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LITERATURE

## 1. MEANING OF TERMS

The word "inspire" and its derivatives seem to have come into Middle Eng. from the Fr., and have been employed from the first (early in the 14th cent.) in a considerable number of significations, physical and metaphorical, secular and religious. The derivatives have been multiplied and their applications extended during the procession of the years, until they have acquired a very wide and varied use. Underlying all their use, however is the constant implication of an influence from without, producing in its object movements and effects beyond its native or at least its ordinary powers. The noun "inspiration," although already in use in the 14th cent., seems not to occur in any but a theological sense until late in the 16th cent. The specifically theological sense of all these terms is governed, of course, by their usage in Lat theology; and this rests ultimately on their employment in the Lat Bible. In the Vulg Lat Bible the vb. *inspiro* (Gen 2 7; Wisd 15 11; Ecclus 4 12; 2 Tim 3 16; 2 Pet 1 21) and the noun *inspiratio* (2 S 22 16; Job 32 8; Ps 18 15; Acts 17 25) both occur 4 or 5 t in somewhat diverse applications. In the development of a theological nomenclature, however, they have acquired (along with other less frequent applications) a technical sense with reference to the Bib. writers or the Bib. books. The Bib. books are called inspired as the Divinely determined products of inspired men; the Bib. writers are called inspired as breathed into by the Holy Spirit, so that the product of their activities transcends human powers and becomes Divinely authoritative. Inspiration is, therefore, usually defined as a supernatural influence exerted on the sacred writers by the Spirit of God, by virtue of which their writings are given Divine trustworthiness.

## 2. OCCURRENCES IN THE BIBLE

Meanwhile, for Eng.-speaking men, these terms have virtually ceased to be Bib. terms. They naturally passed from the Lat Vulg into the Eng. VSS made from it (most fully into the Rheims-Douay: Job **32** 8; Wisd **15** 11; Eccus **4** 12; 2 Tim **3** 16; 2 Pet **1** 21). But in the development of the Eng. Bible they have found ever-decreasing place. In the EV of the Apoc (both AV and RV) "inspired" is retained in Wisd **15** 11; but in the canonical books the nominal form alone occurs in AV and that only twice: Job **32** 8, "But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding"; and 2 Tim **3** 16, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." RV removes the former of these instances, substituting "breath" for "inspiration"; and alters the latter so as to read: "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness," with a marginal alternative in the form of, "Every scripture is inspired of God and profitable," etc. The word "inspiration" thus disappears from the Eng. Bible, and the word "inspired" is left in it only once, and then, let it be added, by a distinct and even misleading mistranslation.

For the Gr word in this passage—*θεόπνευστος*, *theópneustos*—very distinctly does not mean "inspired of God." This phrase is rather the rendering of the Lat, *divinitus inspirata*, restored from the Wyclif ("Al Scripture of God ynspyrid is...") and Rhemish ("All Scripture inspired of God is...") VSS of the Vulg. The Gr word does not even mean, as AV tr<sup>s</sup> it, "given by inspiration of God," although that rendering (inherited from Tindale: "All Scripture given by inspiration of God is...") and its successors; cf Geneva: "The

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whole Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is...") has at least to say for itself that it is a somewhat clumsy, perhaps, but not misleading, paraphrase of the Gr term in the theological language of the day. The Gr term has, however, nothing to say of inspiring or of inspiration: it speaks only of a "spiring" or "spiration." What it says of Scripture is, not that it is "breathed into by God" or is the product of the Divine "inbreathing" into its human authors, but that it is breathed out by God, "God-breathed," the product of the creative breath of God. In a word, what is declared by this fundamental passage is simply that the Scriptures are a Divine product, without any indication of how God has operated in producing them. No term could have been chosen, however, which would have more emphatically asserted the Divine production of Scripture than that which is here employed. The "breath of God" is in Scripture just the symbol of His almighty power, the bearer of His creative word. "By the word of Jeh," we read in the significant parallel of Ps **33** 6, "were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth." And it is particularly where the operations of God are energetic that this term (whether רִיחַ, *rūḥ*, or נְשָׁמָה, *neshāmāh*) is employed to designate them—God's breath is the irresistible outflow of His power. When Paul declares, then, that "every scripture," or "all scripture" is the product of the Divine 'breath, "is God-breathed," he asserts with as much energy as he could employ that Scripture is the product of a specifically Divine operation.

## 3. IMPORTANT PASSAGES

(1) 2 Tim **3** 16: In the passage in which Paul makes this energetic assertion of the Divine origin of Scripture he is engaged in explaining the greatness of the advantages which Timothy

had enjoyed for learning the saving truth of God. He had had good teachers; and from his very infancy he had been, by his knowledge of the Scriptures, made wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. The expression, "sacred writings," here employed (ver 15), is a technical one, not found elsewhere in the NT, it is true, but occurring currently in Philo and Jos to designate that body of authoritative books which constituted the Jewish "Law." It appears here anarthrously because it is set in contrast with the oral teaching which Timothy had enjoyed, as something still better: he had not only had good instructors, but also always "an open Bible," as we should say, in his hand. To enhance yet further the great advantage of the possession of these Sacred Scriptures the apostle adds now a sentence throwing their nature strongly up to view. They are of Divine origin and therefore of the highest value for all holy purposes.

There is room for some difference of opinion as to the exact construction of this declaration. Shall we render "Every Scripture" or "All Scripture" Shall we render "Every [or all] Scripture is God-breathed and [therefore] profitable," or "Every [or all] Scripture, being God-breathed, is as well profitable"? No doubt both questions are interesting, but for the main matter now engaging our attention they are both indifferent. Whether Paul, looking back at the Sacred Scriptures he had just mentioned, makes the assertion he is about to add, of them distributively, of all their parts, or collectively, of their entire mass, is of no moment: to say that every part of these Sacred Scriptures is God-breathed and to say that the whole of these Sacred Scriptures is God-breathed, is, for the main matter, all one. Nor is the difference great between saying that they are in all their parts, or in their whole extent, God-breathed and therefore profitable, and saying that they are in all their parts, or in their whole extent, because God-breathed as well profitable. In both cases these Sacred Scriptures are declared to owe their value to their Divine origin; and in both cases this their Divine origin is energetically asserted of their entire fabric. On the whole, the preferable construction would seem to be, "Every Scripture, seeing that it is God-breathed, is as well profitable."

In that case, what the apostle asserts is that the Sacred Scriptures, in their every several passage—for it is just "passage of Scripture" which "Scripture" in this distributive use of it signifies—is the product of the creative breath of God, and, because of this its Divine origination, is of supreme value for all holy purposes.

It is to be observed that the apostle does not stop here to tell us either what particular books enter into the collection which he calls Sacred Scriptures, or by what precise operations God has produced them. Neither of these subjects entered into the matter he had at the moment in hand. It was the value of the Scriptures, and the source of that value in their Divine origin, which he required at the moment to assert; and these things he asserts, leaving to other occasions any further facts concerning them which it might be well to emphasize. It is also to be observed that the apostle does not tell us here everything for which the Scriptures are made valuable by their Divine origination. He speaks simply to the point immediately in hand, and reminds Timothy of the value which these Scriptures by virtue of their Divine origin, have for the "man of God." Their spiritual power, as God-breathed, is all that he had occasion here to advert to. Whatever other qualities may accrue to them from their Divine origin, he leaves to other occasions to speak of.

(2) 2 Pet 1 19-21: What Paul tells us here about the Divine origin of the Scriptures is enforced and extended by a striking passage in 2 Pet (1 19-21). Peter is assuring his readers that what had been made known to them of "the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" did not rest on "cunningly devised fables." He offers them the testimony of eyewitnesses of Christ's glory. And then he intimates that they have better testimony than even that of eyewitnesses.

"We have," says he, "the prophetic word" (EV, unhappily, "the word of prophecy"): and this, he says, is "more sure," and therefore should certainly be heeded. He refers, of course, to the Scriptures. Of what other "prophetic word" could he, over against the testimony of the eyewitnesses of Christ's "excellent glory" (AV) say that "we have" it, that is, it is in our hands? And he proceeds at once to speak of it plainly as "Scriptural prophecy." You do well, he says, to pay heed to the prophetic word, because we know this first, that "every prophecy of scripture..." It admits of more question, however, whether by this phrase he means the whole of Scripture, designated according to its character, as prophetic, that is, of Divine origin; or only that portion of Scripture which we discriminate as particularly prophetic, the immediate revelations contained in Scripture. The former is the more likely view, inasmuch as the entirety of Scripture is elsewhere conceived and spoken of as prophetic. In that case, what Peter has to say of this "every prophecy of scripture"—the exact equivalent, it will be observed, in this case of Paul's "every scripture" (2 Tim 3 16)—applies to the whole of Scripture in all its parts. What he says of it is that it does not come "of private interpretation"; that is, it is not the result of human investigation into the nature of things, the product of its writers' own thinking. This is as much as to say it is of Divine gift. Accordingly, he proceeds at once to make this plain in a supporting clause which contains both the negative and the positive declaration: "For no prophecy ever came [m "was brought"] by the will of man, but it was as borne by the Holy Spirit that men spoke from God." In this singularly precise and pregnant statement there are several things which require to be carefully observed. There is, first of all, the emphatic denial that prophecy—that is to say, on the hypothesis upon which we are working, Scripture—owes its origin to human initiative: "No prophecy ever was brought—'came' is the word used in the EV text, with 'was brought' in RVm—by the will of man." Then, there is the equally emphatic assertion that its source lies in God: it was spoken by men, indeed, but the men who spoke it "spake from God." And a remarkable clause is here inserted, and thrown forward in the sentence that stress may fall

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on it, which tells us how it could be that men, in speaking, should speak not from themselves, but from God: it was "as borne"—it is the same word which was rendered "was brought" above, and might possibly be rendered "brought" here—"by the Holy Spirit" that they spoke. Speaking thus under the determining influence of the Holy Spirit, the things they spoke were not from themselves, but from God.

Here is as direct an assertion of the Divine origin of Scripture as that of 2 Tim 3 16. But there is more here than a simple assertion of the Divine origin of Scripture. We are advanced a somewhat in our understanding of how God has produced the Scriptures. It was through the instrumentality of men who "spake from him." More specifically, it was through an operation of the Holy Ghost on these men which is described as "bearing" them. The term here used is a very specific one. It is not to be confounded with guiding, or directing, or controlling, or even leading in the full sense of that word. It goes beyond all such terms, in assigning the effect produced specifically to the active agent. What is "borne" is taken up by the "bearer," and conveyed by the "bearer's" power, not its own, to the "bearer's" goal, not its own. The men who spoke from God are here declared, therefore, to have been taken up by the Holy Spirit and brought by His power to the goal of His choosing. The things which they spoke under this operation of the Spirit were therefore His things, not theirs. And that is the reason which is assigned why "the prophetic word" is so sure. Though spoken through the instrumentality of men, it is, by virtue of the fact that these men spoke "as borne by the Holy Spirit," an immediately Divine word. It will be observed that the proximate stress is laid here, not on the

spiritual value of Scripture (though that, too, is seen in the background), but on the Divine trustworthiness of Scripture. Because this is the way every prophecy of Scripture "has been brought," it affords a more sure basis of confidence than even the testimony of human eyewitnesses. Of course, if we do not understand by "the prophetic word" here the entirety of Scripture described, according to its character, as revelation, but only that element in Scripture which we call specifically prophecy, then it is directly only of that element in Scripture that these great declarations are made. In any event, however, they are made of the prophetic element in Scripture as written, which was the only form in which the readers of this Ep. possessed it, and which is the thing specifically intimated in the phrase "every prophecy of *scripture*." These great declarations are made, therefore, at least of large tracts of Scripture; and if the entirety of Scripture is intended by the phrase "the prophetic word," they are made of the whole of Scripture.

(3) Jn **10** 34 f: How far the supreme trustworthiness of Scripture, thus asserted, extends may be conveyed to us by a passage in one of Our Lord's discourses recorded by John (Jn **10** 34-35). The Jews, offended by Jesus' "making himself God," were in the act to stone Him, when He defended Himself thus: "Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came (and the scripture cannot be broken), say ye of him, whom the Father sanctified [m "consecrated"] and sent unto the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" It may be thought that this defence is inadequate. It certainly is incomplete: Jesus made Himself God (Jn **10** 33) in a far higher sense than that in which "Ye are gods" was said of those "unto whom the word of God came": He had just declared in unmistakable terms, "I and the Father are one." But it was quite sufficient for the immediate end in view—to repel the technical charge of blasphemy based on His making Himself God: it is not blasphemy to call one God in any sense in which he may fitly receive that designation; and certainly if it is not blasphemy to call such men as those spoken of in the passage of Scripture adduced gods, because of their official functions, it cannot be blasphemy to call Him God whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world. The point for us to note, however, is merely that Jesus' defence takes the form of an appeal to Scripture; and it is important to observe how He makes this appeal. In the first place, He adduces the Scriptures as law: "Is it not written in your law?" He demands. The passage of Scripture which He adduces is not written in that portion of Scripture which was more specifically called "the Law," that is to say, the Pent; nor in any portion of Scripture of formally legal contents. It is written in the Book of Pss; and in a particular psalm which is as far as possible from presenting the external characteristics of legal enactment (Ps **82** 6). When Jesus adduces this passage, then, as written in the "law" of the Jews, He does it, not because it stands in this psalm, but because it is a part of Scripture at large. In other words, He here ascribes legal authority to the entirety of Scripture, in accordance with a conception common enough among the Jews (cf Jn **12** 34), and finding expression in the NT occasionally, both on the lips of Jesus Himself, and in the writings of the apostles. Thus, on a later occasion (Jn **15** 25), Jesus declares that it is written in the "law" of the Jews, "They hated me without a cause," a clause found in Ps **36** 19. And Paul assigns passages both from the Pss and from Isa to "the Law" (1 Cor **14** 21; Rom **3** 19), and can write such a sentence as this (Gal **4** 21 f): "Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written...." quoting from the narrative of Gen. We have seen that the entirety of Scripture was conceived as "prophecy"; we now see that the entirety of Scripture was also conceived as "law": these three terms, the law, prophecy, Scripture, were indeed, materially, strict synonyms, as our present passage itself advises us, by varying the formula of adduction in contiguous verses from "law" to "scripture." And what is thus implied in the manner in which Scripture is adduced, is immediately afterward spoken out in the most explicit language, because it forms an essential

element in Our Lord's defence. It might have been enough to say simply, "Is it not written in your law?" But Our Lord, determined to drive His appeal to Scripture home, sharpens the point to the utmost by adding with the highest emphasis: "and the scripture cannot be broken." This is the reason why it is worth while to appeal to what is "written in the law," because "the scripture cannot be broken." The word "broken" here is the common one for breaking the law, or the Sabbath, or the like (Jn 5 18; 7 23; Mt 5 19), and the meaning of the declaration is that it is impossible for the Scripture to be annulled, its authority to be withstood, or denied. The movement of thought is to the effect that, because it is impossible for the Scripture—the term is perfectly general and witnesses to the unitary character of Scripture (it is all, for the purpose in hand, of a piece)—to be withstood, therefore this particular Scripture which is cited must be taken as of irrefragable authority. What we have here is, therefore, the strongest possible assertion of the indefectible authority of Scripture; precisely what is true of Scripture is that it "cannot be broken." Now, what is the particular thing in Scripture, for the confirmation of which the indefectible authority of Scripture is thus invoked? It is one of its most casual clauses—more than that,

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the very form of its expression in one of its most casual clauses. This means, of course, that in the Saviour's view the indefectible authority of Scripture attaches to the very form of expression of its most casual clauses. It belongs to Scripture through and through, down to its most minute particulars, that it is of indefectible authority.

It is sometimes suggested, it is true, that Our Lord's argument here is an *argumentum ad hominem*, and that His words, therefore, express not His own view of the authority of Scripture, but that of His Jewish opponents. It will scarcely be denied that there is a vein of satire running through Our Lord's defence: that the Jews so readily allowed that corrupt judges might properly be called "gods," but could not endure that He whom the Father had consecrated and sent into the world should call Himself Son of God, was a somewhat pungent fact to throw up into such a high light. But the argument from Scripture is not *ad hominem* but *e concessu*; Scripture was common ground with Jesus and His opponents. If proof were needed for so obvious a fact, it would be supplied by the circumstance that this is not an isolated but a representative passage. The conception of Scripture thrown up into such clear view here supplies the ground of all Jesus' appeals to Scripture, and of all the appeals of the NT writers as well. Everywhere, to Him and to them alike, an appeal to Scripture is an appeal to an indefectible authority whose determination is final; both He and they make their appeal indifferently to every part of Scripture, to every element in Scripture, to its most incidental clauses as well as to its most fundamental principles, and to the very form of its expression. This attitude toward Scripture as an authoritative document is, indeed, already intimated by their constant designation of it by the name of Scripture, the Scriptures, that is "the Document," by way of eminence; and by their customary citation of it with the simple formula, "It is written." What is written in this document admits so little of questioning that its authoritativeness required no asserting, but might safely be taken for granted. Both modes of expression belong to the constantly illustrated habitudes of Our Lord's speech. The first words He is recorded as uttering after His manifestation to Israel were an appeal to the unquestionable authority of Scripture; to Satan's temptations He opposed no other weapon than the final "It is written"! (Mt 4 4.7.10; Lk 4 4.8). And among the last words which He spoke to His disciples before He was received up was a rebuke to them for not understanding that all things "which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and psalms" concerning Him—that is (ver 45) in the entire "Scriptures"—"must needs be" (very emphatic)

"fulfilled" (Lk 24 44). "Thus it is written," says He (ver 46), as rendering all doubt absurd. For, as He had explained earlier upon the same day (Lk 24 25 ff), it argues only that one is "foolish and slow of heart" if he does not "believe in" (if his faith does not rest securely on, as on a firm foundation) "all" (without limit of subject-matter here) "that the prophets" (explained in ver 27 as equivalent to "all the scriptures") "have spoken."

#### **4. NECESSARY FULFILLMENT OF SCRIPTURE**

The necessity of the fulfilment of all that is written in Scripture, which is so strongly asserted in these last instructions to His disciples, is frequently adverted to by Our Lord. He repeatedly explains of occurrences of occasionally happening that they have come to pass "that the scripture might be fulfilled" (Mk 14 49; Jn 13 18; 17 12; cf 12 14; Mk 9 12.13). On the basis of Scriptural declarations, therefore, He announces with confidence that given events will certainly occur: "All ye shall be offended [lit. "scandalized"] in me this night: for it is written...." (Mt 26 31; Mk 14 27; cf Lk 20 17). Although holding at His command ample means of escape, He bows before on-coming calamities, for, He asks, how otherwise "should the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" (Mt 26 54). It is not merely the two disciples with whom He talked on the way to Emmaus (Lk 24 25) whom He rebukes for not trusting themselves more perfectly to the teaching of Scripture. "Ye search the scriptures," he says to the Jews, in the classical passage (Jn 5 39), "because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me; and ye will not come to me, that ye may have life!" These words surely were spoken more in sorrow than in scorn: there is no blame implied either for searching the Scriptures or for thinking that eternal life is to be found in Scripture; approval rather. What the Jews are blamed for is that they read with a veil lying upon their hearts which He would fain take away (2 Cor 3 15 f). "Ye search the scriptures"—that is right: and "even you" (emphatic) "think to have eternal life in them"—that is right, too. But "it is these very Scriptures" (very emphatic) "which are bearing witness" (continuous process) "of me; and" (here is the marvel!) "ye will not come to me and have life!"—that you may, that is, reach the very end you have so properly in view in searching the Scriptures. Their failure is due, not to the Scriptures but to themselves, who read the Scriptures to such little purpose.

#### **5. CHRIST'S TESTIMONY THAT GOD IS AUTHOR**

Quite similarly Our Lord often finds occasion to express wonder at the little effect to which Scripture had been read, not because it had been looked into too curiously, but because it had not been looked into earnestly enough, with sufficiently simple and robust trust in its every declaration. "Have ye not read even this scripture?" He demands, as He adduces Ps 118 to show that the rejection of the Messiah was already intimated in Scripture (Mk 12 10; Mt 21 42 varies the expression to the equivalent: "Did ye never read in the scriptures?"). And when the indignant Jews came to Him complaining of the Hosannas with which the children in the Temple were acclaiming Him, and demanding, "Hearest thou what these are saying?" He met them (Mt 21 16) merely with, "Yea: did ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou has perfected praise?" The underlying thought of these passages is spoken out when He intimates that the source of all error in Divine things is just ignorance of the Scriptures: "Ye do err," He declares to His questioners, on an important occasion, "not knowing the scriptures" (Mt 22 29); or, as it is put, perhaps more forcibly, in interrogative form, in its II in another Gospel: "Is it not for this cause that ye err, that ye know not the scriptures?" (Mk 12 24). Clearly, he who rightly knows the Scriptures does not err. The confidence with which Jesus rested on Scripture, in its every declaration, is further illustrated

in a passage like Mt **19** 4. Certain Pharisees had come to Him with a question on divorce and He met them thus: "Have ye not read, that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh? What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." The point to be noted is the explicit reference of Gen **2** 24 to God as its author: "He who made them.... said"; "what therefore God hath joined together." Yet this passage does not give us a saying of God's

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recorded in Scripture, but just the word of Scripture itself, and can be treated as a declaration of God's only on the hypothesis that all Scripture is a declaration of God's. The II in Mk (**10** 5 ff) just as truly, though not as explicitly, assigns the passage to God as its author, citing it as authoritative law and speaking of its enactment as an act of God's. And it is interesting to observe in passing that Paul, having occasion to quote the same passage (1 Cor **6** 16), also explicitly quotes it as a Divine word: "For, The twain, saith he, shall become one flesh"—the "he" here, in accordance with a usage to be noted later, meaning just "God."

Thus clear is it that Jesus' occasional adduction of Scripture as an authoritative document rests on an ascription of it to God as its author. His testimony is that whatever stands written in Scripture is a word of God. Nor can we evacuate this testimony of its force on the plea that it represents Jesus only in the days of His flesh, when He may be supposed to have reflected merely the opinions of His day and generation. The view of Scripture He announces was, no doubt, the view of His day and generation as well as His own view. But there is no reason to doubt that it was held by Him, not because it was the current view, but because, in His Divine-human knowledge, He knew it to be true; for, even in His humiliation, He is the faithful and true witness. And in any event we should bear in mind that this was the view of the resurrected as well as of the humiliated Christ. It was after He had suffered and had risen again in the power of His Divine life that He pronounced those foolish and slow of heart who do not believe all that stands written in all the Scriptures (Lk **24** 25); and that He laid down the simple "Thus it is written" as the sufficient ground of confident belief (Lk **24** 46). Nor can we explain away Jesus' testimony to the Divine trustworthiness of Scripture by interpreting it as not His own, but that of His followers, placed on His lips in their reports of His words. Not only is it too constant, minute, intimate and in part incidental, and therefore, as it were, hidden, to admit of this interpretation; but it so pervades all our channels of information concerning Jesus' teaching as to make it certain that it comes actually from Him. It belongs not only to the Jesus of our evangelical records but as well to the Jesus of the earlier sources which underlie our evangelical records, as anyone may assure himself by observing the instances in which Jesus adduces the Scriptures as Divinely authoritative that are recorded in more than one of the Gospels (e.g. "It is written," Mt **4** 4.7.10 [Lk **4** 4.8.10]; Mt **11** 10; [Lk **7** 27]; Mt **21** 13 [Lk **19** 46; Mk **11** 17]; Mt **26** 31 [Mk **14** 21]; "the scripture" or "the scriptures," Mt **19** 4 [Mk **10** 9]; Mt **21** 42 [Mk **12** 10; Lk **20** 17]; Mt **22** 29 [Mk **12** 24; Lk **20** 37]; Mt **26** 56 [Mk **14** 49; Lk **24** 44]). These passages alone would suffice to make clear to us the testimony of Jesus to Scripture as in all its parts and declarations Divinely authoritative.

## **6. SIMILAR WITNESS OF APOSTLES**

The attempt to attribute the testimony of Jesus to His followers has in its favor only the undeniable fact that the testimony of the writers of the NT is to precisely the same effect as His. They, too, cursorily speak of Scripture by that pregnant name and adduce it with the

simple "It is written," with the implication that whatever stands written in it is Divinely authoritative. As Jesus' official life begins with this "It is written" (Mt 4 4), so the evangelical proclamation begins with an "Even as it is written" (Mk 1 2); and as Jesus sought the justification of His work in a solemn "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day" (Lk 24 46 ff), so the apostles solemnly justified the Gospel which they preached, detail after detail, by appeal to the Scriptures, "That Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures" and "That he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Cor 15 3.4; cf Acts 8 35; 17 3; 26 22, and also Rom 1 17; 3 4.10; 4 17; 11 26; 14 11; 1 Cor 1 19; 2 9; 3 19; 15 45; Gal 3 10.13; 4 22.27). Wherever they carried the gospel it was as a gospel resting on Scripture that they proclaimed it (Acts 17 2; 18 24.28); and they encouraged themselves to test its truth by the Scriptures (Acts 17 11). The holiness of life they inculcated, they based on Scriptural requirement (1 Pet 1 16), and they commended the royal law of love which they taught by Scriptural sanction (Jas 2 8). Every detail of duty was supported by them by an appeal to Scripture (Acts 23 5; Rom 12 19). The circumstances of their lives and the events occasionally occurring about them are referred to Scripture for their significance (Rom 2 26; 8 36; 9 33; 11 8; 15 9.21; 2 Cor 4 13). As Our Lord declared that whatever was written in Scripture must needs be fulfilled (Mt 26 54; Lk 22 37; 24 44), so His followers explained one of the most startling facts which had occurred in their experience by pointing out that "it was needful that the scripture should be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spake before by the mouth of David" (Acts 1 16). Here the ground of this constant appeal to Scripture, so that it is enough that a thing "is contained in scripture" (1 Pet 2 6) for it to be of indefectible authority, is plainly enough declared: Scripture must needs be fulfilled, for what is contained in it is the declaration of the Holy Ghost through the human author. What Scripture says, God says; and accordingly we read such remarkable declarations as these: "For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, For this very purpose did I raise thee up" (Rom 9 17); "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand unto Abraham, .... In thee shall all the nations be blessed" (Gal 3 8). These are not instances of simple personification of Scripture, which is itself a sufficiently remarkable usage (Mk 15 28; Jn 7 38.42; 19 37; Rom 4 3; 10 11; 11 2; Gal 4 30; 1 Tim 5 18; Jas 2 23; 4 5 f), vocal with the conviction expressed by James (4 5) that Scripture cannot speak in vain. They indicate a certain confusion in current speech between "Scripture" and "God," the outgrowth of a deep-seated conviction that the word of Scripture is the word of God. It was not "Scripture" that spoke to Pharaoh, or gave his great promise to Abraham, but God. But "Scripture" and "God" lay so close together in the minds of the writers of the NT that they could naturally speak of "Scripture" doing what Scripture records God as doing. It was, however, even more natural to them to speak casually of God saying what the Scriptures say; and accordingly we meet with forms of speech such as these: "Wherefore, even as the Holy Spirit saith, To-day if ye shall hear His voice," etc (He 3 7, quoting Ps 95 7); "Thou art God.... who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage," etc (Acts 4 25 AV, quoting Ps 2 1); "He that raised him from the dead.... hath spoken on this wise, I will give you.... because he saith also in another [place]...." (Acts 13 34, quoting Isa 55 3 and Ps 16 10), and the like. The words put into God's mouth in each case are not words of God recorded in the Scriptures, but just Scripture words in themselves. When we take the two classes of passages together, in the one of which the Scriptures are spoken of as God, while in the other God is spoken of as if He were the Scriptures, we may perceive how close

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the identification of the two was in the minds of the writers of the NT.

## 7. IDENTIFICATION OF GOD AND SCRIPTURES

This identification is strikingly observable in certain catenae of quotations, in which there are brought together a number of passages of Scripture closely connected with one another. The first chapter of the Ep. to the He supplies an example. We may begin with ver 5: "For unto which of the angels said he"—the subject being necessarily "God"—"at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?"—the citation being from Ps 2 7 and very appropriate in the mouth of God—"and again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?"—from 2 S 7 14, again a declaration of God's own—"And when he again bringeth in the firstborn into the world he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him"—from Dt 32 43, LXX, or Ps 97 7, in neither of which is God the speaker—"And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire"—from Ps 104 4, where again God is not the speaker but is spoken of in the third person—"but of the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, etc"—from Ps 45 6.7 where again God is not the speaker, but is addressed—"And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning," etc—from Ps 102 25-27, where again God is not the speaker but is addressed—"But of which of the angels hath he said at any time, Sit thou on my right hand?" etc —from Ps 110 1, in which God is the speaker. Here we have passages in which God is the speaker and passages in which God is not the speaker, but is addressed or spoken of, indiscriminately assigned to God, because they all have it in common that they are words of Scripture, and as words of Scripture are words of God. Similarly in Rom 15 9 ff we have a series of citations the first of which is introduced by "as it is written," and the next two by "again he saith," and "again," and the last by "and again, Isaiah saith," the first being from Ps 18 49; the second from Dt 32 43; the third from Ps 117 1; and the last from Isa 11 10. Only the last (the only one here assigned to the human author) is a word of God in the text of the OT.

## 8. "ORACLES OF GOD"

This view of the Scriptures as a compact mass of words of God occasioned the formation of a designation for them by which their character was explicitly expressed. This designation is "the sacred oracles," "the oracles of God." It occurs with extraordinary frequency in Philo, who very commonly refers to Scripture as "the sacred oracles" and cites its several passages as each an "oracle." Sharing, as they do, Philo's conception of the Scriptures as, in all their parts, a word of God, the NT writers naturally also speak of them under this designation. The classical passage is Rom 3 2 (cf He 5 12; Acts 7 38). Here Paul begins an enumeration of the advantages which belonged to the chosen people above other nations; and, after declaring these advantages to have been great and numerous, he places first among them all their possession of the Scriptures: "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what is the profit of circumcision? Much every way: first of all, that they were intrusted with the oracles of God." That by "the oracles of God" here are meant just the Holy Scriptures in their entirety, conceived as a direct Divine revelation, and not any portions of them, or elements in them more esp. thought of as revelatory, is perfectly clear from the wide contemporary use of this designation in this sense by Philo, and is put beyond question by the presence in the NT of habitudes of speech which rest on and grow out of the conception of Scripture embodied in this term. From the point of view of this designation, Scripture is thought of as the living voice of God speaking in all its parts directly to the reader; and, accordingly, it is cited by some such formula as "it is said," and this mode of citing Scripture duly occurs as an alternative to "it is written" (Lk 4 12, replacing "it is written" in Mt; He 3 15; cf Rom 4 18). It is due also to this point of view that Scripture is cited, not as what God or the Holy Spirit

“said,” but what He “says,” the present tense emphasizing the living voice of God speaking in Scriptures to the individual soul (He **3** 7; Acts **13** 35; He **1** 7.8.10; Rom **15** 10). And esp. there is due to it the peculiar usage by which Scripture is cited by the simple “saith,” without expressed subject, the subject being too well understood, when Scripture is adduced, to require stating; for who could be the speaker of the words of Scripture but God only (Rom **15** 10; 1 Cor **6** 16; 2 Cor **6** 2; Gal **3** 16; Eph **4** 8; **5** 14)? The analogies of this pregnant subjectless “saith” are very widespread. It was with it that the ancient Pythagoreans and Platonists and the mediaeval Aristotelians adduced each their master’s teaching; it was with it that, in certain circles, the judgments of Hadrian’s great jurist Salvius Julianus were cited; African stylists were even accustomed to refer by it to Sallust, their great model. There is a tendency, cropping out occasionally, in the OT, to omit the name of God as superfluous, when He, as the great logical subject always in mind, would be easily understood (cf Job **20** 23; **21** 17; Ps **114** 2; Lam **4** 22). So, too, when the NT writers quoted Scripture there was no need to say whose word it was: that lay beyond question in every mind. This usage, accordingly, is a specially striking intimation of the vivid sense which the NT writers had of the Divine origin of the Scriptures, and means that in citing them they were acutely conscious that they were citing immediate words of God. How completely the Scriptures were to them just the word of God may be illustrated by a passage like Gal **3** 16: “He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.’ We have seen Our Lord hanging an argument on the very words of Scripture (Jn **10** 34); elsewhere His reasoning depends on the particular tense (Mt **22** 32) or word (Mt **22** 43) used in Scripture. Here Paul’s argument rests similarly on a grammatical form. No doubt it is the grammatical form of the word which God is recorded as having spoken to Abraham that is in question. But Paul knows what grammatical form God employed in speaking to Abraham only as the Scriptures have transmitted it to him; and, as we have seen, in citing the words of God and the words of Scripture he was not accustomed to make any distinction between them. It is probably the Scriptural word as a Scriptural word, therefore, which he has here in mind: though, of course, it is possible that what he here witnesses to is rather the detailed trustworthiness of the Scriptural record than its direct divinity—if we can separate two things which apparently were not separated in Paul’s mind. This much we can at least say without straining, that the designation of Scripture as “scripture” and its citation by the formula, “It is written,” attest primarily its indefectible authority; the designation of it as “oracles” and the adduction of it by the formula, “It says,” attest primarily its immediate divinity. Its authority rests on its divinity and its divinity expresses itself in its trustworthiness; and the NT writers in all their use of it treat it as what they declare it to be—a God-breathed document, which, because God-breathed, is through and through trustworthy in all its assertions, authoritative in all its declarations, and down to its last particular, the very word of God, His “oracles.”

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## **9. HUMAN ELEMENT IN SCRIPTURE**

That the Scriptures are throughout a Divine book, created by the Divine energy and speaking in their every part with Divine authority directly to the heart of the readers, is the fundamental fact concerning them which is witnessed by Christ and the sacred writers to whom we owe the NT. But the strength and constancy with which they bear witness to this primary fact do not prevent their recognizing by the side of it that the Scriptures have come into being by the agency of men. It would be inexact to say that they recognize a human element in Scripture: they do not parcel Scripture out, assigning portions of it, or elements in it, respectively to God and man. In their view the whole of Scripture in all its parts and in all its elements, down to

the least minutiae, in form of expression as well as in substance of teaching, is from God; but the whole of it has been given by God through the instrumentality of men. There is, therefore, in their view, not, indeed, a human element or ingredient in Scripture, and much less human divisions or sections of Scripture, but a human side or aspect to Scripture; and they do not fail to give full recognition to this human side or aspect. In one of the primary passages which has already been before us, their conception is given, if somewhat broad and very succinct, yet clear expression. No 'prophecy,' Peter tells us (2 Pet **1** 21), 'ever came by the will of man; *but as borne by the Holy Ghost*, men spake from God.' Here the whole initiative is assigned to God, and such complete control of the human agents that the product is truly God's work. The men who speak in this "prophecy of scripture" speak not of themselves or out of themselves, but from "God": they speak only as they are "borne by the Holy Ghost." But it is they, after all, who speak. Scripture is the product of man, but only of man speaking from God and under such a control of the Holy Spirit as that in their speaking they are "borne" by Him. The conception obviously is that the Scriptures have been given by the instrumentality of men; and this conception finds repeated incidental expression throughout the NT.

It is this conception, for example, which is expressed when Our Lord, quoting Ps **110**, declares of its words that "David himself said in the Holy Spirit" (Mk **12** 36). There is a certain emphasis here on the words being David's own words, which is due to the requirements of the argument Our Lord was conducting, but which none the less sincerely represents Our Lord's conception of their origin. They are David's own words which we find in Ps **110**, therefore; but they are David's own words, spoken not of his own motion merely, but "in the Holy Spirit," that is to say—we could not better paraphrase it—"as borne by the Holy Spirit." In other words, they are "God-breathed" words and therefore authoritative in a sense above what any words of David, not spoken in the Holy Spirit, could possibly be. Generalizing the matter, we may say that the words of Scripture are conceived by Our Lord and the NT writers as the words of their human authors when speaking "in the Holy Spirit," that is to say, by His initiative and under His controlling direction. The conception finds even more precise expression, perhaps, in such a statement as we find—it is Peter who is speaking and it is again a psalm which is cited—in Acts **1** 16, "The Holy Spirit spake by the mouth of David." Here the Holy Spirit is adduced, of course, as the real author of what is said (and hence Peter's certainty that what is said will be fulfilled); but David's mouth is expressly designated as the instrument (it is the instrumental preposition that is used) by means of which the Holy Spirit speaks the Scripture in question. He does not speak save through David's mouth. Accordingly, in Acts **4** 25, 'the Lord that made the heaven and earth,' acting by His Holy Spirit, is declared to have spoken another psalm 'through the mouth of... David,' His "servant"; and in Mt **13** 35 still another psalm is adduced as "spoken through the prophet" (cf Mt **2** 5). In the very act of energetically asserting the Divine origin of Scripture the human instrumentality through which it is given is constantly recognized. The NT writers have, therefore, no difficulty in assigning Scripture to its human authors, or in discovering in Scripture traits due to its human authorship. They freely quote it by such simple formulae as these: "Moses saith" (Rom **10** 19); "Moses said" (Mt **22** 24; Mk **7** 10; Acts **3** 22); "Moses writeth" (Rom **10** 5); "Moses wrote" (Mk **12** 19; Lk **20** 28); "Isaiah... saith" (Rom **10** 20); "Isaiah said" (Jn **12** 39); "Isaiah crieth" (Rom **9** 27); "Isaiah hath said before" (Rom **9** 29); "said Isaiah the prophet" (Jn **1** 23); "did Isaiah prophesy" (Mk **7** 6; Mt **15** 7); "David saith" (Lk **20** 42; Acts **2** 25; Rom **11** 9); "David said" (Mk **12** 36). It is to be noted that when thus Scripture is adduced by the names of its human authors, it is a matter of complete indifference whether the words adduced are comments of these authors or direct words of God recorded by them. As the plainest words of the human authors are assigned to God as their real author, so the most express words of God, repeated by the Scriptural writers, are cited by the names of

these human writers (Mt **15** 7; Mk **7** 6; Rom **10** 5 19.20; cf Mk **7** 10 from the Decalogue). To say that "Moses" or "David says," is evidently thus only a way of saying that "Scripture says," which is the same as to say that "God says." Such modes of citing Scripture, accordingly, carry us little beyond merely connecting the name, or perhaps we may say the individuality, of the several writers with the portions of Scripture given through each. How it was given through them is left meanwhile, if not without suggestion, yet without specific explanation. We seem safe only in inferring this much: that the gift of Scripture through its human authors took place by a process much more intimate than can be expressed by the term "dictation," and that it took place in a process in which the control of the Holy Spirit was too complete and pervasive to permit the human qualities of the secondary authors in any way to condition the purity of the product as the word of God. The Scriptures, in other words, are conceived by the writers of the NT as through and through God's book, in every part expressive of His mind, given through men after a fashion which does no violence to their nature as men, and constitutes the book also men's book as well as God's, in every part expressive of the mind of its human authors.

## **10. ACTIVITIES OF GOD IN GIVING SCRIPTURE**

If we attempt to get behind this broad statement and to obtain a more detailed conception of the activities by which God has given the Scriptures, we are thrown back upon somewhat general representations, supported by the analogy of the modes of God's working in other spheres of His operation. It is very desirable that we should free ourselves at the outset from influences arising from the current employment of the term "inspiration" to designate this process. This term is not a Bib. term and its etymological implications are not perfectly accordant with the Bib. conception of the modes of the Divine operation in giving the Scriptures. The Bib. writers do not conceive of the Scriptures as a human product breathed into by the Divine Spirit, and thus heightened in its qualities or endowed with new qualities; but as a

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Divine product produced through the instrumentality of men. They do not conceive of these men, by whose instrumentality Scripture is produced, as working upon their own initiative, though energized by God to greater effort and higher achievement, but as moved by the Divine initiative and borne by the irresistible power of the Spirit of God along ways of His choosing to ends of His appointment. The difference between the two conceptions may not appear great when the mind is fixed exclusively upon the nature of the resulting product. But they are differing conceptions, and look at the production of Scripture from distinct points of view—the human and the Divine; and the involved mental attitudes toward the origin of Scripture are very diverse. The term "inspiration" is too firmly fixed, in both theological and popular usage, as the technical designation of the action of God in giving the Scriptures, to be replaced; and we may be thankful that its native implications lie as close as they do to the Bib. conceptions. Meanwhile, however, it may be justly insisted that it shall receive its definition from the representations of Scripture, and not be permitted to impose upon our thought ideas of the origin of Scripture derived from an analysis of its own implications, etymological or historical. The Scriptural conception of the relation of the Divine Spirit to the human authors in the production of Scripture is better expressed by the figure of "bearing" than by the figure of "inbreathing"; and when our Bib. writers speak of the action of the Spirit of God in this relation as a breathing, they represent it as a "breathing out" of the Scriptures by the Spirit, and not a "breathing into" the Scriptures by Him.

## **11. GENERAL PROBLEM OF ORIGIN: GOD'S PART**

So soon, however, as we seriously endeavor to form for ourselves a clear conception of the precise nature of the Divine action in this "breathing out" of the Scriptures—this "bearing" of the writers of the Scriptures to their appointed goal of the production of a book of Divine trustworthiness and indefectible authority—we become acutely aware of a more deeply lying and much wider problem, apart from which this one of inspiration, technically so called, cannot be profitably considered. This is the general problem of the origin of the Scriptures and the part of God in all that complex of processes by the interaction of which these books, which we call the sacred Scriptures, with all their peculiarities, and all their qualities of whatever sort, have been brought into being. For, of course, these books were not produced suddenly, by some miraculous act—handed down complete out of heaven, as the phrase goes; but, like all other products of time, are the ultimate effect of many processes cooperating through long periods. There is to be considered, for instance, the preparation of the material which forms the subject-matter of these books: in a sacred history, say, for example, to be narrated; or in a religious experience which may serve as a norm for record; or in a logical elaboration of the contents of revelation which may be placed at the service of God's people; or in the progressive revelation of Divine truth itself, supplying their culminating contents. And there is the preparation of the men to write these books to be considered, a preparation physical, intellectual, spiritual, which must have attended them throughout their whole lives, and, indeed, must have had its beginning in their remote ancestors, and the effect of which was to bring the right men to the right places at the right times, with the right endowments, impulses, acquirements, to write just the books which were designed for them. When "inspiration," technically so called, is superinduced on lines of preparation like these, it takes on quite a different aspect from that which it bears when it is thought of as an isolated action of the Divine Spirit operating out of all relation to historical processes. Representations are sometimes made as if, when God wished to produce sacred books which would incorporate His will—a series of letters like those of Paul, for example—He was reduced to the necessity of going down to earth and painfully scrutinizing the men He found there, seeking anxiously for the one who, on the whole, promised best for His purpose; and then violently forcing the material He wished expressed through him, against his natural bent, and with as little loss from his recalcitrant characteristics as possible. Of course, nothing of the sort took place. If God wished to give His people a series of letters like Paul's, He prepared a Paul to write them, and the Paul He brought to the task was a Paul who spontaneously would write just such letters.

## **12. EFFECT OF HUMAN QUALITIES: PROVIDENTIAL PREPARATION**

If we bear this in mind, we shall know what estimate to place upon the common representation to the effect that the human characteristics of the writers must, and in point of fact do, condition and qualify the writings produced by them, the implication being that, therefore, we cannot get from man a pure word of God. As light that passes through the colored glass of a cathedral window, we are told, is light from heaven, but is stained by the tints of the glass through which it passes; so any word of God which is passed through the mind and soul of a man must come out discolored by the personality through which it is given, and just to that degree ceases to be the pure word of God. But what if this personality has itself been formed by God into precisely the personality it is, for the express purpose of communicating to the word given through it just the coloring which it gives it? What if the colors of the stained-glass window have been designed by the architect for the

express purpose of giving to the light that floods the cathedral precisely the tone and quality it receives from them? What if the word of God that comes to His people is framed by God into the word of God it is, precisely by means of the qualities of the men formed by Him for the purpose, through which it is given? When we think of God the Lord giving by His Spirit a body of authoritative Scriptures to His people, we must remember that He is the God of providence and of grace as well as of revelation and inspiration, and that He holds all the lines of preparation as fully under His direction as He does the specific operation which we call technically, in the narrow sense, by the name of "inspiration." The production of the Scriptures is, in point of fact, a long process, in the course of which numerous and very varied Divine activities are involved, providential, gracious, miraculous, all of which must be taken into account in any attempt to explain the relation of God to the production of Scripture. When they are all taken into account we can no longer wonder that the resultant Scriptures are constantly spoken of as the pure word of God. We wonder, rather, that an additional operation of God—what we call specifically "inspiration," in its technical sense—was thought necessary. Consider, for example, how a piece of sacred history—say the Book of Ch, or the great historical work, Gospel and Acts, of Luke—is brought to the writing. There is first of all the preparation of the history to be written: God the Lord leads the sequence of occurrences through the development He has designed for them that they may convey their lessons to His people: a "teleological" or "aetiological" character is inherent in the very course of events. Then He prepares a man, by birth, training, experience, gifts

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of grace, and, if need be, of revelation, capable of appreciating this historical development and eager to search it out, thrilling in all his being with its lessons and bent upon making them clear and effective to others. When, then, by His providence, God sets this man to work on the writing of this history, will there not be spontaneously written by him the history which it was Divinely intended should be written? Or consider how a psalmist would be prepared to put into moving verse a piece of normative religious experience: how he would be born with just the right quality of religious sensibility, of parents through whom he should receive just the right hereditary bent, and from whom he should get precisely the right religious example and training, in circumstances of life in which his religious tendencies should be developed precisely on right lines; how he would be brought through just the right experiences to quicken in him the precise emotions he would be called upon to express, and finally would be placed in precisely the exigencies which would call out their expression. Or consider the providential preparation of a writer of a didactic epistle—by means of which he should be given the intellectual breadth and acuteness, and be trained in habitudes of reasoning, and placed in the situations which would call out precisely the argumentative presentation of Christian truth which was required of him. When we give due place in our thoughts to the universality of the providential government of God, to the minuteness and completeness of its sway, and to its invariable efficacy, we may be inclined to ask what is needed beyond this mere providential government to secure the production of sacred books which should be in every detail absolutely accordant with the Divine will.

### **13. "INSPIRATION" MORE THAN "PROVIDENCE"**

The answer is, Nothing is needed beyond mere providence to secure such books—provided only that it does not lie in the Divine purpose that these books should possess qualities which rise above the powers of men to produce, even under the most complete Divine guidance. For providence is guidance; and guidance can bring one only so far as his own power can carry

him. If heights are to be scaled above man's native power to achieve, then something more than guidance, however effective, is necessary. This is the reason for the superinduction, at the end of the long process of the production of Scripture, of the additional Divine operation which we call technically "inspiration." By it, the Spirit of God, flowing confluent in with the providentially and graciously determined work of men, spontaneously producing under the Divine directions the writings appointed to them, gives the product a Divine quality unattainable by human powers alone. Thus these books become not merely the word of godly men, but the immediate word of God Himself, speaking directly as such to the minds and hearts of every reader. The value of "inspiration" emerges, thus, as twofold. It gives to the books written under its "bearing" a quality which is truly superhuman; a trustworthiness, an authority, a searchingness, a profundity, a profitableness which is altogether Divine. And it speaks this Divine word immediately to each reader's heart and conscience; so that he does not require to make his way to God, painfully, perhaps even uncertainly, through the words of His servants, the human instruments in writing the Scriptures, but can listen directly to the Divine voice itself speaking immediately in the Scriptural word to him.

#### **14. WITNESS OF NT WRITERS TO THIS**

That the writers of the NT themselves conceive the Scriptures to have been produced thus by Divine operations extending through the increasing ages and involving a multitude of varied activities, can be made clear by simply attending to the occasional references they make to this or that step in the process. It lies, for example, on the face of their expositions, that they looked upon the Bib. history as teleological. Not only do they tell us that "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope" (Rom 15 4; cf Rom 4 23.24); they speak also of the course of the historical events themselves as guided for our benefit: "Now these things happened unto them by way of example"—in a typical fashion, in such a way that, as they occurred, a typical character, or predictive reference impressed itself upon them; that is to say, briefly, the history occurred as it did in order to bear a message to us—"and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come" (1 Cor 10 11; cf ver 6). Accordingly, it has become a commonplace of Bib. exposition that "the history of redemption itself is a typically progressive one" (Kuper), and is "in a manner impregnated with the prophetic element," so as to form a "part of a great plan which stretches from the fall of man to the first consummation of all things in glory; and, in so far as it reveals the mind of God toward man, carries a respect to the future not less than to the present" (P. Fairbairn). It lies equally on the face of the NT allusions to the subject that its writers understood that the preparation of men to become vehicles of God's message to man was not of yesterday, but had its beginnings in the very origin of their being. The call by which Paul, for example, was made an apostle of Jesus Christ was sudden and apparently without antecedents; but it is precisely this Paul who reckons this call as only one step in a long process, the beginnings of which antedated his own existence: "But when it was the good pleasure of God, who separated me, even from my mother's womb, and called me through his grace, to reveal his Son in me" (Gal 1 15.16; cf Jer 1 5; Isa 49 1.5). The recognition by the writers of the NT of the experiences of God's grace, which had been vouchsafed to them as an integral element in their fitting to be the bearers of His gospel to others, finds such pervasive expression that the only difficulty is to select from the mass the most illustrative passages. Such a statement as Paul gives in the opening verses of 2 Cor is thoroughly typical. There he represents that he has been afflicted and comforted to the end that he might "be able to comfort them that are in any affliction, through the comfort wherewith" he had himself been "comforted of God." For, he explains, "Whether we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; or whether we are

comforted, it is for your comfort, which worketh in the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer" (2 Cor 1 4-6). It is beyond question, therefore, that the NT writers, when they declare the Scriptures to be the product of the Divine breath, and explain this as meaning that the writers of these Scriptures wrote them only as borne by the Holy Spirit in such a fashion that they spoke, not out of themselves, but "from God," are thinking of this operation of the Spirit only as the final act of God in the production of the Scriptures, superinduced upon a long series of processes, providential, gracious, miraculous, by which the matter of Scripture had been prepared for writing, and the men for writing it, and the writing of it had been actually brought to pass. It is this final act in the production of Scripture which is technically called "inspiration"; and inspiration is thus brought before us as, in the minds of the writers of the NT, that particular operation of God in the production of Scripture

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which takes effect at the very point of the writing of Scripture—understanding the term "writing" here as inclusive of all the processes of the actual composition of Scripture, the investigation of documents, the collection of facts, the excogitation of conclusions, the adaptation of exhortations as means to ends and the like—with the effect of giving to the resultant Scripture a specifically supernatural character, and constituting it a Divine, as well as human, book. Obviously the mode of operation of this Divine activity moving to this result is conceived, in full accord with the analogy of the Divine operations in other spheres of its activity, in providence and in grace alike, as confluent with the human activities operative in the case; as, in a word, of the nature of what has come to be known as "immanent action."

## **15. "INSPIRATION" AND "REVELATION"**

It will not escape observation that thus "inspiration" is made a mode of "revelation." We are often exhorted, to be sure, to distinguish sharply between "inspiration" and "revelation"; and the exhortation is just when "revelation" is taken in one of its narrower senses, of, say, an external manifestation of God, or of an immediate communication from God in words. But "inspiration" does not differ from "revelation" in these narrowed senses as genus from genus, but as a species of one genus differs from another. That operation of God which we call "inspiration," that is to say, that operation of the Spirit of God by which He "bears" men in the process of composing Scripture, so that they write, not of themselves, but "from God," is one of the modes in which God makes known to men His being, His will, His operations, His purposes. It is as distinctly a mode of revelation as any mode of revelation can be, and therefore it performs the same office which all revelation performs, that is to say, in the express words of Paul, it makes men wise, and makes them wise unto salvation. All "special" or "supernatural" revelation (which is redemptive in its very idea, and occupies a place as a substantial element in God's redemptive processes) has precisely this for its end; and Scripture, as a mode of the redemptive revelation of God, finds its fundamental purpose just in this: if the "inspiration" by which Scripture is produced renders it trustworthy and authoritative, it renders it trustworthy and authoritative only that it may the better serve to make men wise unto salvation. Scripture is conceived, from the point of view of the writers of the NT, not merely as the record of revelations, but as itself a part of the redemptive revelation of God; not merely as the record of the redemptive acts by which God is saving the world, but as itself one of these redemptive acts, having its own part to play in the great work of establishing and building up the kingdom of God. What gives it a place among the redemptive acts of God is its Divine origination, taken in its widest sense, as inclusive of all the Divine operations, providential, gracious and expressly supernatural, by which it has been

made just what it is—a body of writings able to make wise unto salvation, and profitable for making the man of God perfect. What gives it its place among the modes of revelation is, however, specifically the culminating one of these Divine operations, which we call "inspiration"; that is to say, the action of the Spirit of God in so "bearing" its human authors in their work of producing Scripture, as that in these Scriptures they speak, not out of themselves, but "from God." It is this act by virtue of which the Scriptures may properly be called "God-breathed."

## **16. SCRIPTURES A DIVINE-HUMAN BOOK?**

It has been customary among a certain school of writers to speak of the Scriptures, because thus "inspired," as a Divine-human book, and to appeal to the analogy of Our Lord's Divine-human personality to explain their peculiar qualities as such. The expression calls attention to an important fact, and the analogy holds good a certain distance. There are human and Divine sides to Scripture, and, as we cursorily examine it, we may perceive in it, alternately, traits which suggest now the one, now the other factor in its origin. But the analogy with Our Lord's Divine-human personality may easily be pressed beyond reason. There is no hypostatic union between the Divine and the human in Scripture; we cannot parallel the "inscripturation" of the Holy Spirit and the incarnation of the Son of God. The Scriptures are merely the product of Divine and human forces working together to produce a product in the production of which the human forces work under the initiation and prevalent direction of the Divine: the person of Our Lord unites in itself Divine and human natures, each of which retains its distinctness while operating only in relation to the other. Between such diverse things there can exist only a remote analogy; and, in point of fact, the analogy in the present instance amounts to no more than that in both cases Divine and human factors are involved, though very differently. In the one they unite to constitute a Divine-human person, in the other they cooperate to perform a Divine-human work. Even so distant an analogy may enable us, however, to recognize that as, in the case of Our Lord's person, the human nature remains truly human while yet it can never fall into sin or error because it can never act out of relation with the Divine nature into conjunction with which it has been brought; so in the case of the production of Scripture by the conjoint action of human and Divine factors, the human factors have acted as human factors and have left their mark on the product as such, and yet cannot have fallen into that error which we say it is human to fall into, because they have not acted apart from the Divine factors, by themselves, but only under their unerring guidance.

## **17. SCRIPTURE OF NT WRITERS WAS THE OT**

The NT testimony is to the Divine origin and qualities of "Scripture"; and "Scripture" to the writers of the NT was fundamentally, of course, the OT. In the primary passage, in which we are told that "every" or "all Scripture" is "God-breathed," the direct reference is to the "sacred writings" which Timothy had had in knowledge since his infancy, and these were, of course, just the sacred books of the Jews (2 Tim 3 16). What is explicit here is implicit in all the allusions to inspired Scriptures in the NT. Accordingly, it is frequently said that our entire testimony to the inspiration of Scripture concerns the OT alone. In many ways, however, this is overstated. Our present concern is not with the extent of "Scripture" but with the nature of "Scripture"; and we cannot present here the considerations which justify extending to the NT the inspiration which the NT writers attribute to the OT. It will not be out of place, however, to point out simply that the NT writers obviously themselves made this extension. They do not for an instant imagine themselves, as ministers of a new covenant, less in possession of the Spirit of God than the ministers of the old covenant: they freely recognize, indeed, that

they have no sufficiency of themselves, but they know that God has made them sufficient (2 Cor **3** 5.6). They prosecute their work of proclaiming the gospel, therefore, in full confidence that they speak "by the Holy Spirit" (1 Pet **1** 12), to whom they attribute both the

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matter and form of their teaching (1 Cor **2** 13). They, therefore, speak with the utmost assurance of their teaching (Gal **1** 7.8); and they issue commands with the completest authority (1 Thess **4** 2.14; 2 Thess **3** 6.12), making it, indeed, the test of whether one has the Spirit that he should recognize what they demand as commandments of God (1 Cor **14** 37). It would be strange, indeed, if these high claims were made for their oral teaching and commandments exclusively. In point of fact, they are made explicitly also for their written injunctions. It was "the things" which Paul was "writing," the recognition of which as commands of the Lord, he makes the test of a Spirit-led man (1 Cor **14** 37). It is his "word by this epistle," obedience to which he makes the condition of Christian communion (2 Thess **3** 14). There seems involved in such an attitude toward their own teaching, oral and written, a claim on the part of the NT writers to something very much like the "inspiration" which they attribute to the writers of the OT.

## **18. INCLUSION OF NT**

And all doubt is dispelled when we observe the NT writers placing the writings of one another in the same category of "Scripture" with the 18. Inclusion of NT in 2 Tim **3** 16, declared that 'every' or 'all scripture is God-breathed' had already written in 1 Tim **5** 18: "For the scripture saith, Thou shall not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn. And, The laborer is worthy of his hire." The first clause here is derived from Dt and the second from the Gospel of Lk, though both are cited as together constituting, or better, forming part of the "Scripture" which Paul adduces as so authoritative as by its mere citation to end all strife. Who shall say that, in the declaration of the later ep. that "all" or "every" Scripture is God-breathed, Paul did not have Lk, and, along with Lk, whatever other new books he classed with the old under the name of Scripture, in the back of his mind, along with those old books which Timothy had had in his hands from infancy? And the same Peter who declared that every "prophecy of scripture" was the product of men who spoke "from God," being 'borne' by the Holy Ghost (2 Pet **1** 21), in this same ep. (**3** 16), places Paul's Epp. in the category of Scripture along with whatever other books deserve that name. For Paul, says he, wrote these epp., not out of his own wisdom, but "according to the wisdom given to him," and though there are some things in them hard to be understood, yet it is only "the ignorant and unstedfast" who wrest these difficult passages—as what else could be expected of men who wrest "also the other Scriptures" (obviously the OT is meant)—"unto their own destruction"? Is it possible to say that Peter could not have had these epp. of Paul also lurking somewhere in the back of his mind, along with "the other scriptures," when he told his readers that every "prophecy of scripture" owes its origin to the prevailing operation of the Holy Ghost? What must be understood in estimating the testimony of the NT writers to the inspiration of Scripture is that "Scripture" stood in their minds as the title of a unitary body of books, throughout the gift of God through His Spirit to His people; but that this body of writings was at the same time understood to be a growing aggregate, so that what is said of it applies to the new books which were being added to it as the Spirit gave them, as fully as to the old books which had come down to them from their hoary past. It is a mere matter of detail to determine precisely what new books were thus included by them in the category "Scripture." They tell

us some of them themselves. Those who received them from their hands tell us of others. And when we put the two bodies of testimony together we find that they constitute just our NT. It is no pressure of the witness of the writers of the NT to the inspiration of the Scripture, therefore, to look upon it as covering the entire body of "Scriptures," the new books which they were themselves adding to this aggregate, as well as the old books which they had received as Scripture from the fathers. Whatever can lay claim by just right to the appellation of "Scripture," as employed in its eminent sense by those writers, can by the same just right lay claim to the "inspiration" which they ascribe to this "Scripture."

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Prepared for the Web in May 2009 by Robert I Bradshaw from original article.

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