine, may and could be the very part that is fallible. The alternative to inerrancy is death.

Inspiration and inerrancy are inextricably together, despite the efforts of some to divorce them. (See Pinnock, pp. 73-81; Warfield, Ch. 4.) If we assert that the text is a product of inspiration, but also admit that it is with error, does that not also indict the giver of the text, God? Moreover, if we admit error in the text, who is to say how much

error, if it is not totally in error? The assertion by Jesus, that God's Word is truth, is enough to settle the matter for all who accept Jesus' deity. (Pache's Ch. 13 is especially good on this subject.)

2. INFALLIBILITY. If it is distinguishable from inerrancy, infallibility has to do with the nature of the Bible in respect to its intended purpose to tell the truth, and not to deceive. Again, we are considering the very nature of God who gave us the Bible. We ask: is God fallible? Capable of being deceived? If so, our God is not essentially different than we mortals. If not so, then his word must necessarily be infallible, and not otherwise. Hence, as with inerrancy, we are concerned with the essential nature of God, his honor, veracity, etc. As Pinnock states, infallibility of Scripture is the essential link "epistemologically between sinful man and the inscrutable God." (Page 71, *Biblical Revelation*.) Our knowledge of salvation is intermeshed with this fact: God is not deceivable nor deceiving. Life hangs on the point of infallibility.

C. PLENARY

A third term of equal importance with inerrancy and infallibility is "plenary" (full). This term has to do with the extent of inspiration on the revelation of God. If we have considered the Biblical assertions correctly, we draw this conclusion: all Scripture is of God. We have then the result that every part of the Scripture is a product of God, though he used men to speak/write it. The quality which inspiration gives to any text is that God "said" it. Hence, plenary inspiration involves the whole text, whether we have in mind the thought expressed or the vehicles (words) in which it is expressed. Verbal inspiration, then, is the corollary of plenary, infallible, inerrant Scriptures. We cannot assert what God said unless we also can perceive that he has said. Stated differently, revelation is God's communication with man. Unless we understand said revelation, it is but a farce to assert we have revelation. Words and thought are inseparably connected. So are God's words, God's thoughts and God's revelation. If Jesus and others argued upon the tense of a verb, or the number of a word, obviously words are at issue.

It will not do to go astray, as many modern theologians have done, and assert that (any) language is fallible, the writers fallible and the words they used unimportant. It may be so that sometimes such things are true. However, if at any time we argue that an utterance is

from God, and trustworthy, we can also assert that what God has once done, God can do again. Hence, God could reveal his message, and use tools perfectly capable of doing what he wants. An all-powerful God can surely do that which is necessary to communicate to his creation in a way that leaves no room for error. So Jesus believed, and the apostles. What think ye of Jesus? (Do peruse Pinnock, pages 89-95; Young's chapters 1, 4.)

D. TEXT

One last item is of interest, and that is the relationship of the inspired autographs to the copies thereof. The issue is this: what value is an inspired original if we don't possess it?

In the following discussion, keep this in mind: God could certainly produce an original without error, using writers exactly prepared for that purpose. However, what about copies that God did not produce, but which men did, which are not free from error? If these are all we have, does it make any difference, after all, if we hold that only the originals were inspired?

We have before discussed the state of the text, that it is really quite dependable, even to the point where we know which parts are questionable. It is not a valid argument against the whole to argue that a part is in doubt. Moreover, if we cannot ascertain the exact meaning of every text, the fact would be true in regard to the originals also. Hence, that point is not of consequence.

The matter is brought into focus by this question: Which would do better: to have a perfect original from which to copy or an imperfect original? If we have an inspired original, insofar as we correctly understand it, or copy it, we have the original. If however, we have no such inspired original, no copy will make it so, or become so.

Consider this thought: did God not know these facts? Did he not know that the inspired original would be copied, and/or lost? Did he not know that copies would multiply? Did he not know men would say that an inspired original which is not available is no better than an uninspired one, etc.? To ask these questions is to answer them. Of course he knew these things. Now it is a fact that we can know what God wants of us; we can understand enough to obey. We could do little, if any, better if we had the original. Moreover, most of God's people become such through use, not of the originals, not even of the copies, but rather of translations of copies. Hence, we conclude that

the state of the present text in relationship to the originals is within God's wise plan for us. We can, then, confidently use our translations and/or copies with the firm persuasion that therein is all we need from God to trust and obey his will. Additionally, we can continue to better our translations, and work to achieve a more accurate copy of the original autographs.

Summary

God has spoken — to us — in the Bible. His revelation has been given, by the power of the Holy Spirit, through various men, in a word revelation. We can know it, quite adequately, for the purposes of faith unto salvation.

On the basis of these facts, the Hebrew writer warns us to not refuse (God) who speaks to us, reminding us that if those who rejected God under the Old Covenant did not escape, we certainly shall not do so. Let us then give the more earnest heed to the things God has spoken through his word, uniting it with faith, unto the salvation of our souls (Heb. 2:1-4; 4:1-2; 12:25-29).

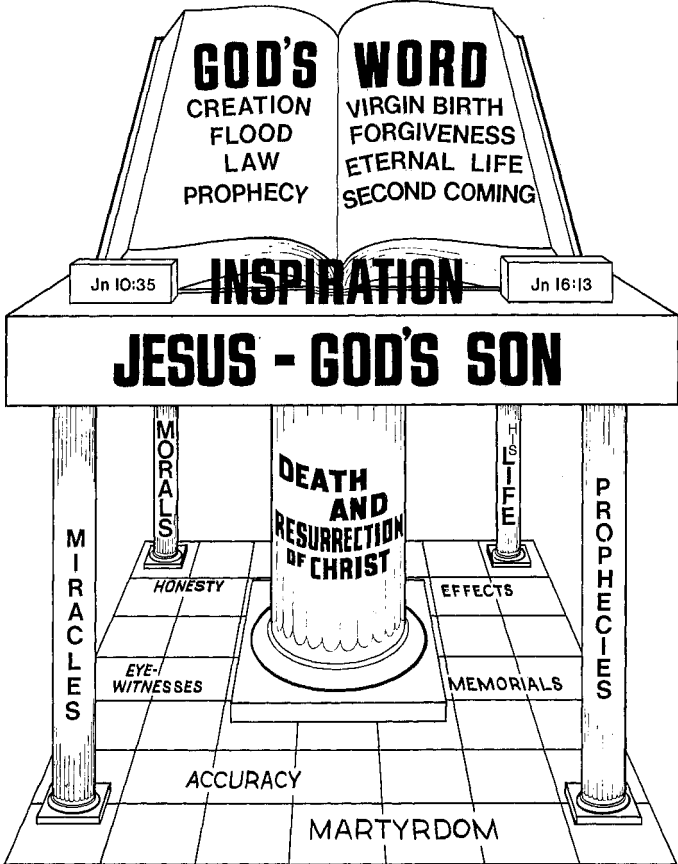
COLLATERAL READING

1. Anderson, J.N.D. *Christianity: The Witness of History*. Tyndale Press, 1969.
2. Baxter, Batsell Barrett. *I Believe Because . . . Part 4*. Baker Book House, 1971.
3. Boles, H. Leo. *The Holy Spirit; His Personality, Nature, and Works*. Chs. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13. Gospel Advocate Co. 1942.
4. Crawford, C.C. *The Eternal Spirit: His Word and Works*. Vol. II, part 8. College Press, 1973.
5. DeHoff, George W. *Why I Believe the Bible*. DeHoff Publications, 1939, 1944.
6. Earle, Ralph. *How We Got Our Bible*. Baker Book House, 1971.
7. Gausson, Louis. *The Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures*. Moody Press, Chicago, Ill.
8. Geisler, Norman L., and Nix, William E. *A General Introduction to the Bible*. Moody Press, 1968.
9. Harris, Laird. *Inspiration and Canonicity of the Bible*. Zondervan Publishing House, 1957, 1969.
10. Henry, Carl F.H., ed. *Revelation and the Bible*. Chs. 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 17, 23. Baker Book House, 1958.
11. Little, Paul E. *Know Why You Believe*. Inter-Varsity Press, 1968.
12. _____. *Know What You Believe*. Scripture Press Publications, 1970.
13. Montgomery, John Warwick. *God's Inerrant Word*. Bethany Fellowship, Inc. 1974.
14. Moore, G.F. *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era*, three volumes. Harvard University Press, 1927.

15. Nichols, Gus. *Lectures on the Holy Spirit*. Nichols Brothers Publishing Company, 1967.
16. Pache, Rene. *The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture*. Moody Press, 1969.
17. Pinnock, Clark. *Biblical Revelation – The Foundation of Christian Theology*. Moody Press, 1971.
18. Sweeney, Z.T. *The Spirit and the Word*. Gospel Advocate Company.
19. Warfield, Benjamin Breckenridge. *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*. Baker Book House, 1948.
20. Wenham, John W. *Christ and the Bible*. Inter-Varsity Press, 1972.
21. Wilson, Hermon O., and Womack, Morris M., eds. *Pillars of Faith*. Baker Book House, 1973.
22. Young, Edward J. *Thy Word is Truth*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957.

Divine Truth

**F
A
I
T
H**



**F
A
C
T
S**

Grounded in Human History

