

The Witness of Scripture to Its Inspiration

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The purpose of this chapter is to consider the witness of Scripture itself to its own inspiration. To begin with there is need to distinguish clearly between two different meanings or possible implications of the word "inspiration" when it is thus used of Holy Scripture. The prevalent ideas associated with this term do not conform to that denotation of the word which has scriptural authority and justification, and which supplies the particular meaning which we have in view in a study of this kind.

I. MEANING OF INSPIRATION

When the word "inspiration" is used of the Bible it is often thought to describe a quality belonging primarily to the writers rather than to the writings; it indicates that the men who produced these documents were inspired men. In contrast to this idea, which indubitably has its place, we find that the Scripture employs the word bearing this meaning primarily to describe not the writers but the sacred writings. II Timothy 3:16 reads *pasa graphē theopneustos*. This the RSV renders "All scripture is inspired by God." Let us here notice three points about this statement. (1) The Greek adjective *theopneustos* (meaning literally "God-breathed") is a compound, which begins with an explicit recognition of God as the author; the inspiration is divine. (2) The human agents in the production of the Scripture are here not even mentioned. (3) The Scripture, or writing thus produced, is

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here described, and is intended to be thought of, as "divinely inspired," or as the KJV renders it, "given by inspiration of God." What, therefore, we are in this chapter to consider as inspired, or produced by divine inspiration, is not primarily the condition or activity of the Biblical writers, but the Biblical writings themselves, the actual written words of Scripture.

II. Place of Self-Authentication

Some will certainly raise the objection that Scripture ought not thus to be appealed to for its own vindication. To quote Scripture in support of Scripture seems, admittedly, from one standpoint, to be arguing in a circle, and to be logically inconclusive. It is important, therefore, to see that in this particular case no occasion exists for such misgiving.

(1) First, let us recognize that every man has surely a right to speak for himself; and that testimony to oneself ought not be ruled out as completely improper. Indeed, if men were not liars and deceivers, or not prejudiced and blind and lacking in full understanding, their own testimony about themselves would be sufficient. Consider the unique example of the perfect Man. Although Jesus recognized that the truth about himself needed confirmation by

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independent witness to satisfy normal human standards, he nevertheless said "Even if I bear witness of myself, my witness is true" (RV.; cf. John 3:31; 8:13, 14).

(2) Not only so, but some truths about people may never be known, unless the individuals concerned themselves bear witness to them. If what they thus say is unreliable, no other means of discovering the truth may exist. Somewhat similarly, the Bible discloses from God himself truths which cannot otherwise be discovered. For our knowledge of them we are wholly dependent upon divine revelation thus communicated through the Scriptures. Surely no justification exists for thus believing what the Bible teaches about other doctrines, wholly beyond independent human confirmation, if we cannot equally rely completely on what the Bible teaches about itself. Moreover, if we are to accept Scripture as our supreme rule of faith and understanding in the one, we ought similarly to do so in the other. In other words, we cannot rightly turn to the Bible for testimony to the otherwise unknown unless we do accept also its testimony to itself.

(3) In the third place, if we believe that the Bible not only claims to be, but is, a book from God, then behind and beyond all its human writers and contributing agents God himself must be acknowledged as its author; and God cannot lie. His word is always true and always trustworthy. The Bible's witness to itself ought, therefore, to be treated as authoritative and decisive; in a very real sense we need none other.

(4) When men wish to confirm witness given about themselves they appeal to one greater; they take an oath and swear by almighty God. Similarly, when God wished to make men doubly sure of his word of

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promise, he confirmed it by an oath. But when he came to swear, since there was none greater by whom he could swear, he swore by himself (cf. Heb. 6:13-18). He thus made himself the guarantor of the truth and trustworthiness of his own word. This supremely illustrates the principle that in any realm of activity the supreme authority must be self-authenticating. It is impossible to get endorsement or confirmation of such utterances by appeal to some greater authority. Similarly, if the Bible is from God, and therefore possesses supreme authority among men in what it says, it cannot be other than self-authenticating. Truth is settled by what it says rather than by what others may say about it, or in criticism of it.

(5) Finally, relief from the possible embarrassment of dependence upon a single witness—and that in this case the witness of Scripture to itself—is provided by the Trinity and the eternity of the Godhead. For God is Three in One; and God still speaks. So the truth and trustworthiness of Scripture, as the authoritative and unbreakable divine word, are confirmed to the Christian believer by the witness during his earthly life of the incarnate Son of God, and by the present continuing witness of the illuminating and indwelling Spirit of God.

III. WHAT SCRIPTURE DECLARES ABOUT ITSELF

Let us now consider in detail some of the statements made in Scripture about itself and its production. Such statements, we shall note, inevitably bear witness also to Scripture's consequent distinctive character and authority.

All Scripture is "God-breathed"

We have noted that in II Timothy 3:16, "All scripture is inspired by God" (RSV), the Greek adjective *theopneustos* means literally "God-breathed," i.e., "inspired of God." The word "inspired," however, is not to be understood as indicating something "extra" superimposed on the writer or writing, to make the writing different from what it would otherwise be. It indicates rather how the writing came into being. It asserts that the writing is a product of the creative activity of the divine breath. The word thus goes right back to the beginning or first cause of the emergence of Scripture, and indicates that Scripture has in its origin this distinctive hallmark, that it owes its very existence to the direct creative activity of God himself. Although men wrote it, it is God who brought it into being. Its content and character have all been decisively determined by the originating and controlling activity of the creative Spirit. For this reason the context affirms that Scripture is profitable "for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training for righteousness," since its character and quality, and indeed its very existence, are God-determined.

This idea of God "breathing" and of the divine "breath" is familiar to

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students of the Old Testament. It is a graphic metaphor applied to the activity of God, especially to the Holy Spirit, who is the executor of the Godhead. So we read in Psalm 33:6, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth." The breath of God is thus almighty to create. By this breath not only the heavens but also man was created. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7). Or again, we read in Job 33:4, "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life." The breath or breathing of God speaks, therefore, of the activity of the One who is the first and final cause of all things. Scripture is said to be the product of his activity, the work of the Holy Spirit of God himself. Nor should we overlook that what is thus said to be Spirit-produced is the actual written Word. Its emergence and its enduring record were the consummation and intended goal of the Spirit's activity.

Men Spoke From God

The ascription to Scripture of this special divine origin and consequent unique character is, either explicitly or implicitly, confirmed as true by many statements made elsewhere in the Bible. For instance, in II Peter the prophetic word given to us in Scripture is said to be the more sure, and a source of light in our darkness to which we ought to give heed, because of its extraordinary and divine origin. Let us note carefully the sequence of thought in Peter's reasoning. "First of all," he writes, "you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (RSV).

So the primary truth about Scripture, the very first thing we need to recognize about it, is that no prophecy in it was produced, or can be interpreted, through any individual man acting independently and alone. Genuine prophecies and their true interpretation do not just break forth "from man." The Spirit of God brings such prophecies to expression to reveal the mind of

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God; and the same Spirit alone can make plain, to those who hear and study these prophecies, what that mind is.

This essential dependence of true prophecy upon God and not upon man is primarily shown in the way in which it came to exist at all. For it was not brought into being simply by any man's desire, decision and determination to give it utterance. It is not "from man." Man is not the prime mover in its production. Indeed, man acting independently, and solely on his own will and initiative, cannot produce it. For true prophecy has never emerged, except when men have been taken up into an activity of the Spirit of God, and borne along to the place, or into the circumstances and the conditions, where they gave utterance to words of which God was the primary originating cause. Clearly, therefore, what matters most for us is the actual words

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they were thus enabled to express. The enduring God-given witness to the truth is contained in, and conveyed by, the writing. These words, therefore, we ought to accept as brought into being by the Spirit of God for our instruction. They have supreme and final authority because they are from God himself. He is their real author.

In any attempt to appreciate the method of inspiration, or the way in which men specially chosen and prepared were moved to speak divinely-intended words, it becomes us, as finite creatures, to recognize, in humility and with reverent awe, that the ways of God are past finding out. Men still cannot fully tell how a human child is brought to birth, and a new independent personality created. In a very real sense a baby has human parents and is "born of woman." Yet in a deeper sense it is "of God." If this is true of ordinary child-birth, how very much more was it true of the birth of him who was "conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary." Also, it seems in harmony with the revealed truth of God to suggest that a similarity in principle prevails between the manner of the birth of the incarnate Word of God and the method of the composition of the written Word of God. Scripture was, so to speak, "conceived or inspired of the Holy Ghost, and thought and uttered by human prophets." Scripture is obviously the work of human writers; and yet it is still more the product and result of a special and supernatural activity of the Spirit. So we may rightly believe it to possess a corresponding perfection.

In thus considering the divine inspiration of Scripture, the difficulty for the human mind is to reconcile the perfection of the divine determination of the finished product with the true freedom and inevitable imperfections of the human writers. How can these two characteristics both apply to the production of Scripture? In principle this problem is only a particular form of the general difficulty always involved in any attempt to reconcile divine predestination and human freewill.

A significant scriptural illustration of the joint working of human freedom and divine predetermination is provided by the one utterance of Caiaphas which is said to be prophecy. To his fellow-members of the Jewish Sanhedrin he said, "It is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not" (John 11:50). In their immediate historical setting the meaning of these words is obvious enough. They were a counsel of political expediency. It was better, as Caiaphas saw it, to make Jesus a scapegoat and to sacrifice one life, than to risk a popular messianic uprising. For such an uprising could only call

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forth a drastic Roman intervention, and then the priestly aristocracy, to which Caiaphas belonged, would be the first to suffer. Such was the meaning intended by human freedom.

These words of Caiaphas were thought worthy of a place in the gospel record for an entirely different reason, however. The evangelist interpreted them prophetically, as words not from Caiaphas but from God. He saw the

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meaning intended by the controlling Spirit. To him the words were a revelation—a revelation all the more remarkable because it was so completely hidden from the mind of the man who uttered the words. "And this spake he," writes John (11:51), "not of himself" (note the words); "but being the high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation." For the high priest had a yearly office, which only he could fulfill, that is, on the day of atonement to make a propitiation for the sin of the people with the blood of sacrifice. And none other than he, fulfilling his own priestly office in a way far beyond his knowing, gave counsel to the Jews that in this year, the year when all types were fulfilled, it was expedient that a man, not an animal victim, die for the people. He designated, as it were, the sacrifice which was to take away sin and procure salvation. And so his words about the death of Jesus appear in the Scriptures not as an expression of the natural mind of Caiaphas, though on the lower level they are expressive of this, but as an expression of the mind of the Spirit, revealing the purpose of God thus to provide the sacrificial Lamb to take away the sin of God's people.

If, therefore, the inspiring Spirit can thus secure the utterance of divinely intended words from the mouth of an opponent of Christ, and words actually spoken by him in an entirely different sense from their divinely intended meaning, is it unreasonable to believe that all words of Scripture—many of them spoken and written by devout saints and uniquely illumined souls—are, all of them, to be received not chiefly nor exclusively as from man, but rather and primarily from God? It behooves us, therefore, submissively to receive them as an expression of the divine mind, and as intended to contribute toward our better understanding of God's ways.

Words of Prophets and Apostles Were God-given

If we are to do full justice to the witness of Scripture concerning its inspiration, another necessary and rewarding study pertains to the Biblical use of the term "prophet," and the Biblical indication of how true prophets function.

What distinguishes and characterizes the prophets of Scripture is that they were men unto whom "the word of God came." As simply stated by a writer a century ago, the Biblical term "prophet" constantly designates "a man whose mouth utters the words of God" (L. Gaussen, *Theophneustia; The Plenary Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures*, p. 62). "A prophet in the Bible is a man in whose mouth God puts the words which he wishes to be heard upon earth." To illustrate this meaning on the more human level, let us notice the description given in Scripture of Aaron's relation to Moses as his spokesman. It is recorded that God said to Moses, "Thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth.... And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people; and he shall be... to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt

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be to him instead of God" (Exod. 4:15, 16). Again later, God said, "See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet" (Exod. 7:1). Clearly, therefore, a prophet is one who speaks words which God puts into his mouth.

Next, let us observe, from the record in I Samuel 3, how Samuel was "established to be a prophet of the Lord," and how "all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew." The chapter dramatically records his first experience of the word of God coming to him. It was not a private message for his own soul, but a word about Eli that had to be publicly uttered. He was thereby called to become a prophet, and to speak forth the word which God had thus given to him. From then on this became his repeated experience. "The Lord revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord. And the word of Samuel came to all Israel."

It was through the burden and constraint of such an experience of being given God's words to proclaim that prophets said with conviction, and unmistakable awareness, "Thus saith the Lord." It was clear that thereby they meant, "These are not my ideas, but words from God himself, which I simply must declare." Such was the irresistible urge, and at times the almost intolerable burden, of being compelled to become the Lord's mouthpiece. "The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?" (Amos 3:8).

Here we cannot do better than let Scripture provide its own explicit and repeated witness through a selection of quotations. All indicate in different ways that the prophets' spoken and written words were God-given. When they had declared their message, it was characteristic of the prophets, for instance, to add "For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isa. 40:5; 58:14; Mic. 4:4). Jeremiah looks for the man "to whom the mouth of the Lord hath spoken, that he may declare it" (Jer. 9:12). Aaron is said to have spoken to the elders of the children of Israel "all the words which the Lord hath spoken unto Moses" (Exod. 4:30). David declares, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue" (II Sam. 23:2). The Lord is said to have "put a word in Balaam's mouth" (Num. 23:5). Similarly "the word of God came upon Shemaiah the man of God" (I Kings 12:22). And God said unto Jeremiah, "Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth" (Jer. 1:9); and to Ezekiel, "Thou shalt speak my words unto them" (Ezek. 2:7).

The unmistakable scriptural testimony, therefore, is that in their inspired utterances David and the prophets functioned as the mouth of the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Peter explicitly acknowledged this in the very early days of the Church. He appealed, for instance, to "this scripture... which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas" (Acts 1:16). He prayed to God as himself the author of Psalm 2, "who by the mouth of thy servant David hath said, Why did the heathen rage?" (Acts 4:25). Similarly Zacharias recalled what God "spoke by the mouth of his

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holy prophets" (Luke 1:70). So according to the language and witness of the Scriptures its prophecies may be said to be the words of God put into, or expressed through, the mouth of man.

The evidence about prophetic utterance thus far adduced concerns primarily the period and the production of the Old Testament Scriptures. The New Testament also, however, contains some

explicit witness to similar activity by the inspiring Spirit, giving to the apostles right utterance in the things of God for the edification of his Church. When Christ himself had warned his commissioned witnesses about the opposition they would meet, and about the ways in which they would need to answer charges brought against them, he had said, "But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you" (Matt. 10:19, 20). Christ also promised his apostles similar divine cooperation in the recording of his own work and teaching when he said of the Spirit, "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26). He similarly promised that the Spirit would guide them into all truth by speaking to them words from God and from Christ. For as Christ said, even the Spirit speaks "not of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak... for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you" (John 16:13, 14).

We find, too, in confirmation of this, that Paul later testifies that his apostolic insight and utterance are wholly Spirit-given. He says that the purposes of God in Christ toward men, and the things prepared for them, are wholly beyond the natural perception and imagination of men; but that God has revealed them to his apostles by his Spirit, and that they are, by the same Spirit, enabled to give right expression to them "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (I Cor. 2:9-13). So in New Testament and Old Testament alike, the very words of apostles and prophets were God-given.

In this connection it is also noteworthy that the men whom the Spirit of God thus used to utter his messages were conscious at times of the compulsion of both divine constraint and restraint. On the one hand, they had to declare all the God-given words; on the other, they could not add other words of their own choosing. This compulsion is particularly noticeable in the case of the prophets, who would have chosen to speak differently if they could; but they could not. So Balaam said, and repeated, "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the Lord, to do either good or bad of mine own mind; but what the Lord saith, that will I speak" (Num. 22:18; 24:13). Similarly Micaiah, when urged to speak good unto King Ahab and not evil, answered, "As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak" (I Kings 22:13, 14).

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The prophets' sense of compulsion to speak their God-given words, and these only, is significantly complemented in Scripture by a solemn injunction, and ultimately by a severe warning, to all who read God-given words, not to add to, or, take away from, what is written. So in Deuteronomy 4:2 we read, "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it"; and in Revelation 22:18, 19, in the section which by God's providential overruling closes the whole Canon of Scripture, we read, "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

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Scripture Quoted in Scripture as the Word of God Himself

When parts of Scripture already recorded are quoted in Scripture by later writers, it is noteworthy that the words thus quoted are sometimes introduced simply as words spoken by God, or as being the utterance of the Lord given through a human prophet. Significantly, too, this characteristic applies not only to those words which in the Old Testament are explicitly said to be utterances of God, but also to words from other parts of the Scripture as well.

So in the Gospel according to Matthew, for instance, Old Testament quotations are introduced which are said to have been "spoken by the Lord through the prophet" (RV), or "what the Lord had spoken by the prophet" (RSV) (cf. Matt. 1:22; 2:15). Also, our Lord himself, in his discussions with the Pharisees about divorce, according to Matthew 19:3-6, not only quoted Genesis 2:24 as an authoritative statement about marriage, but explicitly introduced it as a statement made by the Creator himself at the time of man's creation. "Have ye not read," said Jesus, "that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?" Furthermore, our Lord treated this statement as a decisive authoritative expression of the divine mind and purpose about marriage, sufficient in itself to justify the deduction that for men to separate those joined in marriage by divine appointment is wholly improper. Here, therefore, because divine in origin, words from these ancient Jewish writings are appealed to as determining for all time what is proper in the marriage relationship.

Later in Hebrews 1:7, 8, words about God, spoken in praise by the Psalmist, are quoted as spoken by God himself, and, therefore, as carrying decisive weight and authority. We read, "And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire" (a quotation from Psalm

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104:4). "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever" (a quotation from Psalm 45:6).

Not only are words from the Old Testament thus introduced as spoken by God himself, but sometimes in the New Testament they are used as words having present application, because the living unchanging God is speaking them now. They are his present words for today. So, II Corinthians 6:16 quotes words from Leviticus 26:2: "I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people," to indicate God's present purpose for his redeemed people, and to justify Paul's appeal to his readers that they separate themselves from idolatry and uncleanness.

Similarly, in Hebrews 3:7, words from Psalm 95:7, "Today if ye will hear his voice," are quoted, not as words spoken by the Psalmist long ago, but as words being spoken in the present by God the Spirit—"as the Holy Ghost saith."

Scripture, therefore—so Scripture itself bears witness—may be used as a means of present living communion between God and the individual soul. For what God has once said he may be regarded as still saying (except, of course, where his own fuller revelation has superseded what was previously given only in part or in figure); and responsive words which believers of old have thus been stirred to utter, believers today may rightly still make their own. For example, in

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Hebrews 13:5, 6, we read, "Be content with such things as ye have: for he bath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee [a quotation from Joshua 1:5]. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me [a quotation from Psalm 118:6]."

All this rich wealth of meaning and usage still to be found in Scripture is possible only because it can be treated and trusted as divinely provided for the permanent enrichment of God's people. It is, therefore, to be regarded and used as God-given, words issued on his authority, and therefore words of supreme and unchanging worth. Such, then, is Scripture's own witness to the character and consequence of its divine inspiration.

Divinely-Intended Purpose of Scripture

Since the direction of too much attention to the details of the process of the production of Scripture by human writers may only perplex us with questions which we cannot answer, it is well that we should recognize that any workman's activity is to be properly understood and appreciated only in the light of his aim and ultimate achievement. This means that, in seeking to estimate the full significance of the divine inspiration of the Bible, we should not primarily look at the materials, the men, and the method used in its composition, but consider rather the finished product as a whole in the light of its divinely intended purpose. For the completed revelation of Scripture, taken as a whole, is meant to serve ends which cannot be served by its

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constituent parts or contributing human authors and sources taken independently.

Modern historical and literary criticism, with its excess of devotion to analysis and source criticism, has largely been a movement in the wrong direction, which has often involved a real disregard both of the true source and of the proper purpose of the inspiration of Scripture.

It is important, therefore, that we recognize the twofold end of Scripture as a divinely inspired whole. This is, in the first place, Christological, and, in the second, soteriological. The purpose of Scripture is, first, to testify of Christ, "For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10). In the volume of the book it is written of him (cf. Heb. 10:7). The purpose of Scripture is, second, to make men "wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (II Tim. 3:15). Scripture has been inspired of God to promote the salvation of the world. The Scripture was written, and Christ died and rose again in fulfillment of its prophetic revelation, that repentance and remission of sins might be preached in Christ's name to all nations (cf. Luke 24:46, 47). The New Testament was added to the Old Testament in fulfillment of the promise that the Holy Spirit would guide the apostles into all the truth about the Christ (cf. John 16: 12-15). The full significance of the divine inspiration of Scripture can, therefore, be seen in its proper context only if it is seen as an essential part of the redeeming activity of God for the salvation of mankind.

Scripture serves this divine purpose by providing a true record of what God has done in history for man's salvation, and of those events which, under God's providence, have happened and been recorded for man's instruction. This record is by divine inspiration doubly true. On the one hand, it is historically reliable; it corresponds in its witness to what happened. On the other hand, it is sublime and perfect in its discernment and presentation of spiritual values. These two

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complementary senses in which the scriptural record is true are explicitly emphasized in John 19:35: "And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true: and he knoweth that he saith true" ("he knows that he tells the truth," RSV) , "that ye also may believe" (RV). Here John means that what he says is true or factually accurate, for he speaks as an eyewitness; and that his form of presentation is "ideal" (Gk. *alēthinos*), in harmony with, and an adequate expression of, the true meaning and value of the events thus recorded, a presentation intended to lead the reader to faith in the person and work of Christ.

For its proper use Scripture, which bears such witness to its own divine inspiration, demands from those readers who are enlightened by God's Spirit to share in this conviction about it the submission of unquestioning acceptance. For Scripture provides, not data to be critically sorted out for acceptance or rejection before we can know the truth, but data to be treated as true and trustworthy and of supreme worth, data within whose witness all

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pursuit of the truth must work, if such pursuit is to progress in proper understanding and enjoyment of all the truth which God has thus been pleased to reveal.

IV. FINAL PRACTICAL AUTHENTICATION

Scripture itself explicitly mentions two distinguishing characteristics by which words which claim to be divine in origin may be recognized as genuine, because corresponding in character to their author.

One test is the test of fulfillment (cf. Deuteronomy 18:21, 22; Matt. 5:18). For God does not move indecisively. He never speaks without completing his purpose (cf. Num. 23:19). Fulfillment of Scripture is, therefore, one of the proofs of its divine inspiration. So, when Scripture witnesses to its own fulfillment, or declares that what it says must yet find fulfillment, it confirms its own witness that Scripture is divinely inspired.

The other test of the divine origin of words is the test of unchanging endurance, in contrast to the words of men which have their day and become obsolete. For, in the last analysis, all words are like their authors in character. Since men are like the grass that withers, their words similarly cease to carry weight, and become a dead letter. But not so with God. He lives and abides. He never changes. He is the same yesterday and today and forever. So, when he speaks, his words correspond in character to their author. They, too, have enduring and abiding worth. Therefore, Scripture's unfailing survival and strength as a fresh, living, undeniable word of truth in every generation confirm its divine origin. In a world of transient glory, in the midst of an insecure and impermanent created order, the scriptural Word, and the scriptural Word alone, not only continues to confront each generation anew, but increasingly vindicates its truth in fulfillment. "Heaven and earth shall pass away," said Jesus, "but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35) "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth for ever" (I Pet. 1:24, 25).

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