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THE DOCTRINE OF INERRANCY IN THE LIGHT OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT EVIDENCE

by

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A THESIS

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PREFACE

This study has been motivated by an interest in the implications of inconsistencies in the Scriptural records and their relationship to a view of inspiration. This paper represents an exegetical and doctrinal survey of inerrancy as it is related to the problem of inconsistencies in Scripture.

The basic assumption of those who hold to inerrancy is that inerrancy is a direct implication of Jesus and His apostles' view of Scripture. The person who shares a high regard for these normative teachers of Christian doctrine and is confronted by difficult inconsistencies faces a dilemma.

One solution is to hold to the doctrine and ignore the difficulties for which an explanation will be forthcoming. Much historical research seems to give grounds for this position.

Another solution of the dilemma is to affirm inerrancy was involved in the New Testament view, but in the light of the problems, reject this view as pre-scientific.

A third solution is to reject a view of inspiration which includes inerrancy by results gotten from a re-examination of the essential New Testament data.

It is the aim of the writer to provide a basis for making the latter choice because of the nature of the data uncovered.

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INTRODUCTION

The Problem:

The Bible is an inspired book. To this proposition very few would disagree, including those who do not accept its basic message. The Christian Church throughout history has been concerned to define its inspiration, its elevated character and power, just because it does accept the God of heaven and earth who is actively seeking to reveal Himself to men through this book. The Church has asked and continually is asking how is the Bible inspired and to what extent is it inspired?

One answer to that question constitutes the basis of our inquiry. That answer in its elementary form states that inspiration, the activity of God's Spirit in the recording of revelation, is in a unique mode which results in 'inerrancy,' that is, absolute truthfulness in all the recorded Biblical statements. An evaluation of this position in the light of the data will be made.

The Procedure:

After attempting to trace the historical

development of inerrancy, the specific New Testament materials will be examined and interpreted, as these are the purported sources for the 'doctrine of inerrancy.' An evaluation of the doctrine with the New Testament data will follow in order to see whether or not consistent coherence has been accomplished.

The Significance:

This study might be justified on many grounds. The defenders of inerrancy claim it has been the historic formulation of the Christian community from the beginning. A traditionally adequate faith is certainly worthy of careful consideration. Today inerrancy plays an important role in the thinking of many theologically conservative Christians, thus its foundations must be carefully considered.

The most significant challenge is, however, not whether 'inerrancy' is ancient and historical, not whether it is currently believed, but simply whether or not this view is true, is more fully in accord with the relevant data than other views. And truth is essentially a question of authority, for one must conform to what is, subject himself to the "nature of things" whether this is comfortable, practi-

cally expedient, sophisticated, pious, critical, or whether it is not. Thus the basic area in which our problem finds its focus and significance is the difficult area of religious authority and its correlate -- "truth." What then is the relationship of authority to inspiration?

Ultimate authority in Christianity is God revealing Himself. Revelation is essentially an act of communication which implies a knowing receptor, thus involving an epistemological relationship. Man must know and understand the content of God's revelation which is normative and authoritative. The Bible is communicated revelation which has been recorded and inspiration is involved in the process of this recording. The activity of the Holy Spirit as to His effect in the production of the record is the issue. Exponents of the doctrine of inerrancy would hold to the principle that the effect was one of controlling the work of recording to the extent of keeping the record free from any error. The degree of truthfulness and conformity to fact is thus under contention.

The Doctrine of Inerrancy, then, has its greatest significance in its formulation of Biblical authority: the record of revelation is completely true and thus, because of its complete veracity, it is authoritative.

CHAPTER I

THE DOCTRINE OF INERRANCY DEFINED

From an historical study of inspiration, an understanding of the factors involved in inerrancy may be derived which will allow this doctrine to be expanded in its full apologetic form and, thus, to be properly defined. The word "doctrine" is used in a broad sense referring to the principle of freedom from error in the record which principle will be looked for in the materials reviewed.

Five basic periods have been chosen which reflect significant theological development: the period contemporary with the New Testament, the post-apostolic age, the reformation, the post-reformation period and finally, the modern period. These eras, with their variety and quantity of material, obviously cannot be treated in detail but it is the goal to capture some of the high points which would give a clearer understanding of the doctrine of inerrancy.

Contemporaries of the New Testament

Essenes

The Qumran community has provided revolutionary opportunities and materials in the study of the Bible. The apocalyptic mind-set found its authoritative center

of concern in the Scriptures. Therefore it is appropriate to begin with them.

Evidence on which to form an opinion concerning the Qumran sect's view of the nature of inspiration might be gotten from formula statements introducing Biblical passages, of which the following are illustrative: "God has said through the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz..."¹; "God has said,"² referring to Malachi 1:10 which ends "...says the Lord of hosts." (R.S.V.); a command that those who enter the Essene covenant should act in accord with the explicit injunctions of the law and be careful of "...the distinctions which God Himself has drawn for them"³; the promise of eternal life is given "even as God has sworn unto them by the hand of the prophet Ezekiel"⁴; in the commentary on Habakkuk, Chapter I, verse 5 refers to the traitors who refuse to listen concerning last things "...duly related by the priest who God appoints to interpret in those days all the words of His servants the prophets by whom He has told of that impending disaster."⁵

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1. The Dead Sea Scriptures, translated by Theodor H. Gaster, Garden City, Doubleday and Co., 1956, p. 66.
 2. Ibid., p. 68.
 3. Ibid., p. 69.
 4. Ibid., p. 65.
 5. Ibid., p. 249.

These phrases strike a familiar note on the ears of New Testament readers. They are helpful only generally by stating ^{that} God has spoken in the Old Testament and this communication has been through instruments -- His prophets.

Besides terminology used the extant manuscripts themselves may be of assistance to an understanding of inspiration. First of all the manuscripts which have been discovered show that the authoritative books of the Hebrew canon are all extant, except the book of Esther,⁶ and the qualitatively richer format, script and writing materials of these same books indicate a highly developed concept of the canon which is perhaps identical to the Protestant canon.⁷

Another major factor which evolves from these manuscripts is the variety of textual traditions.⁸ This is perhaps surprising, for in such a closely knit group one would expect to find a more authoritative recension in force, but distinct Masoretic and Septuagint traditions can be found. Thus God's speaking through the prophets was not found in a pure form in the Qumran Sect. The Qumran interpretative principles

6. Frank M. Cross, Jr., *The Ancient Library of Qumran and Modern Biblical Studies*, Garden City, Doubleday and Co., 1958, p. 31.

7. *The Westminster Atlas to the Bible*, Edited by George E. Wright and Floyd V. Filson, Revised Edition, Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, (1956), p. 82.

8. Cross, op. cit., pp. 120 - 145.

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8. Cross, op. cit., pp. 120 - 145.

and methods will perhaps help in clarifying the effect the fact textual variations had on the scholars.

The basic principle of interpretation was derived from the nature of prophecy as viewed by the sect. God had communicated His purpose in mystery (RAZ). The prophet did not even know the time of fulfillment of his words. A divine interpreter was needed. This interpreter came in the famed "Teacher of Righteousness" who had founded the sect on interpretive revelations gotten literally from the mouth of God which gave the true application of prophesy in contemporary events.⁹

Thus a method of exegesis was employed from this leader's interpretations. The text is divided into minute units to bring coherence in relationship to current events. Logical coherence is not looked for in the text itself. Variant readings are carefully chosen to support the commentator's purposes. Sometimes allegory is made use of to relate the text to current events. Finally Biblical prophecy of various dates is reinterpreted to "fit" the beginning of the final events introduced by the Teacher of Righteousness and his ministry.

What conclusions can now be drawn regarding inerrancy? There is probably no explicit statement regarding inspiration as such in the Qumran Literature.

9. F. F. Bruce, *Biblical Exegesis in the Qumran Texts*, Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1959, p. 14.

If a view of God's particular mode of activity in the recording of revelation is missing, the sect, however, does emphasize the fact of God speaking in the records through His prophets. How this is done and the effect of this God-man activity is not raised as a problem for the emphasis is on revelation. The fact of mystery might indicate a "high" view of God's activity but this is in reference to the prophet versus his recording of the divine communication.

The fact of variations in manuscripts and the interpretative presuppositions brought upon the text might indicate a different view of inspiration -- God has substantially revealed His purpose and not acted to preserve infallibility. But one might as well speculate a belief in inerrant autographs was active in mind of the Qumran scholars. Inconclusive evidence will allow no definitive statements from Qumran concerning inspiration especially since the driving concern was contemporary application. Correctness at this point of fulfilled contemporary history was just as important as correctness in the Biblical sources.

Philo

Philo, whose works were probably completed before A.D. 40, is a radical example of Hellenistic Judaism. In this fact, as well as in his concept of inspiration, he stands in contrast to the Essene group, for Philo had a quite clear view of inspiration.

Philo speaks about different modes of inspiration,

using the prophetic experience as his guide in considering this particular activity. The outstanding fact in Philo's concept is the passivity of the prophet during moments of Divine inspiration.

For a prophet gives forth nothing at all of his own but acts as interpreter at the prompting of another in all his utterances and as long as he is under inspiration he is in ignorance, his reason departing from its place and yielding up the citadel of his soul, when the Divine Spirit enters into it and dwells in it and strikes at the mechanism of his voice sounding through it to the clear declaration of that which He prophesieth.¹¹

Thus Philo emphasizes God's unique activity on the prophet as he declares the Word of God. This concept is not directly related to the writing of this word but rather its vocal declaration. But this distinction is not a factor in Philo's thinking as any problem between original communication and the writing is resolved in his view of the Septuagint text.

The traditional statements of the origin of the Septuagint (LXX) are found in the famous letter of Aristeas (Ca. 110 B. C.) which describes a revision committee in Alexandria creating an authoritative Greek text for the library of Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-247 B.C.), by comparing their results. Philo adds a flourish to this, saying that these translators were themselves inspired prophets who "did not produce one one [sic] rendering and another another, but all the same words and expres-

11. W. Sanday, *Inspiration*, London, Longman's Green and Co., 1894, p. 74.

sions as though some invisible prompter were at the ear of each of them."¹²

To interpret this unique text (LXX), Philo used the allegorical method as well as taking the literal sense. But to him the literal was often nothing more than a condescension to man. The significant veiled secrets of the texts became clear in the underlying allegorical sense, clarified in principles and patterns of the philosophic thinking current in his day.

Thus Philo's thought in relation to 'inerrancy' seems clear. The passivity of the prophets, the necessity for a prophetic consistency in translation which was interpreted allegorically would point clearly in one direction -- namely, that in Philo is found one of the earliest and clearest expressions of the basic form of 'inerrancy.'

Josephus

Writing in the last part of the first century, Josephus is very relevant for the attempt to focus on the Jewish religious ideas concerning the Scripture in the time of the New Testament events.

In the specific manner of inspiration, Josephus closely approaches Philo in the emphasis on the passivity of the prophet. In describing Balaam's encounter with

12. Ibid., p. 87.

Balak, Josephus puts these words in Balaam's mouth:

"Thinkest thou that it is in our power to speak or be silent about such things when the Spirit of God takes possession of us? For He causes us to utter words such as He wills and speeches without our knowledge..."¹³

Josephus rather explicitly expounds the concept of inerrancy. The Hebrew Scriptures, which Josephus limited to the books of the present Protestant Old Testament Canon, are in their contents consistent throughout and there is nothing at variance within or nothing contradictory.¹⁴ Thus the underlying principle of 'inerrancy,' complete truthfulness in Scripture statements, is affirmed by Josephus as well as his earlier contemporary Philo.

Summary

The immediate historical context of the New Testament was reflected in the Qumran Sect, Philo and Josephus. In regard to the light this context throws on 'inerrancy' in its germinal form, it may be summarized as follows: (1) Inspiration as a doctrine concerning the recording of revelation was not an explicit concern in this period. Philo would perhaps give an implied indication of the manner in which the record was made through his emphasis on divine action in translation. (2) However, generally speaking, the emphasis in God's

13. Ibid., p. 77.

14. Ibid., p. 89.

communication to man is in terms of the initial prophetic experience of revelation, which is defined substantially as God literally speaking to a passive receptor -- the prophet. (3) Inerrancy, as a view of the Scripture being completely consistent and containing no discrepancies, is stated by Philo and particularly by Josephus so thus the holders of this view can rightly claim its antiquity in germinal form to the contemporary environment of the New Testament writers.

THE POST APOSTOLIC FATHERS

The Old and New Canon

A selection of early fathers indicative of early trends concerning inspiration will now be reviewed. But first a summary will be given concerning the limits involved in the inspired canons as they were understood by the post-apostolic church. First, the Old Testament canon will be considered. (1) By the end of the first century quite a definite idea concerning the limits of the canon was held by the Jews. The limits Josephus put on the canon, Philo's seeming separation of canonical and outside books, as well as the controversial rabbinical meeting at Jamnia all indicate this was the case.¹⁵ (2) The Septuagint version, the Bible of the early church, had the apocryphal writings interspersed between the canonical writings, which indicates the high value placed upon them by Christians as well as Jews. (3) Perhaps because of this fact distinctions between non-canonical books and canonical were early erased and the early Christian fathers in both branches of the church disputed about the limits of the canon. For example, Irenaeus

15. Bruce M. Metzger, *An Introduction to the Apocrypha*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1957, p. 175; C. C. Torrey, *The Apocryphal Literature*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1945, pp. 16-17; Sanday, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-96.

Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria and Augustine viewed the Apocrypha as authoritative while Origen and Jerome rejected it.¹⁶ Thus one cannot posit agreement as to which books the fathers held as authoritative inspired Scripture. But, of course, general agreement on the Jewish canon was implied, the problem being the apocryphal books.

The literary tradition growing up from the event of Christ posed a similar problem in the New Testament Canon. (1) Again there is not a unified agreement as to which are the authoritative books. A majority of the 27 books were seemingly consistently maintained as authoritative but such books as Hebrews and Revelation and the General Epistles were accepted by certain sections of the church and rejected by others.¹⁷ (2) This lack of certainty about all the books continued until the fourth and fifth centuries.¹⁸

Irenaeus

Irenaeus, who died some time after A.D. 190, a leader of the church in Asia-Minor, had well developed

16. Metzger, op. cit., pp. 178-179.

17. Herman Ridderbos, "The Canon of the New Testament," Revelation and the Bible, Ed. by Carl F. H. Henry, Grand Rapids, Baker Book House, 1958, p. 197.

18. Ibid., p. 199.

ideas concerning the perfection of Scripture. Their source insured their perfection; "the Scriptures are perfect, inasmuch as they were uttered (dictae) by the Word of God and His Spirit."¹⁹

The apostolic writers through whom God spoke are totally accurate for after the resurrection, "clothed with the power of the Spirit," they were "filled with a perfect knowledge in all things" thus "they are beyond all falsehood."²⁰ This is effective to the very choice of words used.

Matthew might have said, 'The generation of Jesus was on this wise,' but the Holy Spirit foreseeing the corruptions of the truth, and fortifying us against their deception says, by Matthew, 'The generation of Christ was on this wise.'²¹

Finally, because of the Scriptures' unique source and the total guidance of the writers, perplexing factors may seemingly be at variance and difficult to connect but "all scripture, as it has been given to us by God, will be found to be harmonious."²²

Thus the Scriptures are looked upon by Irenaeus as verbally given by God perfectly through His Spirit

19. Brooke Foss Westcott, Introduction to the Study of the Gospels, New York, Macmillan, 1896, p. 414.

20. Ibid., p. 414.

21. Ibid., p. 414.

22. Ibid., p. 415.

to the Apostles. Inerrancy was thus fundamental to his thinking.

Origen

Origen, one of the leading theologians of the early church in Alexandria, spanned the years A.D. 182 - 251. His doctrine of Scripture encompasses the whole of it in its minute details as inspired of God. So "the records of the Gospels are oracles of the Lord, pure oracles as silver purified seven times in the fire." Thus they contain no error as "they were accurately written by the cooperation of the Holy Spirit."²³

Origen, most famous for his allegorical method of interpretation, tells us Scriptures have three depths of meaning, historical, moral and mystical, which he gives in the metaphor of body, soul and spirit. The underlying principles of this method are significant. "We cannot say of the writings of the Holy Spirit... that anything in them is otiose or superfluous, even if they seem to some obscure."²⁴ Thus all is of equal value.

Another pragmatic consideration is formative for this interpretative process -- seeming discrepancies in

23. Ibid., pp. 430-431.

24. Ibid., p. 432.

the four Gospels.

If one were to set them all forth, then would he turn dizzy, and either desist from trying to establish all the Gospels in very truth, and attach himself to one, ...or admitting the four, grant that their truth does not lie in their corporeal forms.²⁵

Thus Origen defends the principle of complete inerrancy in terms of accuracy in recording, a consistent level of value throughout, and a principle of interpretation which removes any seeming discrepancies.

Athenagoras

This writer is an early Second Century apologist who shares an apologetic resemblance with Justin and who, perhaps, has a tendency toward Montanism. His view of inspiration is one which emphasizes the passivity of the prophet. The prophets "while entranced and deprived of their natural powers of reason...by the influence of the divine Spirit, ..., uttered that which was wrought in them..., the Spirit using them as its instruments as a flute player might blow a flute."²⁶

Not all of the early fathers would go as far as Athenagoras, but he represents a familiar image used by others to express the idea of passivity during inspiration.

25. Ibid., p. 437.

26. Ibid., pp. 410-411.

Augustine

The influence of Augustine (354-430) to this day is difficult to underestimate. The Bishop of Hippo, coming near the end of what is usually thought of as the Post-Apostolic period, perhaps summarizes some of the trends in the period concerning the view of the nature of Scriptures.

The entire truthfulness of the Scriptures is Augustine's basic premise. Speaking to Honoratus, a man influenced by the Manichees who rejected parts of Scripture, he said, "Believe me, whatever there is in these Scriptures, it is lofty and divine; there is in them altogether truth."²⁷ And in a letter to Jerome he says, "I believe most firmly that no one of those writers (of canonical Scriptures) has erred in any respect in writing."²⁸

Having been taught by Ambrose the allegorical method based on the text, 'The letter killeth but the spirit giveth life,' Augustine found many problems solved.

By this time I could find an explanation for the contradictions that used to repel me, an explanation in the depths of its mysteries, having heard many of them reasonably explained; and the authority of Scripture appeared to me all the more august...²⁹

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27. St. Augustine, "On the Profit of Believing," Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Vol. III, Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1956, p. 353.
 28. Cited by David W. Kerr, "Augustine of Hippo," Inspiration and Interpretation, John F. Walvoord, ed., Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1957, p. 73.
 29. St. Augustine, Confessions, Book VI, Chap. V, cited by Alan Richardson, Christian Apologetics, New York, Harper and Brothers, 1947, p. 183.

Thus Augustine would posit Scriptures as entirely perfect and therefore without contradictions.

Summary

Thus the fathers have illustrated in their writings 'inerrancy' not as a doctrine, i.e. a carefully summarized statement of basic thoughts concerning Scriptural perfection, but as a foundational presupposition. Their presuppositions seem to indicate the perfection of Scriptures is thought of as 1) verbal perfection arising from the overwhelming control of the Spirit; 2) plenary accuracy in the totality of the writings which are in all parts equally valuable and harmonious, free from seeming contradictions which are resolved by the deeper allegorical meaning.

THE REFORMATION PERIOD

Luther

Both Luther and Calvin maintain strongly that objective truthfulness and subjective, Holy-Spirit inspired faith are necessary factors in coming to an understanding of the Scriptures. In investigating their particular views of inspiration this fact must remain in the foreground as the basic presupposition. Luther illustrates this by stating: "The content of Scripture is true and certain per se, but we perceive this fact

only inasmuch as by its objective operation we experience it subjectively."³⁰

It is an objective fact that the Bible is the Word of God. By this Luther means that the words of Scripture are God's words. "In Scripture you are reaching not the word of man, but the Word of the most exalted God."³¹

This fact is illustrated by Paul, for whatever Paul says is at the same time spoken by the Holy Spirit and therefore whoever raises a contention to the Apostle's statements speaks against the Holy Spirit.³² The prophets and apostles are Infallibiles Doctores who are at the same time men, capable of sin and error, but within the Holy Spirit works and corrects them to produce true authority from God.³³

This assurance of freedom from error extends to the whole of Scripture. Luther states categorically: "The Scriptures have never erred." "It is impossible that Scripture should contradict itself; it appears so only to the senseless and obstinate hypocrites."³⁴

30. Cited by I. Theodore Mueller, "Luther and the Bible," Walvoord, ed., op. cit., p. 108.

31. Cited by Mueller, op. cit., p. 97, c.f. J.K.S. Reid, The Authority of Scripture: Reformation and Post Reformation Understanding of the Bible, London, Methuen and Co., 1957, pp. 61-62.

32. Reid, op. cit., pp. 61-62.

33. Ibid., p. 62.

34. Cited by Mueller, op. cit., p. 99.

Science as well as history recorded in the Bible is free from error. Thus speaking of the creation narrative, Luther says:

If you cannot understand how it could have been done in six days, then accord the Holy Ghost the honor that He is more learned than you are. When you read the words of Holy Scripture, you must realize that God is speaking them.³⁵

Historical chronological data are evaluated from the point of view that the Bible is absolutely correct.

I make use of the secular writers in such a way that I am not compelled to contradict Scripture. For I believe that in the Scriptures the God of truth speaks, but in histories good people display, according to their ability, their diligence and fidelity (but only as men), or at least that their (the Scriptures) copyists have perhaps erred.³⁶

Other comments of Luther quoted to substantiate the view that he had really a much freer interpretation of Scripture probably can be explained by the fact that Luther distinguishes between the various Biblical books as to their relative value in declaring the essential message of Christ and salvation by faith.³⁷ Thus in his commentary to the Romans these dogmatic words are read:

This then is the proofstone to apply to all books, that one looks to see if they treat of Christ... or not, for all Scriptures declare Christ, and St. Paul will know nothing but Christ. What does not teach Christ is not apostolic, even if St.

35. Ibid., p. 99.

36. Ibid., p. 99.

37. Ibid., p. 100.

Peter and St. Paul teach it. Again what preaches Christ is apostolic, even if it is Judas or Annas or Pilate or Herod that does it.³⁸

Most probably Luther's comments on James concerning its straw-like character can best be explained from the perspective of a judgment of its relative value and not its inerrancy.³⁹ But Luther, not known for slavish consistency, did remark concerning problems brought to light by Erasmus: "If there occurs a contradiction in Holy Scriptures which cannot be composed one must let it go" -- so long as it does not affect "the articles of the Christian faith."⁴⁰ This statement, however, does most probably not reflect Luther's general thought on inerrancy.

Thus Luther held to an inerrancy which was 1) verbal in that the words of Scripture are God's Words but still of relative value in the light of Scripture's main theme -- Christ; 2) plenary as to its extent -- doctrinal, historical and scientific accuracy is defended; 3) one that relegated errors in Scripture to those who have copied it.

Calvin

In contrast to Luther, Calvin's position is clear and systematically given. Calvin considers the Bible as

38. Cited by Reid, op. cit., p. 70; also Mueller, op. cit., pp. 101-102.

39. John Dillenberger, Claude Welsh, Protestant Christianity, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954, pp. 46-47. cf. for another view, i.e., the interpretations of James were straw, Mueller, op. cit., p. 101.

40. Cited by Reid, op. cit., p. 67.

the record of God's revelation through which God has spoken to men by accurately dictating by the Spirit His thoughts and will. It is the assurance of the Holy Spirit which brings these facts to the believer who has responded in faith to God's elective call.

The Scriptures, to be believed "to have come from Heaven, as directly as if God had been heard giving utterance to them,"⁴¹ were transmitted through men. For the prophets "obediently followed the Spirit as their guide," but were "not bereaved of mind (as the Gentiles imagined their prophets to have been)." But this relationship and interaction between God and man produced effectively an accurate divine communication. For prophets and apostles "dared not announce anything of their own, and obediently followed the Spirit as their guide, who ruled in their mouths as in His own sanctuary."⁴²

God's word then is effectively communicated without variation by God's Spirit. The human element is operative but the result is certain, for the words are "dictated by the Holy Spirit (a spiritu sancto dictatum.)"⁴³

Calvin's emphasis on the divine control of written Scriptures is expressed in another favorite term -- amanuenses. The authority of the apostles by which their

41. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. by Henry Beveridge, Vol. I, Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1957, p. 68.

42. Cited by Reid, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-37.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 34.

writings are to be "regarded as oracles of God" is found in the difference between them and their successors, for "they were sure and authentic amanuenses of the Holy Spirit" while their successors "are to teach from the Scriptures they have written."⁴⁴

For Calvin, the confirmation of this complete work of the Spirit in the writers, comes through the witness of the Holy Spirit. Ultimately it is this subjective work of God on the inner man which validates the objective record. The result of this point of view is that Scripture, through the work of the Spirit, is self-authenticating.

Those who are inwardly taught by the Holy Spirit acquiesce implicitly in Scripture; that Scripture, carrying its own evidence along with it, deigns not to submit to proofs and arguments, but owes the full conviction with which we ought to receive it to the testimony of the Spirit. Enlightened by Him, we no longer believe, either on our own judgment or that of others, that the Scriptures are from God; but, in a way superior to human judgment, feel perfectly assured -- as much so as if we beheld the Divine image visibly impressed on it -- that it came to us, by the instrumentality of men, from the very mouth of God.⁴⁵

From Calvin's point of view inerrancy would play an important part in a concept of inspiration. First Calvin considers God's mode of communication to be through dictation, thus assuring accuracy. Secondly, this whole

44. Ibid., p. 35.

45. Calvin, op. cit., p. 72.

view of inspiration is assured to the believer by the Spirit, who guarantees the Scriptures to be the very Word of God.

SUMMARY

The two great reformers have added their particular thoughts on Scripture which help build and clarify a concept of inerrancy. God inspires the writers by His Spirit in the sense of dictation in which the human reason is active but the effect of total accuracy is assured. This effect of accuracy is verbal in that the words of Scripture are God's words and this effect extends to scientific, historical statements as well as doctrinal. Contradictions in Scripture are relegated to copyists who may err.

POST-REFORMATION PERIOD

Introduction

As we move from the fresh impact of the Reformation, the disciples of the leading reformers began to synthesize and theologize the fresh recovery of the Reformation period. A strong emphasis on doctrine was the leading 'forte' of the orthodox theologians. That the doctrine of inspiration would be carefully expounded was inevitable. Some of the leading 'signposts' set by the Reformation Fathers were followed to the limit. Picking up the leads of reformed and Lutheran traditions

by choosing leading theologians as guides will indicate what "orthodox" theologians were thinking and writing.

Voetius (1588-1676), a Dutch Calvinistic theologian, presents clearly his view.

It is to be held that the Holy Spirit in an immediate and extraordinary mode dictated all things which were to be written and were written, both the matters and the words, as well those which the writers were before ignorant of or not able to recall, as those which they knew very well both historical or particular, and the dogmatic universal, theoretical, and practical.⁴⁶

This is clearly a development of Calvin's thinking for it essentially eliminates the cognitive faculty of man as any factor of importance. One may, however, argue this is the only direction one may take with Calvin's presuppositions and that Calvin only did not extend them far enough.

The most radical "pressing of a point" was the Helvetic Consensus Formula. Essentially the position of the Dutch churchman Buxtorf, this confession was probably the most extreme of the period.

The Hebrew version of the Old Testament, which we have received and hold today, as handed down by the Jewish Church to whom the oracles of God were formerly committed, is inspired both as respects consonants and as regards vowels (either the points themselves, or at least the force of the points) and both as respects matters and as respects words.⁴⁷

46. Cited by Henry C. Sheldon, *History of Christian Doctrine*, Vol. II, New York, Eaton & Mains, 1885, p. 79.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 79.

Beside the extreme literal pressing of the demand for an inspired text, this confession shows that inspiration had become, at least in the minds of many theologians, a way of expressing the principle of inerrancy. Inspiration and inerrancy had become one and the same.

On the Lutheran side of this development of rigid and overstated views there are equally talented theologians. Quenstedt (1617-1685), professor at Wittenburg, considers the overwhelming activity of God's Spirit as completely normative. "...the very words and each and every expression used by the sacred writers...the Holy Spirit individually supplied, inspired and dictated." "Prophets and apostles contributed nothing of their own except tongue and pen."⁴⁸ Thus the human element was overwhelmed and eliminated.

There also was therefore no error of any conceivable kind in the Scriptures.

...No mendacity, no falsity, no slightest error, whether in matters or words, but every single thing whatsoever that is transmitted in it, whether it be dogmatic, or moral, of history, chronology, typography or names is most true; nor can or ought there to be attributed to Scripture as transmitted in the sacred letters any ignorance or forgetfulness or lack of knowledge, or lapse of memory by the Holy Spirit.⁴⁹

In order to defend his views in the face of seeming conflicts in manuscripts, Quenstedt was ready, with

48. Ibid., p. 77.

49. Cited by Reid, op. cit., p. 86.

all this store of superfluous inspiration, to pass a bit of it along to the extant manuscripts to give them some life.

We can be certain that the sacred codices which we now have in our hands are those which existed at the time of Jerome and Augustine, nay, at the time of Christ Himself and His Apostles.⁵⁰

At this point Gerhard interjected and maintained that only the original Hebrew and Greek manuscripts were authentic.

SUMMARY

It would not be fair to suggest that every theologian of the period held these views. The Arminian Remonstrants, such as Hugo Grotius (1583-1645), the scholar Episcopius (1583-1643) and Philipian Timboren (1633-1712), as a persecuted minority, taught less strict views.⁵¹ But the "orthodox" theologians and their views on inspiration held the day. The mode of inspiration was conceived of as dictation in which the human reason was an insignificant part of the process, thus assuring inerrancy as an effect. This was a verbal accuracy which extended to every conceivable area in the Scriptures. This high degree of accuracy, if not present in the extant manuscripts, was certainly present in the original auto-

50. Ibid., p. 89.

51. Sheldon, op. cit., pp. 79-80.

graphs. Inerrancy became so important it seemingly became a prerequisite of inspiration and a synonym of inspiration.⁵²

In this Post-Reformation period, the principle of inerrancy flowered. Friend and foe alike, however, consider the bloom more 'weed.'

MODERN PERIOD

L. Gaussen

The historical survey attempted so far has produced evidence that 'inerrancy' as a doctrine was present at least in germinal form from a very early date; it was developed and enlarged as time went on until it became a formidable part of a concept of inspiration. The writers chosen for this period express adequate statements of this doctrine in a significant form so that their writings are starting points in discussions on inspiration.

Inerrancy is thought of as a derivative and essential part of God's inspiring activity during the recording of revelation. Gaussen's definition of Divine inspiration shows this clearly:

.....that inexplicable power which the Divine Spirit put forth of old on the authors of

52. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, "The Church Doctrine of Inspiration," *Revelation and the Bible*, op. cit., pp. 213-214, for this criticism as well as other general criticism of this period.

Holy Scripture, in order to their guidance [sic] even in the employment of the words they used, and to preserve them alike from all error and from all omission.⁵³

Thus inspiration has a positive effect -- the words of man become the Word of God,⁵⁴ and the book is relieved of any error of omission or commission.

As Gaussen elaborates his view of inspiration, certain elements pertaining to inerrancy are clarified. He makes clear inerrancy is a necessary product of inspiration. The sacred books "contain no error; they are written throughout by inspiration of God."⁵⁵ This result is assured by the author's view as to the mode of inspiration. Inspiration is thought of not as an internal experience of insight by the writer but inspiration is "in that which is written."⁵⁶ (Italics author's). For the Bible is not "a book which God employed men, whom he had previously enlightened, to write under his auspices. No -- it is a book which He dictated to them."⁵⁷ Thus there is perfect guidance in the writing of the book extending to "both the things the which the writer knew already and those of which he knew nothing."⁵⁸

53. L. Gaussen, *Theopneustia, The Plenary Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures*, trans. David D. Scott, Chicago Moody Press, 1949, p. 34.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 53

55. *Ibid.*, p. 34

56. *Ibid.*, p. 48.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 49.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 48.

This degree of inerrancy is assigned to the original autographs which, out of the necessity of receiving a divine communication, must be kept from error as this kind of knowledge being received by the writer could never be recovered if lost by a blunder.⁵⁹

The scope of inerrancy found in the autographs is complete and necessarily so for "were it true that there were, as they tell us, erroneous facts and contradictory narratives in the Holy Scriptures, one must renounce any attempt to maintain their plenary inspiration."⁶⁰ Therefore, Gaussen goes on to investigate objections and concludes that seemingly insignificant details such as personal remarks in Paul's letters are completely inspired and therefore valuable, there is no error in reasoning or doctrine, no inner contradiction in historical facts, or outward contradiction to natural science.⁶¹ Inspiration is complete.

Complete inerrancy is epistemologically necessary for Gaussen. For "if left to think...that God has not entirely dictated it, and that human infirmity may have had its share in it, where shall I stop in assuming that there may be errors? I know not."⁶²

59. Ibid., p. 158.

60. Ibid., p. 207.

61. Ibid., pp. 197-270.

62. Ibid., p. 160.

Thus inerrancy is the inevitable effect of God's inspiring work on the entire original writing of Scripture in order to give certainty for saving faith.

Benjamin B. Warfield

Warfield, an apologetic "giant" of the turn of the Twentieth Century, contributes a formidable argument for the defense of his position. That Warfield holds that 'inerrancy' is a necessary result of inspiration is clear from his definition of inspiration.

Inspiration is that extraordinary, supernatural influence (or, passively, the result of it), exerted by the Holy Ghost on the writers of our Sacred Books, by which their words were rendered also the words of God, and, therefore, perfectly infallible.⁶³

This association and cooperation of the human and Divine by which man's language participates in and becomes divine is the Spirit's superintendence over verbal choices and superintendence over the entire product to preserve it from any inconsistencies. Because entire truthfulness is necessary for Divine authorship, as God is perfect and entirely true, inerrancy is secured.⁶⁴

The extent of inerrancy is quite complete. Doctrinal, scientific, logical contradictions in historical or geographical facts are non-existent. And this is the

63. Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, Ed. Samuel G. Craig, Philadelphia, The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1948, p. 420.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 173.

case even when the phenomena of Scriptures are investigated by critical research.

All the fierce light of criticism...has not yet been able to settle one indubitable error on the New Testament writers...No phenomena can be pled against verbal inspiration except errors, -- no error can be proved to exist within the sacred pages; that is the argument in a nut shell.⁶⁵

The foundation for this doctrine of inerrancy is vast, interrelated and firm. For although Warfield admits that plenary inspiration or any doctrine of inspiration is not the basis for faith in the truth of Christianity (as this is a historical question based on the previous fact of revelation),⁶⁶ inspiration and its correlate inerrancy are crucial nevertheless.

First, it is based on authoritative teaching. "We adopt it specifically because it is taught us as truth by Christ and His apostles" not on a priori or sentimental grounds.⁶⁷ Secondly, one needs inerrancy to have desired effect, namely, a communication from God. "Revelation is but half revelation unless it be infallibly communicated; it is but half communicated unless it be infallibly recorded."⁶⁸ Thirdly, inspiration which results in inerrancy

65. Ibid., p. 440.

66. Ibid., p. 121.

67. Ibid., p. 218.

68. Ibid., p. 442.

produces a practical authority for the faithful, for:

The authority which cannot assure of a hard fact is soon not trusted for a hard doctrine ...What we are to accept as the truth of God is a comparatively easy question, if we can open our Bibles with the confident belief that what we read there is commended to us by a fully credible "thus saith the Lord."⁶⁹

This practical authority is important also since even though Christianity can be vindicated historically, the average man is not and cannot be a historical scholar. Also, since historic vindication results in only substantial but adequate verification, the detailed promises given might be lost to the Christian.⁷⁰

Fourthly and finally, inerrancy has been consistently held through history because of "an instinctive feeling in the church that the trustworthiness of the Scriptures lies at the foundation of trust in the Christian system of doctrine."⁷¹ The Church, thus, has sensed "her need of an absolutely infallible Bible"⁷² down through history to provide a foundation for faith.

Thus, based on solid authority, theoretical, pragmatic and psychological factors support this doctrine of inerrancy which holds that the effect of Divine superintendence in the process of inspiration produces a record

69. Ibid., p. 182.

70. Ibid., pp. 121-122.

71. Ibid., pp. 120-121.

72. Ibid., p. 125.

completely free from errors thus perfectly filling the needs of Christians.

Contemporary Trends

Gaussen and Warfield are two leaders upon whom contemporary exponents of inerrancy lean heavily. However, certain contemporary trends may be summarized concerning this doctrine. 1) Inerrancy is relative to the purpose of the writers. Such distinctions as cultural and transcultural, form and content, are made to relieve Scripture of carrying the burden of precise scientific accuracy in regards to the structure of nature.⁷³

2) History is a current problem for exponents of this doctrine. Packer insists there is as much need "to insist on the truth of Biblical testimony on matters of historical fact as on matters of theology."⁷⁴ Carnell deals with internal historical discrepancies by tracing them to the sources the Biblical writers used. The writers of Scripture infallibly record what they have before them.⁷⁵ This constitutes a definite movement from Warfield's position.⁷⁶

73. c.f. Edward John Carnell, *The Case for Orthodox Theology*, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1959, pp. 92-97; J.I. Packer, *Fundamentalism and the Word of God*, Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1958, p. 96; Bernard Ramm, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*, Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1956, pp. 66-80.

74. Packer, op. cit., p. 100.

75. Carnell, op. cit., p. 111.

76. Ibid., p. 108.

From the important advocates of inerrancy some fundamental characteristics of the doctrine may be derived. 1) Inerrancy is a necessary effect of God's action in producing the record of revelation. 2) Inerrancy is limited to the originals of the Scriptural books. 3) Inerrancy is plenary as to its scope and includes accuracy in all of Scripture's statements, historical as well as theological (modified slightly by Carnell). 4) Inerrancy is necessary for authoritative certainty in faith.

Inerrancy as an attempt to protect the utter truthfulness of God and to know Him has arisen historically from interpretations of the prophets' experience in which God's activity with man was put forth in a bold "thus says the Lord." With God there is no error, thus God's inspiring activity must overcome man's finiteness and tendency to err. The testimony of Christ and the apostles to the Old Testament's authority add to the picture of freedom from error in all of Scripture. Thus inerrancy has come to maturity in its progress through history and may be now defined in the following manner: inerrancy, found in New Testament teaching, is the unique effect of the Spirit's unparalleled activity on or with the Biblical recorders writing of revelation, in order to produce a record of revelation which was

infallibly accurate and correct in theological as well as historical matters, that men might have an absolutely true, authoritative communication from God for the purposes of belief and godly living.

THE NEW TESTAMENT VIEW OF INSPIRATION - CHAPTER II

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter will be to attempt an interpretative analysis of the New Testament data for an understanding of its view of inspiration -- that is, the implications of God's activity in the recorded page. This will be done with a specific reference to inerrancy as a given possible implication of the data.

In undertaking such a study there are serious limitations. The New Testament has few, if any, explicit statements concerning the specific effects of inspiration. Such a view is, as many other doctrines, an implication from the data. Determining these implications is a rational process of interpretation and evaluation and thus subject to the inherent restrictions of these processes. Any view of inspiration thus cannot be held with absolute certainty as reflecting completely the New Testament view. However, it is significant that Christianity is not ultimately dependent on any view of inspiration. Warfield reflects this: "Were there no such thing as inspiration, Christianity would be true, and all its essential doctrines would be credibly witnessed to us..."¹

The method followed is a first hand study of the

1. B. B. Warfield, Inspiration and Authority, op. cit., p. 210.

New Testament data, compared with other sources, which deal with usage, allusions and statements concerning the Old Testament Scripture. The implications from this data are organized and related to statements purported to come from Jesus, secondly Paul, thirdly significant passages from other New Testament writers.

Jesus' View of Inspiration

Implications of Interpretative Usage of Old Testament

One might glean from Jesus' interpretative usage two essential elements, namely, the nature and value of the Old Testament. Matthew 5:17-48 gives a statement which indicates some of Jesus' thoughts concerning the Law's essential nature.

First, the Law and the prophets are a means of God's historic revelation of His will for man. This passage, found in the "Sermon on the Mount," indicates that Jesus' statements concerning kingdom members (5:3-16) may have raised questions concerning the authority of the Old Testament Scriptures in the hearers' minds. So Jesus quickly dispels any false notions relating to His position as a teacher of "new" doctrines. (The Beatitudes are distinctly not new but a significant interpretation of Old Testament concepts.) "Think not that I have come to abolish (καταλυν) the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them." (Matthew 5:17 R.S.V.) Thus the Old Testament is still valuable as a

source for knowing about God and His intentions for man.

But Jesus in saying this had made an astonishing claim for Himself and a negative statement about the nature of the "writings." Given by God this law must be complete, perfect and thus final -- from the point of view of the hearers. However, the word "fulfil" (πληρω) gives a different connotation. To fulfil is to bring into completion a potential. In the Greek it literally was used of a ship's sail filled out by the wind, or, as in John 12:3, Mary anointing Jesus' feet created the effect of the house being "filled" (πληρω) "With the fragrance of the ointment." (John 12:3, R. S. V.). From this sense of filling up an empty but potential area (such as a room or a sail) the word took the meaning of bringing to completion something already begun.² The end and completed potential or design is brought into final form and thus fulfilled. Webster's definition is accurate and helpful: "To carry into effect as an intention; to bring to pass as a design; also reflexively, to realize or manifest completely."³

To remain with the figure of the sailboat for a moment, Christ brings a new class of boat with more square

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2. Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, " " trans. by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1957, pp. 676-678.
 3. Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, "Fulfil," Springfield, G. & C. Merriam Co., 1956, p. 335.

feet of sails than was found in the old. The old, smaller boat performs its function -- the wind propels it -- but only according to the potential of the sails. Christ allows the "wind" to work more efficiently for His "sail" is more adequate, and thus "perfectly" fulfils the purpose of "boating."

The Law then is adequate but not perfect, that is, it adequately performs its function but there are intrinsic limitations within its structure, for its total potential has not been realized until now -- for "I have come...to fulfil." Thus now the Law finds its completion, perfection and finality drawn into the focus of Christ. Now men have to decide to throw stones or worship.

In the context Jesus, having claimed to fulfil the law, describes the nature of this fulfilled law. It is eternal and completely perfect. "For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot will pass from the law until all is accomplished." (Matthew 5:18). The interpretation of this passage is difficult. What law is Jesus referring to in verse 18? The possibilities seem to be: 1) the Old Testament -- that is, as a whole since "law" often means this in New Testament writings; 2) the moral law -- that is, the "ten commandments," which reflect the eternal moral standards of God, in contrast to ceremonial, social or political commands; 3) the "fulfilled" law -- that is, Jesus' re-

interpretation of the Old Testament law and prophecy. The writer would hold to the latter on the strength of the connective "for," which indicates the reason that Jesus has not come to abolish the law is that this Old Testament, as interpreted and completed by Christ, is eternal and minutely perfect. Secondly, Jesus, in verses 21-48 reinterprets and evaluates the tradition of the Scribes and Pharisees and in the process reveals limitations in the Old Testament itself. Thus Deut. 24:1-4 on divorce is abrogated, along with Numbers 30:2 on oaths, Exodus 21:24, Lev. 24:20 and Deut. 19:21 on recompensatory justice. The Old Testament statements are then not all entirely permanent in nature and the inner motive determines that classification.

But the Old Testament is a revelation from God in which the record of God's activity to reach man with redemptive revelation has begun to work its way out in history. It is by nature limited at least in some areas to the situation in which it was given but, nevertheless, adequately and substantially revealed God's mind and purposes now perfectly caught up and revealed in a Son.

If this indicates Jesus' view of the nature of the Old Testament, what is its value and how is that determined? Jesus indicates that the Old Testament has in its contents varying degrees of value. In Matthew 22:34-40

Jesus is put to the test by his religious opponents as they ask Him, "Teacher which is the great commandment in the law?" He gives His famous reply on love which is directed to God and man, then adds, "On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets." The foundational essence of the Old Testament is included in this statement and all other statements are to be viewed in its light. Wenham reflects this position by stating that "the summary itself brings home forcibly the fact that within the Old Testament all its elements are not equally fundamental."⁴

In a number of instances Jesus indicates the area of life which gives the writings their significance. His teaching concerning the sabbath in Matthew 12:1-8 is illustrative of the fact that the most significant thing in the law is not literal rule-keeping of the written ordinance and traditionally interpreted applications of the law. The attitudes and motivations of men are the significant ends of the law. If man's attitudes, concerns, motivating interests have not been altered, rule-keeping is useless, for this is what the law was intended to teach. Thus David did a legally wrong act in the light of ceremonial law when he ate the bread of the Presence, but was guiltless because of the motive involved. The Old Testament

4. J. W. Wenham, *Our Lord's View of the Old Testament*, London, The Tyndale Press, 1953, p. 18.

then is attempting to teach men these proper attitudes toward God and men and from this gets its true value.

The Beatitudes seem to be almost entirely Old Testament teaching in which true motives and attitudes given by the writings have been summarized. A classic example is, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." (Matt. 5:8) (R.S.V.). The 24th Psalm in its entirety is most beautifully summarized in those words -- "...who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart... He will receive blessing from the Lord..." Psalm 24:3-5 R.S.V.

The temptation narrative illustrates the inner significance of the writings. Jesus uses scripture which shows He looked to it to give Him correct and accurate descriptions of essentials, what life means -- obedience to God, what life's purpose is -- worshipping and serving God alone. Thus the inner significance in the spiritual relationship of men to God is the true value of the Old Testament.

Jesus viewed the scripture not only as the source of truth concerning inner moral living, but the source of theological or doctrinal authority. John 10:31-39 finds Jesus in a debate with the Jews over His claims. He, being a mere man, has claimed divinity! To answer their intellectual objections, thus opening the way for belief, Jesus appeals to their theological authority.

He refers them to Psalm 82, which teaches that men whose actions reveal an outgoing concern for others are "gods, sons of the Most High" sharing the privilege of a unique relationship with God while at the same time as mortals, subject to death.

On this basis Jesus' argument runs as follows:

1) If the term "gods" is applied to mortal receptors of God's message; 2) If the source of this message claims divinity; 3) then don't stumble over words since the lesser man and greater man are identified similarly, but look at evidence of my works and believe in me. Thus Jesus has proved that evidence for "blasphemy" is not simply terminology but has to do with the person. Theological problems of doctrine -- the Son of God concept and nature of blasphemy -- have been given more light from the exegesis and interpretation of a Psalm.

A crucial area for this study is found in the words the "scripture cannot be broken." (John 10:35). In what sense are these words to be taken? "Broken" is a translation of Abw which has various shades of meaning. Bauer suggests the following: 'loose', 'untie' bonds, fetters or something which was used to hold together an object. More appropriately in this context "destroy, bring to an end, abolish, do away with", particularly of commandments, laws and statements which are repealed

annulled or abolished.⁵

Jesus here seems to be arguing that the Jews should remain within the context of their basic authority. "There is a clear statement in the Scripture and you cannot do away with Scriptural statements by ignoring them or removing them. You must take them at face value in considering these theological matters." The Old Testament then is the basic source of theological authority.

Having indicated some of Jesus' ideas concerning the value of the Old Testament, the question then is how may that value be determined and appropriated? Jesus puts forward a rather clear method of evaluating the Old Testament writings in the discussion about divorce in Matthew 19: 3-12. In this account of the incident the question of the Pharisees is a question concerning the grounds of divorce, which at the time was a theological debate between the rabbinical schools of Shammai and the more liberal school of Hillel.⁶

Jesus' reply undercuts the question by interpreting from Scripture the ideal intention of God in the matter of marriage -- namely, that marriage is a life-long union

5. Bauer, op. cit., "Abba", pp. 484-485.

6. Raymond Abba, *The Nature and Authority of the Bible*, London, James Clarke, 1958, p. 272.

not to be destroyed. He does this by arguing, from the statement of Genesis 2:24, that it implies an act of union by God and therefore ideally man should not alter this situation.

The response of the Pharisees is that one must then explain a clear command of Moses which contradicts this viewpoint. (Deut.24:1-4) This statement Jesus explains as an accommodation to moral weakness and sin on the part of Moses, and that the original intention of God was not reflected in these statements of Moses. Thus the Old Testament contains teachings which accommodate man's imperfections and teachings which do not reflect the ideal eternal purposes of God. But how can this evaluation be made?

From Jesus' interpretative usage certain principles of evaluation may be discovered. One must first ascertain the total scriptural viewpoint in its essential elements concerning God and man's basic relationship to his Creator and his fellows. Secondly, the specific statement is evaluated in the light of the overall purposes and attitudes of God gleaned from the whole of scripture. If there is contradiction then the specific statement has limited purpose and application.

Jesus therefore is exhorting His hearers to use their reason to evaluate the particular parts of scripture in the light of the whole. For "He Himself knew how to

stimulate the exercise of reason and repeatedly He encouraged His hearers to go beneath the externals of Scripture language and think out its underlying principles."⁷

Summary Conclusions

Jesus, through His interpretative usage of the Old Testament, has given primary data concerning the nature and value of the Old Testament. From this data the following implications are drawn: 1) God has limited his communication to men by giving partial and restricted moral teachings which are not in accord with His ideal intention for men. God accommodated Himself in some areas, such as divorce, to man's weaknesses. 2) Therefore, the Old Testament writings must be viewed as adequate and substantially true, i.e., adequately and substantially reflecting the intentions of God for men. The Old Testament in this context has performed its purpose of redemptive revelation. 3) If God allowed a partially limited communication in the area of moral behavior, it would not be inconsistent if God allowed historical writers of Kings and Chronicles to work with limited resources and thus produce limited but adequate and substantially correct histories. This is particularly

7. Wenham, op. cit., p. 16.

true since historical difficulties found in these writings, i.e., internal inconsistencies⁸, do not deal with any essential teaching, either spiritual, moral or historical. 4) Man must evaluate the teaching of scripture from its essential principles and basic purposes since scripture has varying degrees of value. These essential principles are related to God's essential character and creative intentions and secondly, spiritual principles of life which deal with proper attitudes, motives and concerns in man's relationship to God and his neighbor. 5) Therefore, because of these essential purposes carried out in the Old Testament, it is a source of theological authority, that is, from the purposes it expresses it is normative and reliable to communicate truth, the truth of God.

Implications of Prophetic Fulfillment

Prophecy plays a significant role in Jesus' use of the Old Testament. Because of this fact an attempt will be made to investigate this area of quotation that other conclusions concerning Jesus' view of scripture may be derived from these statements.

The content of prophetic teaching is divine revelation. This is reflected in two aspects of prophecy. Prophecy

8. Edward John Carnell, The Case for Orthodox Theology, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1959, pp.102-111.

is an insight into God's concerns, will and attitudes. It gives the significance of events as seen from the divine perspective. Secondly, prophecy is sometimes viewed as predictive -- imaging beforehand significant events.

The sources of prophetic teachings, as indicated by Jesus, are taken from whole passages of Scriptures thus including a significant context. Statements of prophecy are not gotten only from isolated verses.⁹

In Luke 22:37 (R.S.V.) Jesus says, "For I tell you that this scripture must be fulfilled in me, 'And he was reckoned with transgressors'; for what is written about me has its fulfillment." This passage is taken from Isaiah 53:12, the famous Servant passage. Jesus undoubtedly used this particular verse to indicate the total context of a Messianic idea which was in His mind. The particular verse gives one aspect of this total context for emphasis.

Jesus, having washed the disciples feet in their last supper together, indicates the blessings of following His example. But He knows all the disciples are not to be ultimately trustworthy, "it is that the scripture may be

9. C.H.Dodd, According to the Scriptures, London, Nisbet & Co., 1952, p. 126.

fulfilled, 'He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.'" (John 13:18 R.S.V.) This reference is to Psalm 41:9, which speaks of a righteous man who, trusting in God, is being persecuted by his enemies who desire to see his death. But God raises him up, thus vindicating his character. The whole Psalm is beautifully illustrative of Jesus' suffering at the hands of His enemies and His vindication through resurrection by God. The Psalm is not predictive in a literal sense but enshrines principles which are completed in their fullest significance in Jesus.

However, prophecy is not necessarily literal and verbatim in **application** but substantially carries out a basic principle or event. Thus in Psalm 41:4 (R.S.V.) the righteous sufferer cries, "I have sinned against thee," a statement not applicable to Christ. Or in crying for mercy he petitions God, "Raise me up that I may requite them", (Psalm 41:10 R.S.V.) again not reflecting the person of our Lord in attitude. It may be argued that the fulfillment was only one verse but then one is forced into a very unfortunate position concerning the real possibility of prophecy at all -- prophecy is relegated to indiscriminate proof-texting. F. F. Bruce states, "The New Testament tendency to present a coherent Christian exegesis of self-contained sense units of the Old Testament scripture is a safeguard against an atomizing interpretation."¹⁰

10. F.F. Bruce, *Biblical Exegesis in the Qumran Texts*, Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1959, pp 68-69.

A method of interpreting the prophetic elements underlies this view of prophecy. C. H. Dodd in his significant work "According to the Scriptures" outlines this process. We have already hinted at some of its main features. They are: 1) The selection of passages from the prophets and Psalms, viewed as wholes; 2) The scriptures were interpreted upon intelligible and consistent principles along patterns found in the Old Testament itself. The method has then roots in the original intention of the scriptures; 3) The gospel facts are associated with these developing lines of thought and provide the meaning of the gospel facts.¹¹

This method of interpretation of prophecy is most probably original with Jesus, who opened the minds of the disciples to understand the scripture (Luke 24:44-46 R.S.V.). The disciples were privileged to gain a significant insight into the meaning of the events they had experienced.¹²

Summary Conclusions

A few principles concerning the scriptures may be now given from Jesus' use of prophecy. 1) The scripture

11. Dodd, op. cit., pp 109, 126-127.

12. Ibid., p. 110.

contains prophetic statements which reveal God's essential nature and the prophetic expectancy of God's continued and greater working in the future to complete purposes He has already been working out in the life of Israel. 2) Prophecy is divine but it must be thought of as substantially accurate as certain elements in it are temporary. Absolute correspondence between prophecy and future event is not forthcoming. 3) The method of prophetic interpretation initiated by Jesus is original but based on an historical understanding of the text. Magical, mystical, allegorical, supernaturally hidden meanings are not descriptive of this prophetic interpretation. An interpreter has come to correlate various elements but these various strands are discovered in the text, not interpolated by the mind of the correlator.

Implications of Formulas of Quotations

Jesus introduces His quotations with significant statements. They, taken as a whole, emphasize the agents involved in scripture. The divine agent involved in scripture is often the only emphasis in the formula. Thus in Matt. 15:4 Jesus introduces a compiled quotation of Exodus 20:12 and 21:17 concerning the proper attitude toward parents with, "For God commanded," (*By ap God's eimen*). The Old Testament passages indicate that God is the one who is speaking.

Another highly interesting passage emphasizing the divine in the Old Testament is found in Matthew 19:4-5, where the Divine Creator is given as the source of a statement made by the narrator. "Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said..."(R.S.V.). The passage referred to is Genesis 2:24, which is a statement given by the narrator. God is clearly communicating His will in the Old Testament in such a substantial way that the written statements accurately reflect His purposes.

Man is not neglected as an important agent in the Old Testament records. Thus one reads the formula in Mark 7:6 (R.S.V.), "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites...". Men have spoken.

The extent of a man's involvement is shown in Luke 20:37 (R.S.V.). "But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the passage about the bush, where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham...". This passage in Exodus 3:6 indicated God as the speaker. This speech has thus been recorded by Moses and passed on in the scriptures.

A third category of formula brings the first two together - God and man interact to bring divine revelation. In Mark 7:9-10, the parallel passage to Matt. 15:4 concerning parents, Mark records Jesus as upbraiding the

religious leaders for "rejecting the commandment of God (*την εντολην του Θεου*) in order to keep your tradition. For Moses said ...". The connective 'for' (*γαρ*) indicates clearly Moses as a man was speaking the commands of God.

Nicole comments:

These passages (where man is involved) supply clear evidence that the divine superintendence was not viewed as obliterating the human agency and characteristics of the writers, but rather, that God secured a perfectly adequate presentation [*italics mine*] of the truth through the responsible and personal agency of the men he called and prepared for this sacred task. ¹³

A more general formula is found as often used by Jesus -- "it is written". This is an expression which indicates the statement which follows contained in the holy writings is of normative authority and expressive of God's character and purposes. ¹⁴ That this is the case is the very presupposition of quoting any statement as authority for one's position. That this formula brings with it the implication that the "appeal is made to the indefectible authority of the Scriptures of God, which in all their parts and in every one of their declarations are clothed with the authority of God Himself," ¹⁵ is

13. Roger Nicole, "New Testament Use of the Old", Revelation and the Bible, ed. by Carl F.H. Henry, Grand Rapids, Baker Book House, 1958, p.140.

14. Cf., B.B. Warfield, op. cit. p. 240.

15. Ibid., p. 240.

something else again. The appeal is made to a scriptural authority which, as we have indicated, has varying degrees of value and subject to certain limitations. Christ quotes those passages of highest value and significance - a fact beautifully illustrated by his compilation of two distinct statements of scripture as a summary of "all the law and the prophets".

Summary Conclusions

The facts concerning scripture taken from the formulas of quotation are as follows: 1. God is active with the scriptures communicating his basic intentions and character through the records. God is present as the source of the writings irrespective of the mode of revelation, for when God's intentions and attitudes are being presented He is revealed; 2. Man plays an active role in the revelation of the Old Testament. This insures one result -- human fallibility has a part in the scripture even as originally recorded. This is true unless there is direct evidence that men become divine in the process of receiving God's revelation. Such evidence is not found in the New Testament. If men had become divine in understanding when receiving revelation, God could not then have communicated with men -- the presupposition of the

scriptures. God has communicated with men! The fact that this revelation is recorded further negates the possibility of absolute communication. All languages, including Hebrew and Greek, are imperfect instruments of communication. A thought can not be absolutely communicated with language. For the use of "implication" is necessary to communicate and all implications of statements cannot be known absolutely and with unfailing certainty. 3. The Bible, however, does communicate adequately and substantially that the purposes of God in redemptive revelation may be realized. It thus fulfills the purposes for which it was given.

Implications ~~from~~ the Manner of Quotation

Under this heading, Jesus' use of the textual sources will be investigated. First, what were the sources Jesus used? There seems to be three alternatives, all of which were used to a greater or lesser degree by Jesus. The Hebrew text, a dead language in Jesus' day, would be a noteworthy source to one acquainted with it; the Septuagint (LXX) was the most popular translation of the Old Testament in Jesus' day and was used extensively by Him; thirdly, an oral or partly written Aramaic translation -- Jesus' native language -- was most probably a source for the Old Testament text quoted by Jesus.¹⁶

16. Crawford H. Toy, *Quotations in the New Testament*, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1884, p. IX; Arthur Jeffery, "The Text and Ancient Versions of the Old Testament," *The Interpreter's Bible*, ed. by George A. Buttrick, Vol. I, New York, Abingdon Press, 1952, p. 57.

All of these textual materials were substantially adequate witnesses to the early Hebrew writings and were used by Jesus as His authority. All of the following combinations of textual sources are found in statements purported to be from Jesus; statements which agree both with the Hebrew Masoretic text and the Septuagint, the Septuagint against the Hebrew, conversely, quotations which are found in the Hebrew and not in the Septuagint, and finally quotations of Old Testament passages which agree with neither the Hebrew or the Septuagint.¹⁷

Roger Nicole gives the implication of the use of translations.

Now no translation can give a completely adequate and coextensive rendering of the original. A certain measure of change is inevitable, even when one is quoting by divine inspiration.¹⁸

However, Nicole postulates that even when this Scripture is appealed to as the Word of God "it is not claimed that they viewed anything but the original communication as vested in full with divine inerrancy."¹⁹ This supposed "claim" is not forthcoming from the data of the New Testament. Nicole goes on to state that the use of a translation in the New Testament "in spite of its occasional defects, teaches the important lesson that the basic message

17. Toy, op. cit., p. IX.

18. Nicole, op. cit., p. 142.

19. Ibid., p. 143.

which God purposed to deliver can be conveyed even through a translation...."²⁰ It was this basic message that God desired to communicate, it was this that was authoritative for Jesus whether found in the Hebrew "autograph," the Septuagint translation, or for us in the popular versions used today. Through them all God may still communicate His redemptive revelation. An argument that authority is related to inerrant "autographs" is philosophical theorizing which has no basis from the New Testament evidence. Jesus worked with practical authoritative writings -- the textual materials He had in His situation. That God communicated through them was sufficient cause to hold them as His norm for life.

Jesus followed normal principles in regard to the way He quoted from His sources. He at times literally follows a particular version. At other times He paraphrases and gives a free rendering which is interpretative so the meaning He desires to communicate comes clearly forth.²¹ This is so, for Jesus is interested in the underlying ideas which the words are the means of communicating. Although some of the particular verbiage may differ

20. Ibid., p. 143.

21. Pierre Ch. Marcel, "Our Lord's Use of Scripture," *Revelation and the Bible*, ed. by Carl F. H. Henry, Grand Rapids, Baker Book House, 1958, p. 122; Toy, op. cit., pp. XX-XXI.

in His sources, the words present are adequate for their purposes -- as are Jesus' interpretative paraphrases which give the essential meaning.

Summary Conclusions

The manner in which Jesus quotes His texts gives further insight into His view of the Scripture. 1) God's communication to men is found from the source of the textual traditions at hand. These, though containing inaccuracies, fulfil God's purpose. This is a principle which is involved in God's communication which applies to the original writings as well as copies and translations. 2) These texts even with their inaccuracies are the authority men must have to know God and to live because these texts communicate in their words what God would have men know.

Implications of the Presence of the Spirit.

Matthew 22:41-46 records an incident in the final days of Jesus' life, as He is teaching in the temple attempting to convince the people of His Messiahship. As the current messianic idea was related to David, Jesus attempts to clarify how the Messiah can be called a "son," which signifies a lesser position to the father, when the father David called the messiah "lord" in Psalm 110:1.

Jesus seals his lofty concept of the Messianic office with a reference to this Psalm by arguing on the

basis of the Psalm, "How is it then that David, inspired by the Spirit, (ΕΥ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙ) calls him Lord...?" (Matthew 24:43 R. S. V.). What then are the implications of ΕΥ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙ -- in the Spirit?

In this context there seem to be two possible interpretations. The first is that David was having an ecstatic visionary experience. Thus John in the book of Revelation introduces his vision with this phrase. (Rev. 1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10). The writer encounters in an **exalted** state truth of God. (c.f. Ezekial 3:12,14; 37:1).

Closely related to this usage is the fact that the phrase 'in the Spirit' or 'by the Spirit' connotes the action of God upon men into the recognition of Divine truth. The Holy Spirit is active in revelation. So Ephesians 3:5 indicates the recognition of the Gentile's place in the inheritance of God has been revealed (αποκαλύπτω) to apostles and prophets by the spirit. (ΕΥ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙ) Thus God's purposes and will have been known through the agency of the Spirit. This is the sense of Matthew 24:43. David has expressed the truth of the messianic office accurately.

Thus the work of the Spirit in the Old Testament writers is to adequately communicate to men the essential truth of God that man must know if he is to be in fellowship with the mind and will of God.

This inspiring work of the Holy Spirit has to do with the writer of scripture receiving a divinely ~~given~~ insight. It has not to do essentially with the recording of that revelation. Jesus assumes that the prophetic insight has been adequately communicated in the scriptures and can be discovered in its pages.

Summary Conclusions

Jesus recognizes the activity of the Holy Spirit in the scriptural content. 1) The purpose of that activity is to guide men into an understanding of essential truths which He is seeking to reveal. 2) To the end of the communication and understanding of these essential truths the Spirit operates in all of the scripture and His effect is present in all of the scripture, including historical inconsistencies in the book of Kings and Chronicles. That the Spirit is operative even in the context of weakness, limitations, error and human sin to perform the work of moving men into the context of God's will is one of the great facts of the scriptures. God uses human instruments to perform His will in all areas of experience as He used men to record His revelation. 3) Therefore, the result of inspiration is not absolute accuracy in all details.

Inspiration in the Potential New Testament

Implications of the Nature of Jesus' Words

Jesus makes reference to the content of what now is called the New Testament. Thus, for the purposes of this paper, it will be valuable to summarize them. In considering the nature of Jesus' words, the records purport to claim that Jesus considered His words eternal and complete. He has come to bring into completion what was begun in the Old Testament for the perfect expression of God's mind was found in Him. "Heaven and earth will pass away." (Luke 21:33 R.S.V.). Jesus comes to perfectly express the mind of God and fulfill His creative purposes for man in all righteousness.

Jesus' words are not only eternal in nature, they are "spirit and life" (John 6:63 R.S.V.). They deal with the inner man, motives, attitudes and basic life orientation which are effective within and continue to be effective within hearers who have responded to Him. (This is the significance of the perfect tense "have spoken" in John 6:63.) They are not just literal propositions but a life changing dynamic power communicated by the Spirit.

The literal significance of Jesus' words found in the gospels are that they must be adequate to fulfill this purpose of inner transformation. That fact is shown

in parallel passages where at times the literal order or similar words are lacking but the essential meaning is the same.

Implications of the Spirit's Activity

In John's gospel, chapters 14-16, insight is given as to the Spirit's work with and through the disciples. Part of the Spirit's activity, as the Spirit of God's Truth, is to affect the moral conscience of men, convincing the "world of sin and of righteousness and of judgement." (John 16:8 R.S.V.). The coming of the Spirit to the disciples is the prerequisite of this activity of the Spirit which takes on a fuller and more perfect mode of expression in the world. Thus the Spirit works through disciples to perform His inner moral activity.

In relation to the disciples, the Spirit guides them into all of God's truth, which is essential to make clear to man God's will, desires, attitudes and concerns most perfectly revealed in Christ (John 16:12-15). This the Spirit will do by bringing into remembrance all that Jesus said to them concerning the essential prerequisite knowledge about abiding in Christ. (John 14:26). Thus the significant words of Jesus will be remembered, allowing for authoritative written records.

Also in relation to the disciples, the Spirit provides a witness to Jesus. The disciples will bear witness "because you have been with me from the beginning"

(John 15:27 R.S.V.). They are therefore in the most authoritative position to declare Christ. That the Spirit is always present in this declaration is implied as He, through the witness of the disciples, will bring to bear on the moral consciences of men the truth they hear declared by the disciples. The disciples then must be substantially correct in the essentials of the message of Christ--a need assured by the presence and work of the Spirit of Truth.

Summary Conclusions

- 1) The words Jesus has spoken are eternal. But obviously a "word" is to communicate ideas. These ideas are not only intellectual propositions, but are able to affect the spirit of men. Verbatim accuracy then in recording Jesus' words is not necessary, nor a fact.
- 2) The disciples with the guidance of the spirit have caught the essential nature of Jesus' words, communicating them to their readers in a substantially accurate fashion that God, through His Spirit, may perform His inner life giving work of grace.
- 3) The fact that Jesus' apostles are led and guided by the Spirit ~~does~~ not make them inerrant in all matters; for Jesus, in the Spirit, prepared them for their task of communication through normal channels of experientially learning by being with Christ. The Holy Spirit interprets and guides in their consideration of

that experience that they may communicate it accurately enough to answer such questions as "What must I do to be saved?"

Conclusions

The problem of the nature of God's activity in the recording of revelation is not resolved by explicit scriptural claims. Jesus has supplied the data from which ~~inferences~~ may be drawn concerning the effect of God's involvement in the recording of revelation.

1) The source of the scriptural insights concerning God's activities and will is God Himself acting to effectively communicate revelation to men. Thus, because of this fact of God's primary activity, God is the ultimate authority and scripture is a derived authoritative recording of that great movement of God.

2) The means of communication is the Spirit who acts to guide men in their understanding of the essential truth God is seeking to reveal.

3) The effects of God's guidance is correctness and accuracy in the essentials related to God's purpose in redemptive revelation.

4) Absolute accuracy in all the details of scripture is not a result of inspiration, for God has limited Himself to the weakness of men who err.

5) Because its essential purpose has been carried out, the scripture, including current versions, is a unique

theological authority, for its essential principles are normative and reliable in communicating the truthful revelation of God.

Paul's View of Inspiration

Implications from Interpretative Usage

Paul's view of inspiration -- God's activity in the recording of revelation -- is closely related to that of Jesus. The data for Paul's view will be selected with the background of Jesus' view in mind that repetition may be limited.

In his argument that all kinds of men, both Jews and Gentiles, are being controlled by sin in Romans 3:9-20, Paul used Scripture to illustrate and validate his point by a literal compilation of verses from the Psalms and Isaiah concerning the nature of men separated from God.

This use of literal interpretation indicates that the Scriptures have a normative value in matters of the God and man relationship and the essential nature of that relationship is given in the Scriptures. The underlying principles of Psalms and history, of law and prophecy all witness and are authoritative for the purpose of relating man to God.

Prophecy witnesses to the same value of Scripture. For in it the image of the gospel of God was given in promise to the prophets who looked forward to the new great

event and shared in the basic principles of righteousness and love involved in that Gospel and fulfilled by it. Messianic fulfillment is viewed from basic principles enshrined in Old Testament prophecies and Psalms. Thus Paul, sharing Jesus' Messianic interpretation (see pages 49-53), gives his "Gospel," "that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ...that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures..." (1 Cor. 15:3,4 R. S. V.)

Paul and the use of allegory creates a perplexing problem. If Paul used this method of interpretation can his results be valid? In relationship to inspiration one may also ask, does the recording of revelation validate the methods used to communicate those God-given insights and also what does this imply as to the nature of the recorded word?

A Rabbinical method of exegesis which may be termed allegorical consisted of seeing a deeper hidden meaning which is not involved in the normal meaning of the text.²² Spiritual truths are gleaned from passages which actually are not intended to produce them. A literal quality is also involved in this Rabbinical procedure. Each minute part of Scripture had isolated meaning even when removed from its context and supplied elsewhere.²³

22. Alan Richardson, Christian Apologetics, New York, Harper & Brothers, 1957, p. 180.

23. Toy, op. cit., p. XXIII.

Thus this attitude toward the text implies a plenarily equal value in all parts of Scripture and the presence of supernatural, mystical meaning in a text which is completely, absolutely perfect and revelatory of all truths.²⁴

Passages in which it is suggested that Paul interprets Scripture in this way are 1 Cor. 9:9 and 1 Tim. 5:18, concerning a restriction on muzzling oxen, applying it to providing for apostles; 1 Cor. 10:1-4, dealing with Christ as the supernatural rock; Gal. 3:16, the seed of Abraham; and especially Gal. 4:21-31. In the latter passage Paul himself explains that he is about to embark on allegorizing in supporting his attack against the Judaizers in the Galatian church -- "Now this is an allegory." (ἀλληγορεῖν) (Gal. 4:24, R. S. V.)

Did Paul then hold this particular concept of interpretation? The writer does not think so, for Paul's use of allegory is not as fanciful and unhistorical as many make it to be. Generally speaking, Paul's allegorical interpretation is confined within the following principles:

- 1) Paul's basic assumption is not that attributed to usual allegorizing theologians (including many of the church fathers) that all Scriptures are of plenary value and there is always to be discovered a deeper 'hidden' meaning;
- 2) Paul takes principles found already in the original

24. Ibid., p. XXII; W. Sanday, Inspiration, Second ed., London, Longmans, Green and Co., 1894, p. 79.

context of the Old Testament, then relates basically similar principles revealed in the new event of Christ by putting them into the form and terminology of the old narrative. Gal. 4:21-31 beautifully illustrates this. The principle of the narrative is that the promises of God depend upon grace received through faith, not works, for their fulfillment. In Galatians Paul has been arguing that the promised position of sonship depends not upon works but faith, for by faith ~~one~~ receives the Spirit which sets us free from bondage of works. The principle being established, particulars are associated always on Scriptural authority. Therefore, in chapter 4:27, 30 Paul gives Biblical quotations to bring authority into the metaphor. (Verse 27 is from Isaiah 54:1; the second from the context of the original incident). 3) The purpose of this procedure is basically to illustrate a point already established by regular means -- Scriptural quotations, experience, logic, etc. Paul does not prove essential points in his argument by allegory. It is a psychological, literary method to clinch an argument in a strikingly appealing fashion -- especially so in Galatians 4, where Paul is arguing with Judaizing law-keeping Jews.

Summary Conclusion

For Paul the Scriptures ~~is~~ given that man might understand his relationship to God, and in order to fulfill

this purpose it has been adequately recorded so it may be used as an authority for life. The new event of Christ substantiates this divine nature; for the principles of the faith-life, given within these pages, are still authoritative even for Christian believers living in Christ.

Implications of the Formulas of Quotation

For Jesus the divine element in Scripture is significantly reflected in the formulas which introduce Scriptural statements. A somewhat different expression is used to describe the divine nature of Scripture apart from a quotation, and for convenience it will be discussed here. Paul states in Romans 3:2 that the Jews have certain privileges which the Gentiles do not have. One primary advantage is that the Jews are "entrusted with the oracles of God." (*τα λόγια τοῦ Θεοῦ*) (R. S. V.).

In classical Greek such writers as Euripides and Herodotus of the Fifth Century B. C. use *α λόγια τοῦ Θεοῦ* to indicate basically short statements from divine sources.²⁵ The Septuagint relates this word to the statements of the prophets who are giving the truth of God as the Spirit moves in their lives.²⁶ In the New Testament usage Romans 3:2 very likely refers to the fact that the Jews are in possession of the Scriptures in which is found the message of God to men, communicating God's will and pur-

25. Bauer, " *λόγος* ," op. cit., p. 477.

26. 2 Samuel 23:1; Isaiah 13:1; Malachi 1:1.

poses for men. Stephen, in Acts 7:38, speaks of Moses as the receptor of "living oracles." (A. S. V.). Hebrews 5:12 indicates that the readers of the letter are immature and need instruction again in the "first principles of God's word." (A. S. V.) This may refer to the Scriptures (so Warfield) or to the new message about Christ.²⁷ Finally in 1 Peter 4:11, Peter is exhorting those who are gifted that they use the gift for the benefit of others in such a manner that God may be glorified. Teachers should then speak as if they were uttering "the oracles of God."

Thus the phrase "Oracle of God" indicates that God has and still is communicating through what He has revealed to the prophetic mind. The means of this communication is the authoritative Scriptures (or apostles). The Scriptures are not all prophetic in a strict sense, i.e., related to the unusual experience of the class of religious leaders in Israel and Judah, but they are prophetic in a more general sense that all the Scriptures are valuable in revealing God through His redemptive revelation in the life of Israel.

Another usage of introductory formulas by Paul which may express an emphasis on the divine character of

27. Warfield, op. cit., p. 405.

the Scriptures is the way Paul personalizes the Scripture. The Scripture speaks to Pharaoh in Romans 9:17, and in Galatians 3:8 foresees and preaches the "gospel beforehand to Abraham." Warfield suggests that "these acts could be attributed to 'Scripture' only as the result of such a habitual identification, in the mind of the writer, of the text of Scripture with God as speaking..."²⁸

Paul in using ~~these~~ formulas indicates that the Scriptures are prophetic writings communicating the mind of God. In Galatians 3:8 the prophetic Scriptures "foresee" the fact that God would justify the Gentiles by faith. In Romans 9:17 the Scriptures teach the principle that God's sovereignty reflects itself to His glory in the actions of even rebellious men. The Scriptures substantially and adequately reflect the mind of God that man might know Him.

The assertion of an identification of the text with God as speaking needs careful explanation. The Scriptures are a record. A record never makes a perfect correspondence to the event signified by that record because of limitations of knowledge and perspective on the part of the receptor involved in the process of communication itself. This is heightened when the communication is between the immortal, eternal Spirit and fallible man. Therefore, the text substantially and adequately communicates

28. Ibid., pp. 299-300.

the revelation of God, not perfectly, because the Scriptures are a record and as such limited by their very nature. But Paul indicates that ~~one~~ may know objectively that the text -- by which he would mean the Septuagint -- is divine in origin, for it practically and adequately performs its purpose of communicating the content of God's message to men. The source of Scripture is reflected by its contents and not so much its mode of communication. God is revealed in all of Scripture whether it is by prophetic experience or careful research and recording of traditions. Textual limitations do not then hinder Paul, for the truth of God as recorded has been transmitted sufficiently accurately.

Paul not only emphasizes the divine agent in producing Scripture but ^{also} the human plays a significant role. Thus Paul, describing in Romans 10 the situation of Israel, quotes from the Song of Moses in Deut. 32:21, words Moses attributes to God. This quotation is introduced in Romans 10:19, "First Moses says..." He goes on in verse 20 to introduce a quote by the words, "Then Isaiah is so bold as to say..." These latter words are from Isaiah 65:1 ~~wanda~~ are seen as coming from God. Moses and Isaiah have adequately captured the mind and concerns of God, who is going to act in a new way with the nations.

Paul puts his ideas concerning the divine-human

activity in a phrase which combines the two elements.

"The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through ^Isaiah the prophet..." (Acts 28:25, R.S.V.)

The divine element maintains the significant place as the source while the prophet is the means of communicating the message of God. Both are active, insuring an adequate communication which can affect the lives of men as they read it.

"It is written" is the most usual introduction of a quotation used by Paul. As in any quotation this implies the statement is authoritative, that is, it reflects truly and accurately God's purposes. One cannot maintain that this formula implies all of Scripture has such a high degree of accuracy or that no inconsistencies can be found in the Scripture of any kind. For as Henry Preserved Smith has pointed out, this formula is used in 1 Cor. 3:19 of a quotation of one of Job's accusers, Eliphaz the Temanite. All of this accuser's statements are not reflective of God's purposes, however, for "The Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite: 'My wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends; for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has.'" (Job 41:7 R.S.V.) Obviously Paul considered this particular statement to be adequate but one could hardly suggest he would ascribe equal authority to all the statements of Eliphaz.²⁹ Paul carefully evaluated

29. Henry Preserved Smith, *Inspiration and Inerrancy*, Cincinnati, Robert Clarke & Co., 1893, p. 270. Cited by Carnell, op. cit., pp. 102-103.

these statements in terms of a larger context and understanding of God's purposes. The conclusion of such a study issues forth in an "it is written."

Summary Conclusion

Paul's use of formulas gives a direction for his view of the record. 1) The content of the Scripture is the essential message of God to man, for God has communicated to man through the Scriptural record. 2) Therefore this essential message must be accurately enough recorded to communicate the message concerning Him and His relation to His creation. 3) This practical purpose has been accomplished through God's activity with man in the revelatory act which has been recorded in writing. This writing maintains God's purpose even as it is translated and copied so that its authority is an ever functioning one. 4) But because the Scriptures are a record they share inherent limitations of this mode of communication which are involved in the nature of limited man.

Implications of Manner of Quotation

Paul reflects his Hellenistic upbringing in his use and devotion to the Septuagint. "Paul almost always cites after the Septuagint." This is true except in only a few cases where familiar passages are probably taken from an Aramaic translation.³⁰ He thus uses the sources

30. Toy, op. cit., p. XXXVI.

at hand for his authority.

Ephesians 4:8 gives an insight into a significant divergence which reflects Paul's attitude toward the Scripture. In quoting Psalm 68:18 he speaks about divergent gifts coming from the same source of the Spirit, saying, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." (R.S.V.). But both in the Hebrew and the Septuagint the reading is the opposite. "Thou didst ascend the high mount, leading captives in thy train, and receiving gifts among men..." (Psalm 68:18 R.S.V.).

F. F. Bruce suggests that a parallel is found between the Qumran scholars and the New Testament interpreters. They selected texts on the basis of which would best suit their interpretations.³¹ That Paul chose another traditional statement which diverged from his usual authority more adequately gives explanation to this phenonema of interpretation then a probable interpretative paraphrase.³²

The reading Paul uses is given in the Peshitto-Syriac and the Targum, indicating a textual tradition of the time is behind Paul's reading here.³³ Thus ~~one~~ sees that Paul evaluated his sources by the criteria of his New Testament argument. He does not seem to be driven by a textual

31. F. F. Bruce, *Biblical Exegesis in the Qumran Texts*, Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1959, p. 70.

32. C.F. Ibid., p. 70; Toy, op.cit., p. 198; William Lee, *The Inspiration of Holy Scripture*, Second ed., London, Livingtons, 1857, pp. 353-354.

33. Toy, op. cit., p. 197.

critical motivation of using the materials at hand to get as close as possible to an original autograph. So the authoritative word is in translations and current versions which are judged best by the intended use and interpretation in the mind of the writer. Authority then was flexible and adequate to communicate the message of God to men, a process which involved its reception by men who, moved by the Spirit, used the best knowledge and judgment they had to understand it.

Summary Conclusions

On the basis of Paul's manner of quoting his sources, which was very similar to that of Jesus, ~~one sees~~ that Paul is not attempting to discover an original autograph for authority but that current traditions and his purpose of citation gave him a flexible, adequate authority which, guided by his interpretive understanding, moved him to a choice of text and mode of quotation. A concern for an original record is thus lacking.

Implications from the Presence of the Spirit

For Paul, the moving dynamic of the Spirit of God was essential in his understanding of the Gospel. The Spirit is that divine factor which is the means given to communicate the revelation of God. For it is the Spirit ~~who~~ can effectively reveal the personality of God -- His

will, mind and attitude. (1 Cor. 2:10). Thus one of the great functions of the Holy Spirit is revelatory.

Spiritual knowledge, however, is now limited to the finite mind of man and thus only transitory in content. This Spiritual knowledge, however, is adequate to fulfil its function in man's present situation where his capacity for divine knowledge is limited. So the prophetic gift as well as the utterance of knowledge, all inspired...by one and the same Spirit, (1 Cor. 12:11) is imperfect. "For our knowledge is imperfect (*ἐκ μέρους*) and our prophecy is imperfect, but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away. (1 Cor. 13:8, R.S.V.).

The word translated imperfect does not connote inconsistency as much as partiality. This limitation is not on the part of the Spirit, "for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God." (1 Cor. 2:10, R.S.V.). The limitation is in man through whom the Spirit works to reveal God. For man can only have relative knowledge in this world, even only relative knowledge of God. Man's mind has a limited capacity and his reason finds in every branch of knowledge barriers and paradoxes obstructing his search to understand. God's redemptive revelation to man thus involves itself in the limited possibilities of reasonable knowledge -- if God has chosen through a written record to give knowledge of Himself. But man may use the written record and its data, his emotions

and will in an existential commitment to God in which he shares an immediate knowledge of God. This knowledge is a sharing of life -- attitudes, motivations and concerns, it is the true end of redemptive revelation. The Scriptures stand as a means to that end -- always a limited means, but one which adequately performs its function -- giving primary and substantial redemptive "data" from God.

The Spirit, in working out this purpose, guides man in understanding this redemptive data gotten from revelatory events that God's purpose may be accomplished. That He makes up for shortcomings in all the conditions of knowing involved in Scripture, such as inadequate or inconsistent sources in historical books, is another question.³⁴ God has operated in history to provide man with the conditions of knowing Himself in revelatory events. That God has supplied all the conditions sufficient for His purposes and limited the writers to those conditions seems to be the case.

The fact that Scriptures are inspired is a direct claim of Paul -- "All Scripture is inspired by God" -- ΘΕΟΠΝΕΥΜΕΝΟΙ. (2 Tim. 3:16.) What are the implications of this claim?

34. C.F. Carnell, op. cit., pp. 102-110; Everett F. Harrison, "The Phenomena of Scripture," Revelation and the Bible, ed. by Carl F.H. Henry, Grand Rapids, Baker Book House, 1958, p. 249.

This particular word is a combination of θεός God and πνέω, to breathe or blow. Thus in Matthew 7:25 winds blew against the house built upon a rock, thus creating the effect of pressure. Also the word has the connotation of 'breathe out,' 'give forth an odor,' which is witnessed to in the Martyrdom of Polycarp 15:2. Polycarp's burning body gave forth a pleasant, spicy odor which came forth in the smoke. In Ignatius' letter to the Ephesians, 17:1, the purpose of Jesus' anointing is in order "that he might breathe immortality upon" and therefore 'into the church.'³⁵ The word etymologically speaking thus indicates the transference of something against or into another object -- wind against the house, odor against one's nostrils, immortality into a person by a pressure or influence. Thus God-blown Scriptures means that God's 'pressure' is influential in the Scriptural writings. The 'how' is a question of debate.

The usage of θεόπνευστος is difficult to ascertain, for it is used only once in the New Testament writings and ^{is} not found earlier in Greek literature³⁶ but in the later writings it is used. Warfield makes a careful analysis of this usage of the word and concludes that the word has a "passive significance rooted in the idea of the creative breath of God."³⁷ Its usage in Psalms of

35. Bauer, op. cit., "πνέω," p. 685-686.

36. Warfield, op. cit., p. 245.

37. Ibid., pp. 275-276, 296.

Phocylides, the Oracula Sibyllina and Plutarch, indicates that *Θεόπνευτος* relates to wisdom which partakes of a divine nature,³⁸ the highly excellent streams of a city,³⁹ created life from God⁴⁰ and dreams which have a divine message.⁴¹ Thus the word indicates an object's participation in a divine quality derived from God's expressive activity within that object. God then imparts a divine quality to Scripture.

Finally, and most significantly, the context must be taken into consideration to derive the meaning of the word under study. Paul, in chapter 3 of 2 Timothy, is describing the retrogression of evil men in the last days. He then exhorts Timothy not to regress but to progress -- continue on in the Christian life by continuing in belief and by using the available means of growth. The Scripture is such a means and Timothy has been acquainted with it since a child learning that the Scripture is "able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ." (2 Tim. 3:15, R. S. V.). Also in verse 16 the emphasis is on purpose -- the place and possibilities of Scriptures, derived from their purposes, to aid in continued growth. Thus *Θεόπνευτος* is a predicate of the Scripture in a contextⁱⁿ which the purposes of Scripture are being described.

38. c.f. Ibid., p. 267.

39. Ibid., p. 266.

40. Ibid., p. 267.

41. Ibid., p. 264.

Thus a divine quality expressing God's purpose is the nature of inspiration. To paraphrase the passage at hand: "All Scripture, taken as a whole and in various translations and versions, is God-breathed in that its essential message is communicating the purposes of God through its recording of His revelatory acts in history and is therefore profitable..."

What are those purposes? This passage tells us what Paul thought them to be. The overall purpose is to give the basic principles of faith through the reorganizing effect of presenting man with the perspective of God. Thus the Scriptures have the power "to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. 3:15).

The basic areas in which these faith principles apply may be categorized as doctrinal and moral. Thus doctrinally the Spirit moves to communicate accuracy through the inspiration and recording of prophetic insight into revelatory events upon which doctrine is formulated. Secondly, and related to this, the essential moral purpose of the Bible is adequately communicated through the Spirit's work in the writers: the basis of the moral life -- the righteousness of God; its essential nature -- obedient faith; its formative content -- God's mind, attitudes and will; and its dynamic means -- the indwelling Spirit. (From the implications of 2 Tim. 3:16B).

The ultimate goal or end toward which these purposes go is then to recreate man as complete and capable of meeting all demands of life with God, which is reflected in good works. (2 Tim. 3:17).

Thus God's inspiration of the Bible is related to His revelatory purposes which He carries out through the means of the recorded record as originally given, and as it was in Paul's day and as it is in the contemporary scene. For throughout history God's recorded revelation has effectively carried out God's purposes and is inspired -- presently and actively in a glorious fashion by assuring the essential message is adequately maintained and by interrupting man's self-sufficiency with the challenging demands of God's message.

Summary Conclusion

- 1) Because of the limited nature of man's knowledge, God adequately supplies the conditions necessary for man to know Him in revelation. The limited conditions of man's knowledge were not all altered in revelation but man remained essentially in a state where his knowledge was adequate although not perfect.
- 2) The involvement of God's Spirit in the writing of Scripture is in the divine guidance which produces a message of revelatory content.
- 3) This revelatory work is carried on in the recording of Scripture for the purposes of adequately communicating that message through the various texts and versions of

history. 4) God's inspiration of the record is thus related to His revelatory purposes which remain adequately communicated.

Conclusions

Conclusions as to Paul's view of inspiration are as follows:

1) The essential work of God's Spirit is not the recording of revelation but the understanding and communication of that revelation to the spirit of men.

2) God's Spirit acts to safeguard the basic purposes of revelation by adequately guiding the recording of that revelation.

3) The action of inspiring the record as defined continues effectively in the historical transmissions of the texts which adequately carry out the purposes of recorded revelation.

4) The effect of this action of the Spirit in the recording of revelation is limited to maintaining the essential purposes of revelation. The limited conditions of man's knowledge remains and God does not work to alter that situation as long as His basic purposes in revelation are fulfilled.

Other New Testament Writers

Implications of Peter's View of Prophecy

Peter's view of prophecy may be taken from various

passages of Scripture. However, this study will limit itself to 2 Peter 1:20, 21, particularly as this relates to the activity of the Spirit. Critical questions concerning the authorship have been put aside as ultimately not relevant to this study, which concerns the New Testament view of inspiration.

Peter in the general context is establishing his authority over the readers. This is necessary, for false teachers have plagued the church and are corrupting it. Peter is a reliable source of authority because he has not been subject to "cleverly devised myths" (2 Peter 1:16, R. S. V.) but has been an eyewitness and has even experienced the glory on the Mount of Transfiguration. Thus from this source of personal contact with Christ, Peter is a significant authority, having experienced the fulfillment of the prophetic word. This word the readers should receive and hold. A word of caution is suggested at the outset, however, for false teachers have arisen and are perverting the people.

The prophetic Scriptures are not to be subject to a person's peculiar reinterpretations based on his false motives. (2 Peter 1:20). This is true, for the source of prophecy was never the desires of men, but God is the true source of prophecy. Therefore, be careful of men who have evil motivations and who will "exploit you with false words." (1 Peter 2:3).

The textual structure of verse 21 indicates a contrast between the sources of prophecy -- "by the impulse of man" contrasted with -- "by the Holy Spirit," (R.S.V.), both phrases connected with the same verb

φέρω. The first part of this contrast makes clear that prophecy does not come from the source of human desires, plans and purposes. But it is by the source of God's Spirit Who acts in men to carry out the Divine plans and purposes in the prophetic communication thus giving prophecy its uniqueness.

This is accomplished by a particular activity of God. The verb used is one which has a variety of connotations. It is used in the sense of carrying some object -- as Simon of Cyrene bearing Christ's cross in Luke 23:26. It is also used of seeds yielding or producing fruit in Mark 4:8. Approaching the requirements of the context is the idea that the usage of *φέρω* often is in the context of being moved out of position, to drive. The wind in Acts 26:15,17 drives the boat in a storm off Crete.⁴²

From this usage the concept of motivation becomes clear. This motivation, by the agency of the Spirit of God, results in the fruitful yielding of a communication of the divine intention and attitudes. This is in contrast to a motivation of men whose intentions and attitudes do not make up the essential nature of prophecy. It is be-

42. Bauer, op. cit., "*φέρω*," p. 862-863.

cause the Scriptures, which contain this prophecy, are motivated by the Spirit of God and thus productive of God's perspective that men speak from God.

The association of the initial prophetic experience with the written record is an assumption which has no bearing in the facts. Peter is describing the source of the prophecy contained in the writings. He is describing something of the prophetic experience which has produced the prophetic message of men speaking from God. However, he says nothing concerning the actual recording of that prophecy. That this has been done accurately and adequately is his underlying assumption. That there is a perfect and direct correspondence with the record and the event cannot be proved from Scriptural claims. The versions and translations Peter used adequately and substantially communicated what was originally given in the prophetic experience, which is more significant than knowing what was originally given in the first record.

Summary Conclusion

One cannot glean a claim as to the nature of the recorded prophetic experience from Peter's statement. One may, however, gain a basic attitude, which is that written Scriptures provide, as they are, an adequate means of communicating the prophetic message. This the Holy Spirit assures in the recording of the essential message which men spoke from God.

Implications of the Holy Spirit Speaking in Hebrews

In the Epistle to the Hebrews interesting formulas of quotations are found. Illustrative of this usage are Hebrews 3:7 and 10:15, where the Holy Spirit is pictured as speaking. In commenting on these formulas Tasker has struck at the basic significance of them.

The manner in which the writer introduces the several quotations which he makes from the Old Testament, makes it clear that he had the highest view of its inspiration, and a deep sense of its permanent and abiding message. He does not say, "It is written," or "the Scripture saith," but, "God saith" or, "Christ saith" or, "the Spirit saith." ...In this way the writer shows clearly that the message of God spoken of old times remains a message which God speaks at all times in the present circumstances of men's lives.⁴³

Thus the Scriptures are applicable in the present time, able to communicate the relevant message of God. The words used express substantially the thought of God.

The quotations, particularly in 3:7, are almost verbatim from the Septuagint. This version is the one in which the Holy Spirit is speaking. That this version properly expresses the Hebrew is apparent but the significant thing is that present versions communicate the message of the Holy Spirit even when there is not exact correspondence between them.

The basic message which has come from God is essentially normative for the purpose of faith-principles.

43. R.V.G. Tasker, *The Old Testament in the New Testament*, Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1947, p. 115.

Through this message the means of man being related to the Holy God in the High Priest who is worthy has been pictured and foretold in the Old Testament Scriptures.

Summary Conclusions

God is presently communicating through the Holy Spirit in Scripture for there, as given in contemporary and authoritative versions, the Holy Spirit speaks God's essential message to men.

The New Testament View of Inspiration

The purpose of this chapter has been to evaluate the New Testament data for its view of inspiration -- particularly in reference to inerrancy as a possible effect of inspiration.

The general conclusion concerning the doctrine of inerrancy as seen in the light of the New Testament evidence is that inerrancy is not the only necessary conclusion one can draw from the evidence. That it may be held honestly as an implication of the evidence is certain. However, the evidence as a whole does not indicate that it is an adequate statement of the case.

The specific elements of inspiration found in the New Testament are as follows:

- 1) The nature of inspiration is an implied activity of God's Spirit in the creation of a written record of

revelation;

2) The goal of inspiration is an adequate written communication of God's purposes given through revelation.

3) The texts of inspiration are the historical and contemporary texts and translations. The Holy Spirit was working equally in the autograph as He is working in copies and translations of the autographs, to preserve the essential message of revelation in substantially, accurately and reliably recorded documents.

4) The extent of inspiration is plenary -- the whole of Scriptures are inspired because the Spirit has been active in all of the recording of revelation, assuring God's purposes in that revelation are carried out.

5) The effect of inspiration is a substantially adequate recording and transmission of God's purposes in communicating revelatory doctrinal and moral data which provide a basis for man to be properly related to God and his neighbor. Thus authority which is normative is effectively communicated in the Scriptures.

EVALUATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF INERRANCY - CHAPTER III

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter will be to evaluate the doctrine of inerrancy in the light of the evidence. Basically this evidence is twofold, philosophical and Scriptural, which can never really be divided. Assertions concerning inerrancy will thus be evaluated as to the validity of the inferences drawn from the sources of evidence. The best possible explanation of the data vindicates the assertion.

There is no need to state arguments at length as much of this has been done in the previous chapters. Essential ideas will be chosen for evaluation.

The process of evaluation involves one in the dangers of reasonable judgment. Objectivity as well as soundness of argument and the balance of the weight of evidence limits, by the subjective elements involved, all such judgments. However, this is the situation of all knowledge and values will be gotten if the reader enters the arguments from his own point of view and judges and evaluates both the evidence presented and argument of the writer in the following evaluation. Another type of limitation is that inerrancy, as ^{with} all doctrines, is defined with varying emphasis. Thus all arguments will not be equally relevant.

At this beginning point it will be necessary to define inerrancy once again: inerrancy, found in New Testament teaching, is the unique effect of the Spirit's unparalleled activity on or with the Biblical recorders writing of revelation, in order to produce a record of revelation which was accurate and correct in historical as well as theological matters, that men might have an absolutely true authoritative communication from God for the purposes of belief and godly living.¹

Method of Concluding Inerrancy

Warfield clearly sets forth what he terms his "inductive method"² of appropriating the doctrine of inerrancy (which is the necessary effect of inspiration).³ Certain presuppositions must be immediately given. Epistemological methods are non-biblical in nature. The Bible does not define those methods but uses them. This vital factor of approach must be then evaluated purely on its own merits. Warfield's essential reasoning is the method of inductive historical thinking. The basic steps are as follows: 1) Limiting the relevant data as to doctrine to claims, statements, allusions, and facts which indicate the attitudes but not including characteristics of their own writings -- the phenomena of Scripture--

1. Ante, pp. 36-37.

2. B. B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, ed. by Samuel G. Craig, Philadelphia, The Presbyterian and Reformed Pub. Co., 1948, pp. 205-206.

3. Ante, p. 32.

as relevant to doctrine;⁴ 2) The conclusion is arrived at, by historical reasoning, that the apostles are true teachers of doctrine; 3) Study indicates they taught inerrancy as part of their Biblical view of Scripture; 4) Commitment to this principle is made because, having concluded them trustworthy, "if we refuse to trust them here, we have in principle refused them trust everywhere,"⁵ 5) The doctrine is then tested against the facts ascertained by Biblical criticism and exegesis.⁶ But here a word of caution is introduced that sufficient evidence must be given for an error for the reality of an inconsistency "cannot be logically or rationally recognized unless the evidence for it be greater in amount and weight than the whole mass of evidence for the trustworthiness of the Biblical writers as teachers of doctrine."⁷ "We must have undisputable errors -- which are not forthcoming."⁸

In evaluation, the following must be said: 1) Warfield's first point concerning the limitations of the significant data is a misconception. For the phenomena of Scriptures help determine the meaning of the allusions and statements concerning the Scripture.

4. Warfield, op. cit., p. 205-206.

5. Ibid., p. 212.

6. Ibid., p. 223.

7. Ibid., p. 219; c.f. p. 212, 215, 224.

8. Ibid., p. 226.

No view of Scripture can indefinitely be sustained if it runs counter to the facts. That the Bible claims inspiration is patent. The problem is to define the nature of that inspiration in the light of the phenomena contained therein.⁹

One must not accomodate the doctrine because of difficulties, since all positions have problems, but one must accomodate the facts to the development of the doctrine.

2) The third point of Warfield's logic is not correct and this is crucial. The claim that the New Testament writers teach inerrancy is not in accord with the findings of this thesis as indicated in Chapter II. Francis L. Patton is quoted by Harrison as saying in Fundamental Christianity that we have no right "to substitute the word 'inerrancy' for 'inspiration' in our discussion of the Bible unless we are prepared to show from the teaching of the Bible that inspiration means inerrancy -- and that, I think, would be a difficult thing to do."¹⁰

3) The fourth point of Warfield's position suffers from inconsistency with the nature of historical reasoning.

9. Everett F. Harrison, "The Phenomena of Scripture," *Revelation and the Bible*, ed. by Carl F. H. Henry, Grand Rapids, Baker Book House, 1958, p. 239; c.f. Edward John Carnell, *The Case for Orthodox Theology*, Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1959, p. 106.

10. Cited by Harrison, op. cit., p.238.

The only results of historical reasoning can be that the apostles are generally trustworthy guides. If one does not follow them on one point of doctrine it does not mean one cannot follow them on another point of doctrine. Historical reasoning deals only in probabilities, not absolutes.

4) In the fifth point Warfield asserts there are no errors in the Scripture. The internal evidence, however, would indicate something else. The type of errors found in the Scriptures are not in the essential, substantial nature of the Scriptures but rest in the "accidents" of Scripture.¹¹ The writers do not intend to mislead and errors, therefore, are not "errors of deceit but of inadvertence, not of falsehood, but of lack of knowledge."¹² This becomes clear when considering synchronisms in II Kings 15 - 18, the historical mistake in Stephen's speech in Acts 7:4 as related to Genesis 11:31 - 12:5 and similar minor discrepancies.¹³

11. Robert A. Traina, *Methodical Bible Study*, New York, Robert A. Traina, 1952, p. 212; Charles A. Briggs, *The Bible, The Church and The Reason*, Second ed., New York, Scribner's, 1893, p. 92.

12. Briggs, op. cit., p. 93.

13. Briggs, op. cit., pp. 109-113, pp. 215-235; Carnell, op. cit., pp. 102-111; Lewellyn J. Evans, "Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration," *Inspiration and Inerrancy*, ed. by Henry Preserved Smith, Cincinnati, Robert Clarke & Co., 1893, pp. 68-69; Harrison, op. cit., p. 249; James Orr, *Revelation and Inspiration*, Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1952, pp. 163-165, 179. Henry Preserved Smith, "Biblical Scholarship & Inspiration," *Inspiration and Inerrancy*, ed. by H. P. Smith, Cincinnati, Robert Clarke & Co., 1893, pp. 126-135.

5) Warfield's emphasis on the authority of the New Testament writers is a positive one which needs more careful study today. Seldom ^{does} one find writers who wrestle with the New Testament evidence as thoroughly and capably as Warfield.

6) Warfield's attempt at induction is worthy in principle of being followed.

The Nature of Inerrancy

The presupposition of the nature of inerrancy is a concept of revelation which posits that "revelation is but half revelation unless it be infallibly communicated, it is but half communicated unless it be infallibly recorded."¹⁴ Therefore, by an extraordinary influence of the Spirit, God, guides men, though not superseding their humanity, so that their words perfectly become Words of God and thus absolutely infallible.¹⁵ God's word is then of this nature because "God Himself is infallible; the infallibility of Scripture is simply the infallibility of God speaking."¹⁶

14. Warfield, op. cit., p. 442.

15. Warfield, op. cit., p. 422.

16. J. I. Packer, "Fundamentalism" and the Word of God, Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1958, pp. 95-96.

In evaluation the following observations are recorded:

1) The presupposition of this statement is on a very shaky foundation and runs counter to the Biblical evidence which claims revelation's purpose is accomplished even through fallible translations.¹⁷ The postulate revelation requires is that the essential purposes of revelation will be adequately carried out through the means chosen to communicate that revelation.¹⁸ The definition of those passages which so fulfill God's purposes is, to some extent, a debatable matter as is the degree of accuracy required to fulfill those purposes.¹⁹

2) God's guidance as defined which claims not to supersede the humanity of the writers, but makes their words perfect, is a contradiction in terms. There are two co-efficients in the process of Divine communication. The New Testament emphasizes, of course, the Divine, but this fact does not eliminate the finite from the picture. "Its qualities, its possibilities, its activities, its inherent limitations remain the same... . An inspired man is not God."²⁰ The fact becomes clearer when one ponders the problem of communicating the divine in language.

17. Evans, op. cit., p. 69.

18. Orr, op. cit., pp. 155-156.

19. cf., Briggs, op. cit., pp. 115-116; Packer, op. cit., p. 98; Smith, op. cit., p. 144; with Warfield, op. cit., p. 122 on the sufficiency of historical methods.

20. Evans, op. cit., pp. 37-38.

Briggs comments,

Human conceptions, even when enlarged and informed by the divine Spirit, cannot altogether grasp the infinite truth of God. Human language, even when the speaker or writer is guided by the indwelling Spirit, cannot give complete and faultless expression to the heavenly message.²¹

Infallible language is difficult to conceive.

What is meant? Terms such as 'adequate' and 'accurate' are more appropriate. The infallible communicates in the fallibility of human language.

3) The transference of God's infallible character simply onto the record is oversimplification, for the record as a record becomes obliterated in the process. The Scripture is a record of revelation and does not perfectly correspond with the events of revelation but, as any record, gives substantial witness to those events adequately for redemptive revelation. This essential message communicated through fallible records and recorders is what gives the divine character to the Bible. All God does is perfect.

But who are we, to define that perfection, to formulate its constituents, to legislate its conditions, to decide beforehand that it must be thus, that it cannot be so, that this is indispensable, that impossible?²²

The Text of Inerrancy

A derivative doctrine from the nature of inerrancy as described above is the teaching that the original

21. Briggs, op. cit., pp. 101-102.

22. Evans, op. cit., p. 35.

writings are those which are inspired (as defined by Warfield, for instance.)²³ This fact is thought necessary for two reasons. The first reason is that the writers must express divine thoughts by human language. In order that the proper message may be delivered into the world this initial communication must be infallible.²⁴ Translations of the original can be developed with relative simplicity since the first initial difficulty has been overcome -- the translation of the divine into the human.²⁵

Secondly, there is an epistemological necessity in holding this aspect of inerrancy, for if it is assumed "that human infirmity may have had its share in it, where shall I stop in assuming that there may be errors? I know not."²⁶ With translations the range of conjectures is limited if one posits an inerrant autograph, but without it the limit is boundless.

The evaluation of this position is as follows:

1) The problem of a divine message has been considered but one may reiterate a point. God has chosen to communicate through men. Though a fallible mode, it was adequate to serve the purposes of God -- and still

23. Ante, p. 32.

24. Packer, op. cit., p. 89-90.

25. Louis Gaussen, *The Inspiration of Holy Scriptures*, trans. by David D. Scott, Chicago, Moody Press, 1949, pp. 155-156.

26. Ibid., p. 160.

remains adequate,

2) Epistemological certainty is gained from holding to an inerrant autograph. The process and problems of evaluating Scripture, with the limitations that involves, is almost removed from the study procedure. What is involved in such a process is applying tests of truth to the Scriptural statements and claims that its worth generally and specifically may be determined.

The reasons this is necessary are: an empirical approach to knowledge is the most common way ~~one~~ learns and grows. We test ourselves and our environment constantly to know the truth. Secondly, the alternative to this process is credulity. ~~One~~ must accept then the Koran because it makes divine claims. Thirdly, Warfield, a leading exponent of inerrancy, allows this process to yield the fruit of concluding that all Christianity's essential doctrines could be vindicated.²⁷ Fourthly, and most significantly, Jesus and his apostles employed this method when reading the Old Testament. Accepting basic general doctrines and truths, the particulars were evaluated in this light.²⁸ Lastly, epistemological certainty is in the nature of things a phantom -- non-existent. Man, with his limited knowledge, operates in the area of probabilities, and thus faith. It is with existential

27. Warfield, op. cit., p. 210.

28. Ante, pp. 42-48.

obedient faith that certainty comes, never in the realm of intellectual knowledge and doctrinal certainty.

3) This recourse to autographs is a completely theoretical expedient. Whether, then, originals were inerrant or not cannot be settled definitively as the direct evidence is lacking. One must work practically with less sure materials.

Faith in the consistency of God warrants an attitude of confidence that the text is sufficiently trustworthy not to lead us astray. If God gave the Scriptures for a practical purpose -- to make men wise unto salvation through faith in Christ -- it is a safe inference that He never permits them to become so corrupted that they can no longer fulfil it.²⁹

4) The fact of inspiration is historical and contemporary. God has acted to preserve His message of salvation that it may be adequately known through all versions -- autographs as well as the Revised Standard Version. This fact is clearly shown in the New Testament's usage of the texts at hand.³⁰ It is this message of the acts of the redeeming God which give all Scriptures their authority.

5) Thus any view of authority which attempts to attack the authority of the Scriptures on its form -- inerrancy or substantial truthfulness -- misses the point of Biblical revelation. Authority rests in the revealed God witnessed to by the Scriptures, and that content is authoritative, for it is given from God.

29. Packer, op. cit., p. 90.

30. Ante, pp. 47-59, 76-78, 89.

Conclusions

After a general evaluation of the doctrine of inerrancy in the light of the New Testament evidence the following conclusions are drawn:

1) The purpose of inerrancy as an effect of inspiration in order to keep the revelation from God pure is seemingly based on faulty presuppositions from the point of view of the New Testament. God Who is perfect works in history, limiting Himself to men and their weaknesses. He, therefore, is not interested in a pure communication, ~~is~~, one which is entirely free from any human error, but works to inspire the record so that His redemptive purposes may be carried out adequately.

2) The procedure in discovering this doctrine has been limited by not allowing relevant evidence, thus negating the values of the conclusions.

3) The basis of the doctrine ~~are~~ the views of Jesus and His apostles who do not support this view. The reason for holding it is removed.

4) The only effective test of inerrancy -- the phenomena of Scripture -- does not support the conclusion asserted.

5) The epistemology of inerrancy is practical but oversimplified and ultimately dangerous to faith.

6) Therefore, on the basis of this clear pattern of evidence, inerrancy is an invalid doctrine.

SUMMARY

Chapter I - The Doctrine of Inerrancy Defined

A. Inerrancy and Inspiration

Inerrancy is a necessary effect of God's activity in producing the record of revelation.

B. Inerrancy and the Record

Inerrancy is limited to the originals of the Scriptural books.

C. Inerrancy in Scope

Inerrancy is plenary as to its scope and includes accuracy in all Scriptural statements.

D. Inerrancy and Authority

Inerrancy is necessary for authoritative certainty in faith.

Chapter II - The New Testament View of Inspiration

A. Nature of Inspiration

It is an implied activity of God's Spirit in the creation of a written record of revelation.

B. Goal of Inspiration

It is an adequate written communication of God's purposes in revelation.

C. Records of Inspiration

The Historical and contemporary texts and translations, all of which effectively communicate the message of God, constitute the revelatory records.

D. Extent of Inspiration

It is a plenary extent assuring God's purposes are worked out in them taken as a whole.

E. Effect of Inspiration

It is a substantially adequate recording and transmission of revelatory doctrinal and moral data that man may be properly related to God and his neighbor.

Thus authority is purposefully and normatively communicated in Scriptures.

Chapter III - Evaluation of the Doctrine of Inerrancy

A. Purpose of Inerrancy

It is limited because God seeks to work out His revelation among finite men. Thus He accepts limitations and therefore there is no need for a pure revelation free from all error.

B. Method of Inerrancy

The relevant data is excluded and therefore the foundations are weak.

C. Basis of Inerrancy

Jesus and His apostles do not support the viewpoint of inerrancy, and there is, therefore, no reason to support it.

D. Test of Inerrancy

The only effective test - the phenomena of Scripture -- does not support it, therefore it cannot be validated.

E. Epistemology of Inerrancy

It is highly pragmatic but oversimplified and, therefore, ultimately dangerous to faith.

Conclusions

- A. Inerrancy is a doctrine whose germinal ideas are very ancient.
- B. Inerrancy is not the most probable implication of the New Testament data.
- C. Inerrancy is invalid as a doctrine on the basis of a clear pattern of evidence.

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