

A Study of the Idea of  
THE VERBAL INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

with special reference to  
the Reformers and Post-Reformation Thinkers  
of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

A Thesis

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Allan Andrew Zaun, B.A., B.D.

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## PREFACE.

At the outset of this study it will be well to define terms. By "verbal Inspiration" we mean the theory which maintains that in the process of recording the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit Himself selected the very words which the writers used. In the same sense that Milton is the author of Paradise Lost, the Holy Spirit is held to be the author of Scripture. Whether communicated by suggestion or actual dictation, the words of the text are the exact words, and no other, which God wished to have employed. The form, as well as the content, is literally given by God. This, briefly, is the verbal theory. We recognize the intimate, but not absolutely inseparable, connection between thought and language. To the extent that words can be an adequate expression of the thought, Inspiration is verbal; however, the classic formulation of the doctrine, in its insistence upon dictation and verbal inerrancy, introduced mechanical features with which many scholars today cannot find themselves in full agreement.

In the Reformation and post-Reformation periods we are confining our study principally to the dogmaticians of Germany, Switzerland, and the Netherlands; no attempt has been made to trace the development of the doctrine in England and Scotland, which, however, were profoundly influenced by the Genevan Reformation. Likewise, we end our investigation with the seventeenth century, for there was no essentially new advance in the idea of verbal Inspiration; rather, what followed constituted a reaction.

And now a personal word. I wish to express my sincere appreciation of the privilege of having begun this study under the late Reverend Professor Hugh R. Mackintosh, whose wise guidance and kindly encouragement were a benediction. My sincere thanks are due also to Professor Karl Heim, whose classes in Tübingen were a constant source of inspiration, and whose personal counsel was most gracious; to Professors John Baillie and Hugh Watt for their pertinent suggestions; to my principal Adviser, Professor G. T. Thomson, whose painstaking criticism and warm interest have been extremely helpful; and to Rev. Dr. A. Mitchell Hunter for his discerning criticism of the chapter on Calvin. Finally, I desire to thank the Librarians of the Universitäts-Bibliothek in Tübingen, and of the New College Library, Edinburgh, for their patience and solicitude in placing the required research materials at my disposal.

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## INTRODUCTORY: NON-CHRISTIAN CONCEPTIONS OF INSPIRATION

Without any attempt at detailed proof, but merely in a cursory manner, we shall endeavour, in this introductory section, to trace some of the more significant non-Christian conceptions which have been held with regard to Inspiration. From earliest times, men have believed in the possibility of communication with the gods whom they worshipped; the divine "inbreathing" may have manifested itself in various forms, such as demoniac possession, mantic frenzy, inspired oracle, or infallibly dictated and supernaturally transmitted inerrant writings. To be sure, there has been a progression, a lifting of levels, a definite advance to higher ethical standpoints; but nevertheless the common thread can be traced. We begin, then, with primitive, animistic concepts, and go on through the Hindu, the Greek and Roman ideas, and finally to the Muslim conception of Inspiration.

### A. The Primitive Conception of Inspiration.

The idea of "possession" originates in a spiritual theory of the universe. Primitive man believed that there were supernatural powers, which he could possibly placate but not entirely control, and which at times became embodied in human forms. Whether the possession is permanent or temporary, the idea is found at all stages of human development, and has had a profound effect upon the history of religious belief. When in a state of abnormality, the subject is regarded with reverential awe by his fellows, and every word and action is supposed to be beyond his

control, proceeding solely from the indwelling power. What we today would recognize as the psychopathic manifestations of epilepsy, neuroticism, perversion, and hysteria, was believed to be but the working of the god, who was seeking to communicate himself through his chosen instruments to his people. Some of the phenomena were stimulations to intense emotional excitement, convulsive shiverings and shakings of the body, violent gestures, and wild looks. The will of the gods was then revealed in shrill cries, the subject acting without any volitional consciousness.<sup>1</sup>

"As in normal conditions the man's soul, inhabiting his body, is held to give it life, to think, speak, and act through it, so an adaptation of the self-same principle explains abnormal conditions of body or mind, by considering the new symptoms as due to the operation of a second soul-like being, a strange spirit."<sup>2</sup>

Thus, under the influence of this possessing power, he seems to himself, and to those observing him,

"to have become the mere instrument of a spirit which has seized him or entered into him, a possessing demon in whose personality the patient believes so implicitly that he often imagines a personal name for it, which it can declare when it speaks in his own voice and character through his organs of speech.....This is the savage theory of daemonic possession and obsession, which has been for ages, and still remains, the dominant theory of disease and inspiration among the lower races."<sup>3</sup>

Anything which the subject says in this state of

- 
1. Fallaize, E. N., Art., "Primitive Possession", Hastings Encycl. of Religion and Ethics, Vol. 10, p. 122 ff. Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1918.
  2. Tylor, E. B., Primitive Culture, Vol. II., p. 124, New York, Brentano, 7th ed., 1924.
  3. Ibid., p. 124.

exaltation is naturally regarded as a direct, authoritative deliverance of the spirit itself. And then, extending the argument, it is easy to transform these utterances into prognostications. Rather than being a merely a priori view, abundant evidence in the recorded instances of animistic possession would substantiate the fact that "even when the state of possession may have been induced primarily with another object in view, advantage has been taken to obtain knowledge of the future through the possessed person."<sup>1</sup>

#### B. The Hindu Idea of Inspiration.

The verbally inspired scriptures of Hinduism are the "Śruti", literally, "that which is heard"; the divine voice communicating itself to the human ear, and bringing the authoritative message direct to men by aid of the pen or by oral teaching.<sup>2</sup> The theory with reference to śruti presented as rigid and thoroughgoing a doctrine of verbal inspiration as has ever been devised. The volume was irrevocably closed; there was possibility neither of addition nor of diminution.

".....the Veda.... on account of its non-human character, is raised above all suspicion of error and other imperfections. ....Therefore the Veda is the final authority and court of appeal on all questions of teaching and interpretation."<sup>3</sup>

Another evidence of the unique position assigned to

- 
1. Fallaize, E. N., op. cit., p. 125.
  2. Geden, A. S., Art., "Hindu Inspiration", Hastings Encycl. of Religion and Ethics, Vol. 7, p. 352. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1918.
  3. Rāmānuja, Vedāntasūtras, II. ii, 43. Quoted by Geden, op. cit., p. 352.

the writings of the Veda, was the complicated provision made for the preservation of the ipsissima verba of the text. It was necessary that they be committed to memory by students; the continual and accurate recitation of them safeguarded their purity, and provided a sufficient check against alteration even in the slightest detail of the customary order and form of words. The method known as kramapāṭha, or "serial reading", was an added precaution; each word was repeated twice in progressive order, with the preceding and also the succeeding word. The jaṭapāṭha, "twisted", or "inverted reading", was that method in which each successive pair of words was repeated three times, in one instance in inverted order. Even hymnology was not exempt from this laborious discipline; the words and verses were conscientiously counted, and the records preserved in the works of the Sanskrit grammarians; extant texts indicate these numbers to be correct.<sup>1</sup>

The ṛṣis, who were the ancient poets and seers of the Vedic hymns, claimed to have "seen" (dr̥ś) the sacred texts before they were subsequently conveyed to men. Their share in the revelation was merely passive; they recorded the message as it was supposed to have been given to them, and as regards both subject-matter and form, they had no part in its composition or final ordering.

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1. Geden, A. S., op. cit., p. 353.

### C. The Greek and Roman Conceptions of Inspiration.

The Greek ideas of inspiration, as applied to divine writings and their interpretation, were formed while the very mystery of writing itself was still new.<sup>1</sup> It was to be expected that a kind of a glamour would hang over the written words. An existence of their own was given to them, inasmuch as they were accorded an importance and position of respect that did not attach to any spoken words. We can see this process especially in regard to the writings of Homer.

"Reverence for antiquity and belief in inspiration combined to lift him above the common limitations of time and place and circumstances. His verses were regarded as having a universal validity: they were the Bible of the Greek races, the voice of an undying wisdom. So when the unconscious imitation of heroic ideals passed into conscious philosophy of life, it was necessary that such philosophy should be shown to be consonant with the old ideals and current standards."<sup>2</sup>

As the forms of ethics, physics, and metaphysics developed, they accordingly all appeal to Homer; they will receive a better hearing if they can claim to be deductions from his writings. Being able to claim kinship with a revered name of antiquity automatically invested those subsequent works with an added authority. Soon it would be evident, however, that the gulf between the old and the new conceptions was widening; and so in order not to make the break too sudden, a reconciliation was sought in a symbolical treatment of the words. A hidden

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1. Bethune-Baker, J. F., An Introduction to the Early History of Christian Doctrine to Time of the Council of Chalcedon, pp. 49-50. London: Methuen, 1903. Cf. Hatch, Hibbert Lectures, 1888.

2. Ibid., p. 50.

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  2. Ibid., p. 50.

meaning was detected underneath the surface of a record or representation of the actions, or even possibly of the actions themselves; hence the tension between current reverence for old authority and a critical belief in its validity would be obviated. It is quite possible that this method was often challenged; nevertheless it had a very strong hold upon the Greek mind. Underlying the theology of the Stoic schools, it gained currency among the scholars and critics of the early empire, and survived as a literary habit for some time after its original purpose was no longer necessary.

In contrast to the type of daemonic possession experienced by the primitive peoples, the Greek conception was that of the overpowering force of a personal god. When the body of the priest or writer passed for a time into the possession of the god, all his acts and words would be not only prompted by, but would also proceed directly from the god himself. In this sense, the devotee identified himself with the God.

In the sixth century B.C., the Orphic and Pythagorean influences were not only very strong in Greece, but there were current oracular dicta, from a weird, mystic, half human, half divine, female figure; we know nothing of her origin, except that her original home was in Asia Minor. It was said that, like the Pythia, she was inspired by Apollo; when uttering her prophecies she became possessed--  
 ἐνθεός. For this, the earliest fact that we know about her, we are dependent upon a famous fragment of Heraclitus (fragm. xii., ed. Bywater), who represents her as uttering

sayings "with frenzied lips", a tradition of which Virgil later makes good use in the sixth Aeneid.<sup>1</sup>

Plato taught that a man cannot become a prophet, nor can he utter an oracle until he has abandoned his own reason, and has allowed the Divine to occupy its place.<sup>2</sup> The god, having taken away from the poets and prophets their minds, uses them as assistants. God gives to human senselessness and passivity the mantic frenzy; no one in his senses (έννοους) can possibly attain to genuine and divine mantic. Unconscious of the many and splendid things he utters in the prophetic state, the prophet is but the passive instrument of the inspiring deity.<sup>3</sup> The art of divination is given not to the wisdom, but to the foolishness of man. When in his right mind, no man can attain to prophetic truth and inspiration; however, when he receives the inspired word, either his intellect becomes enthralled in sleep, or else he is demented by some distemper or possession. Further, Plato gives an account<sup>4</sup> of the four forms of madness: prophecy, inspiration, poetry, and love, and seeks to demonstrate that the truly self-possessed man cannot be the subject of these inspirations. He makes Socrates assert<sup>5</sup> that poets compose their songs not by virtue of any wisdom or skill, but because of

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1. Fowler, W. W., The Religious Experience of the Roman People, London, 1911, pp. 257 f.

2. Ion, 534b.

3. Cf. Timaeus, 71e: οὐδείς έννοους έφάπτεται μαντικής ένθέου και άληθοῦς, άλλ' ή καθ' ύπνον τήν τής φρονήσεως πεδηθείς δύναμιν ή διά νόσον ή διά τινά ένθουσιασμόν παραλλάξας.

4. Phaedrus, 244.

5. Apol., 22c; Ion., 533e.



a kind of natural inspiration, like that of prophets and seers. Since it was the characteristic of seers, they being but the mouthpieces of the god, to utter what they did not understand, Plato concluded that statesmen, though often successful in their speeches and policies, were equally ignorant of the real meaning of their words, and were hence guided by divine inspiration.<sup>1</sup> As has been observed, the prophet is one in whom all human powers are neutralized, and thus he is low in the scale of men.<sup>2</sup>

The Roman idea of Inspiration was similar to that of the Greeks, from which it sprang; both agree in depriving the human subject of his rational and discriminating powers, of placing the will in abeyance, and if, while not always holding that the subject is in a state of complete ecstasy, yet they render him so passive that the effect is the same. The frequently quoted assertion of Cicero is characteristic: "Nemo igitur vir magnus sine aliquo afflatu divino unquam fuit."<sup>3</sup>

Usually the medium of the divine revelation was a woman who became the mechanical mouthpiece of the god, losing her own consciousness, so that in agitated trance she gave vent to the words which inspiration caused her to

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1. Meno, 99c, d.

2. Phaedrus, 248d.

3. De natura Deorum, II, 66; Cf. De Div., I. 50; Pro Arch., 8; Seneca, Ep. 27; Cf. Plutarch, De defectu oraculorum, 40. It is interesting to note that no less than 28 titles in Greek alone, most of them compounded with θεός, have been enumerated, and others might be added. Cf. Delitzsch, J., De Inspiratione Scripturae sacrae, quid statuerint patres apostolici et apologetae secundi saeculi, p. 21. Leipzig, 1872.

utter:

"Struggling in vain, impatient of her load,  
And lab'ring underneath the ponderous God,  
The more she strove to shake him from her breast,  
With more and far superior force he pressed;  
Commands his entrance, and, without control,  
Usurps her organs, and inspires her soul."<sup>1</sup>

In passing, we note that it is significant that Helenus (Aeneid, 3:371ff), although somewhat of a prophet in his own right, still leads Aeneas to the temple of Apollo, in order that he might receive fuller inspiration. Virgil faithfully represents the Greek view of inspiration, that the god is all-important, and man but his instrument.<sup>2</sup>

It is probable that to these Greek and Roman notions of *μαντική* and *ἐκστασις*, can be attributed the later ideas of Philo; and, profoundly influenced by him, the views of the early Christian church took their rise. The theory of verbal Inspiration, in its stricter forms, is a direct counterpart to these extreme emphases which make Inspiration a wholly Divine process.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Virgil, Aeneid, VI. 77-80 (Dryden's translation).

Cf. Aen. VI. 47-51:

".....subito non vultus, non color unus;  
Non comptae mansere comae; sed pectus anhelum,  
Et rabie fera corda tument; majorque videri.  
Nec mortale sonans; afflata est numine quando  
Jam propiore dei."

2. Bailey, Cyril, Religion in Virgil, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1935, p. 28. Cf. pp. 24-28.

3. See further: Sonntag, Doctrina Inspirationis, pp. 3 ff;  
Wegscheider, Institutiones Dogmaticae, 1829, pp. 155 ff;  
Baumgarten-Crusius, Einleitung in die Dogmatik, pp. 81 ff;  
Grimm, art. "Insp", in Ersch & Gruber's Allgemeine Encyclo-  
pädie, pp. 38 ff; Bailey, Cyril, Phases in the Religion  
of Ancient Rome, Oxford U. Press, 1932.

#### D. The Muslim View of Inspiration.

According to the strict Muhammadan doctrine of Inspiration, the very words are provided which God wishes the prophet to give forth. The highest form is called wahī zāhir, or external inspiration, and was used for the production of the Qur'ān. During the reception of the message, the mind of Muhammad was passive, the words being brought to him by the angel Gabriel.<sup>1</sup> Some Muslim theologians contend that even the wild rhapsodical Sūras first composed by the Prophet (as xci., c., cii., ciii.) were of wahī authority, although all of them do not bear the marks of such an assumption, and probably were not intended to be clothed in the dress of a message from the Most High. Ash-Shah-rastānī speaks of "the sayings of the Prophet which have the marks of wahī", but this passage is in dispute.<sup>2</sup> In support of this, however, this verse is quoted: "By the star when it setteth, your companion Muhammad erreth not, nor is led astray, neither doth he speak of his own will. It is none other than a revelation which hath been revealed to him."<sup>3</sup> When Muhammad took the definite position of assuming that the Great Name was the direct speaker of his revelations, then all the earlier Sūras came likewise to be regarded as emanating immediately from God.<sup>4</sup>

1. Sell, E., Art., "Muslim Inspiration", Hastings Encycl. of Religion and Ethics, Vol. 7, p. 354. Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1918; Ibid., The Faith of Islam, London, 1880, pp. 37 f., 150 f.

2. Quoted in Dābistān, Bombay, 1826, p. 21. Quoted by Sell.

3. Qur'ān, liii. 1.

4. Thus Mohammedans rigidly include every word of the Qur'ān, regardless of the stage of its delivery, in the category of Qāla 'llāhu, or "Thus saith the Lord."

It is impossible for the Muhammadan to conceive that there can be a human as well as a divine side to Inspiration. Before each sentence of the Qur'ān, the word "say" is either expressed or implied; herein, according to the Muslim mind, lies its highest perfection. A more extreme form of verbal Inspiration is scarcely to be found. Any view which would allow that the divine mind can operate through human consciousness is considered to be very inferior. In fact, the Prophet himself was directed to disclaim any knowledge apart from the words revealed: "Say: I say not to you, 'In my possession are the treasures of God'; neither say I, 'I know things secret;' neither do I say unto you, 'Verily, I am an angel;' only what is revealed to me do I follow."<sup>1</sup>

Ibn Khaldūn says:

"Of all the divine books, the Qur'ān is the only one of which the text, words, and phrases have been communicated to the prophet by an audible voice."<sup>2</sup>

He continues:

"The sign that a man is inspired is that he is at times completely absent, though in the society of others. His respiration is stentorious and he seems to be in a cataleptic fit, or in a swoon. This, however, is merely apparent; for in reality such an ecstasis is an absorption into the invisible world; and he has within his grasp what he alone is able to conceive, which is above the conception of others. Subsequently these spiritual visions descend and become perceptible to the faculties of man. They are either whispered to him in a low tone, or an angel appears to him in human shape

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1. Qur'ān, vi. 50.

2. Prolégomènes, tr. de Slane, i. 195. Quoted by Sell.

and tells him what he brings from God. Then the ecstasis ceases, and the prophet remembers what he has heard."<sup>1</sup>

The doctrine of wahī is closely related to the attribute of God called kalām, "word", or "speech", concerning which there was a long and bitter struggle between the Mu'tazilite and the orthodox group of Muslims. It ranged around the question as to whether or not the attributes of God were eternal. The orthodox contention is that the Qur'ān was written from the foundations of the world on the Preserved Table.

It is related that Gabriel occasionally made his message known to the Prophet through the tinkling of a bell, which mode of operation had a disquieting effect upon Muhammad. His body would become agitated, and even on a cold day, the perspiration rolled off him. His visage was perceptibly changed, bearing witness to the great agitation of his mind. If he were riding, the camel upon which he sat would fall to the ground.<sup>2</sup>

Thus again we have seen a thoroughgoing doctrine of verbal inspiration, similar to those of the ancients, comprising the elements of mantic, ecstasy, human passivity, and infallible authority for the resultant writings; never

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1. Hughes, T. P., art., "Inspiration", in A Dictionary of Islam, p. 214. 2nd ed., London: W. H. Allen Co., 1896.
  2. Zaid said: "One day when God sent wahī on the Prophet, his thigh was on mine, but it became so heavy that I feared mine would be broken." (Ṣaḥīḥu'l-Bukhārī, "Kitāb aṣ-Ṣalāt," Leyden, 1862-8, vol. 1, p. 105.)  
Quoted by Sell, op. cit., p. 355.

has there been a stricter or more self-consistent theory devised.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Cf. Tisdal, W. St. C., The Original Sources of the Qur'ân London 1905, pp. 12, 14, 22-26; Guillaume, A., in The Legacy of Islam, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1931, pp. 239-283; Wensinck, A. J., The Muslim Creed, its Genesis and Historical Development, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1932, pp. 259, 260, 264.

Chapter One: Biblical Doctrine of Inspiration.

It is our purpose, in this phase of our study, to determine as objectively as possible, whether there is any ground in Scripture itself for the theory of verbal Inspiration. Without consciously distorting verses, or pressing them into biased interpretations, we shall inquire whether the writers themselves make any claim of being inspired, whether the record itself bears evidence of such Inspiration, and whether, in any sense, that record can be construed as infallible.

All a priori considerations must be put aside; it is too easy to assume beforehand that a certain theory is taught. Our views must be taken entirely from the evidence furnished by the Scriptures themselves; as we see the actual effects of Inspiration in the writings of men who claimed to be inspired, so shall we be able to formulate our conclusions. We must always bear in mind "that the men were inspired, and that the books are the results of that inspiration."<sup>1</sup> If we carefully weigh all that this statement implies, we shall be furnished with a key to the whole question. The character of the books is not to be determined from our preconceived theories of Inspiration; rather should we seek to determine the nature of their inspiration from the books themselves. As Bishop Butler has so excellently observed:<sup>2</sup>

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1. Alford, Greek Testament, Prolegomena, Ch. I, 6, p. 21.  
2. Butler, Joseph, Analogy of Religion, Pt. II, Ch. III.

"We are in no sort judges beforehand, by what methods and in what proportion it were to be expected that this supernatural light and instruction would be afforded us....The only question....concerning the authority of Scripture is whether it be what it claims to be--not whether it be a book of such sort and so promulgated, as weak men are apt to fancy a book containing a Divine revelation should. And, therefore, neither obscurity, nor seeming inaccuracy of style, nor various readings, nor early disputes about the authors of particular parts, nor any other things of the like kind, though they had been much more considerable in degree than they are, could overthrow the authority of Scripture, unless the prophets, apostles, or our Lord had promised that the Book containing the Divine revelation should be secure from these things."

The Scriptures are silent regarding the precise mode of Inspiration; the fact is asserted, but the method is not stated. Taking for granted that it is supernatural, since the Bible treats of a revelation from God to men, we find it difficult, from the data provided, to devise an adequate theory. We are told of the operation of the Spirit of God upon prophets and apostles and holy men, and consequently we infer that their writings are divinely true and their testimony authoritative. But we are not told exactly how this took place; the Scripture accounts of Inspiration present to us two principal ideas: first, the objective revelation that was presented to the consciousness of the writer, and secondly, the transference of that revealed truth to the spoken or the written word. To what precise action of the Spirit this result was due, we do not know; it were better to avoid theorizing, lest we involve ourselves in fruitless speculation that can serve no useful purpose; what the Scriptures themselves teach must be our guide.



A. The Old Testament View of Inspiration.

1. The claims of Inspiration by the writers.

The writers' own statements are of real value in the sense that it is to be expected that if they really were "verbally" inspired, they themselves would bear witness to that fact. However, we are not seeking to adduce separate statements of Scripture as proof-texts alone; only the cumulative argument is to be taken into account. To quote the Bible in support of its Inspiration is not necessarily arguing in a circle if we are careful in stating our grounds for belief in the truth of the Scriptures. The question of the authority of the Bible is one thing; the question of the manner and nature of its Inspiration is quite another. We must not assume the Inspiration of Scripture to prove its truth, and then turn around and assume its truth to prove its Inspiration. After first determining on what grounds we accept the Bible as true, then only can we inquire concerning the spiritual condition of its writers.

God spoke to the prophets and holy men of Israel. They were the organs, the mouthpieces of God; their words were the very "oracles of God." His guidance, while it was general, was also specific; Inspiration, in some cases, seems to have extended to their individual words.<sup>1</sup> For example, the Lord said to Moses, commissioning him: "I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say."<sup>2</sup> The transmission of the message was to be guarded even with respect

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1. It is interesting to note, in this connection, that the verb "inspiro" occurs in the Old Testament in the Vulgate only in Gen. 2:7; and the noun, "inspiratio" is found only in Job 32:8, and Psa. 18:15.

2. Ex. 4:10-12 (A.V.)

to the words, hence Aaron was to be entrusted with their expression, and God would bless that effort.<sup>1</sup> "And thou shalt speak unto him (Aaron), and put words in his mouth; and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be.....to these instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God." Again, God said to Moses: "See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet."<sup>2</sup>

At the time of the rebellion of Korah, Moses curses the rebels, and if the Lord will not punish them, he is willing to hazard the validity of his own prophetic office: "Hereby ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men, then the Lord hath not sent me."<sup>3</sup> Again, Balaam acknowledged the limitations which Divine Inspiration imposed upon him; he was to deliver the message; for more he could not be responsible: "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more."<sup>4</sup> Later, Balaam was further reinforced by the Divine assistance: "And the Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth, and said, Return unto Balak, and thus thou shalt

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1. Ex. 4:15, 16.

2. Ex. 7:1.

3. Num. 16:28, 29.

4. Num. 22:18; Cf. I Kgs. 22:14: "And Micaiah said, As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak."

speak."<sup>1</sup>

When bringing the Law down from the Mount, Moses reminds Israel that he was mediator between them and God; the Divine word was brought through him: "I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to show you the word of the Lord."<sup>2</sup> And, foreseeing the time when the Law could no longer satisfy the needs of man, the Lord promised the ideal Prophet, who should come to redeem His people: "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth."<sup>3</sup> In his most touching words of farewell, Moses recounts to the people how God has commissioned him to exercise care in writing the song, which should forever be remembered by the children of Israel: "Now therefore write ye this song.....put it in their mouths.....it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed. ....Moses therefore wrote this song the same day, and taught it the children of Israel."<sup>4</sup> And, at the close of this great life, justly could it be said of him that the Lord knew him intimately; thus the revelations through him partook of special authority: "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face."<sup>5</sup>

While he was but a lad, Samuel ministered before Eli in the temple of the Lord; but "neither was the word of the

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1. Num. 23:5; Cf. 23:16; 22:35: "only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak."

2. Deut. 5:5; cf. Ex. 20:21.

3. Deut. 18:18, 19; cf. Isa. 51:16.

4. Deut. 31:19-22.

5. Deut. 34:11; cf. 18:15; Ex. 33:11; Num. 12:8: "with him will I speak mouth to mouth"; Deut. 5:4.

Lord yet revealed unto him."<sup>1</sup> However, when the communion between himself and God was definitely established, he was mightily used for the accomplishment of God's purposes. When Saul was to be anointed, "the Lord had told Samuel in his ear a day before";<sup>2</sup> and later, in instructing this same king to smite Amalek, he forcibly gains Saul's attention by proclaiming: "now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the Lord."<sup>3</sup>

To the prophet Nathan "the word of the Lord came"<sup>4</sup> so that the heart of his master David might be stirred up for the building of the Temple; the king acknowledges too that "God hath revealed (or, "opened the ear") to thy servant."<sup>5</sup> By Divine direction the prophet was commissioned to rebuke David for his miserable sin, and with a thundering "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel,"<sup>6</sup> he hurled against him the righteous condemnation of an outraged Deity. The charge was not man to man, but God to man, speaking authoritatively through the voice of His prophet; and David recognized that Authority. He himself was not so far from God but that he was utilized as an instrument for the revelation of the Divine will, for at the close of his fruitful life he could testify: "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and

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1. I Sam. 3:7.

2. I Sam. 9:7. We do not press for an over-literalization of the narrative, but are seeking to emphasize the "verbal" aspects of the inspirational process.

3. I Sam. 15:1; note: not "the word", but "the words of the Lord", as though each individual word was of importance.

4. II Sam. 7:4.

5. II Sam. 7:27.

6. II Sam. 12:7.

His word was in my tongue . . . . The Rock of Israel spake to me."<sup>1</sup>

With recurring impressiveness, the expressions used by the writers, who were acting as prophets or spokesmen for God, compel our attention. With almost complete unanimity they emphasize the truth that what they spoke and wrote was not their own words, but was in His name, at His express command, and by His Inspiration. Frequently "the word of the Lord came",<sup>2</sup> the message to be delivered, or the action contemplated, was "by the word of the Lord".<sup>3</sup> The real test of prophetic authority and genuineness of Inspiration was a conclusive "Thus saith the Lord";<sup>4</sup> before that no man could stand.

The form of language used is so varied, and yet so general, when viewed in the light of the official character which the prophets bore, that it is difficult for us to limit the evidence to any special occasion of their speaking or writing; rather must we hold their prophetic Inspiration as covering them generally. Their claims cannot very well be avoided: "The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw";<sup>5</sup> "the word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel";<sup>6</sup> "the beginning of the word of the Lord by Hosea";<sup>7</sup> "the word of

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1. II Sam. 23:2, 3.

2. I Kings 12:22; 17:2; 18:1; 19:9, 15; 21:28; II Chr. 11:2; I Chr. 17:3; Jer. 1:2; 25:3.

3. I Kings 13:1, 2, 5, 9-32.

4. I Kings 12:24; 20:13, 14, 28, 42; 21:19; II Kings 3:17.

5. Isa. 2:1.

6. Ezek. 1:3; cf. 3:1-4: "Eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel with my words".

7. Hosea 1:2.

the Lord that came unto Joel";<sup>1</sup> "thus saith the Lord" to Amos; "The Lord hath spoken, who can but prophesy?"<sup>2</sup> Obadiah too could adduce a "Thus saith the Lord"<sup>3</sup> as evidence of his prophetic authority; "The word of the Lord came unto Jonah";<sup>4</sup> "The word of the Lord that came unto Micah";<sup>5</sup> "The book of the vision of Nahum";<sup>6</sup> "The burden which Habakkuk the prophet did see";<sup>7</sup> "The word of the Lord came unto Zephaniah";<sup>8</sup> "In the first day of the month came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet";<sup>9</sup> "In the eighth month...came the word of the Lord unto Zechariah";<sup>10</sup> "The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi";<sup>11</sup> --in all these expressions we feel the dominating presence of the Spirit of God, guiding these men in the formulation and presentation of their message.

Isaiah and Jeremiah were especially conscious of the Divine pressure which literally drove them to a proclamation of the word of the Lord. "The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it";<sup>12</sup> "I have put my words in thy mouth";<sup>13</sup> "my words which I have put in thy mouth shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth

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1. Joel 1:1.
  2. Amos 1:3ff; 3:8.
  3. Obad. 1.
  4. Jonah 1:1.
  5. Mic. 1:1.
  6. Nahum 1:1.
  7. Hab 1:1.
  8. Zeph. 1:1.
  9. Hag. 1:1.
  10. Zech. 1:1.
  11. Mal. 1:1.
  12. Isa. 40:5.
  13. Isa. 51:16; cf. Deut. 18:18.

and for ever."<sup>1</sup> The great urgency of the matter is indicated by the cry, "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken!"<sup>2</sup> Jeremiah could not contain himself; the overflow of God's Spirit compelled him to speak out valiantly: "His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay."<sup>3</sup> He went, in response to Divine commission: "The word of the Lord came unto me, saying: ....thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak..... Then the Lord put forth His hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth."<sup>4</sup> With the promise of assistance comes also the assurance of victory; the people are to be utterly conquered by the message: "Because ye speak this word, behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them."<sup>5</sup>

## 2. God's direct command to the Prophets to write.

The spokesmen of the Lord not only partook of an intimate Inspiration that extended, in some cases, to even the words, but they were also commanded, upon specific occasions, to write various revealed matters, historical facts, and other relevant data. Concerning the defeat of

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1. Isa. 59:21.

2. Isa. 1:2; cf. Deut. 32:1; Jer. 2:12; 6:19; 22:29; Ezek. 36:4; Mic. 1:2; 6:1, 2.

3. Jer. 20:3; cf. Job 32:18, 19; Psa. 39:3.

4. Jer. 1:4, 7, 9; cf. Num. 22:20, 33; Isa. 6:7; Isa. 51:16.

5. Jer. 5:14; cf. 15:19: "thou shalt be as my mouth".

Amalek, "the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua."<sup>1</sup> After the renewing of the Tables of the Law, God made a covenant with His people, and again commanded Moses, "Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel."<sup>2</sup> We read that, in response, "Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys,"<sup>3</sup> an act that doubtless was frequently repeated. Moses' great song was composed and written by Divine Inspiration, for the Lord commanded him: "Now therefore write ye this song....and teach it the children of Israel: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me..... It shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed: for I know their imagination.....And Moses therefore wrote this song the same day, and taught it the children of Israel."<sup>4</sup>

To the prophet Isaiah the Lord said, "Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen;"<sup>5</sup> and further, God's condemnation of the people was to be expressly recorded: "Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever."<sup>6</sup>

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1. Ex. 17:14. Lee, Inspiration of Holy Scripture, p. 308, lays special weight on the fact that such a comparatively insignificant incident should be specifically committed to writing: "Here Jehovah commands His servant to place on record, not some revelation of His secret counsels--not any express prediction of events still future,--not a class of precepts relating to spiritual or ritual worship,--but, a simple narrative of an historical fact; namely, the defeat of the Amalekites at Rephidim."
  2. Ex. 34:27.
  3. Num. 33:1.
  4. Deut. 31:19, 21, 22.
  5. Isa. 8:1.
  6. Isa. 30:8.



Jeremiah was under similar Divine impulsion to write: "Thus speaketh the Lord God of Israel, saying, Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book";<sup>1</sup> "take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel.....Then Jeremiah called Baruch.....and Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the Lord, which he had spoken unto him, upon a roll of a book."<sup>2</sup> Jeremiah himself claimed that he was inspired of the Lord, for these were his instructions: "Therefore go thou, and read in the roll, which thou hast written from my mouth, the words of the Lord in the ears of the people in the Lord's house."<sup>3</sup> This process was especially repeated, in order to provide a new copy after the king had burned the first one.<sup>4</sup> The prophet's final prediction against Babylon was also "written in a book".<sup>5</sup>

The prophet Habakkuk was likewise directed to record the revelation vouchsafed to him: "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it."<sup>6</sup>

### 3. Development of the Idea of Infallibility.

Upon the return of the Jews from the Exile, and the setting of the religious life of the nation upon a new basis, interest was directed afresh upon the minute

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1. Jer. 30:1, 2; cf. 22:30; 29:1, 4.

2. Jer. 36:1, 4.

3. Jer. 36:6.

4. Jer. 36:27, 28.

5. Jer. 51:60.

6. Hab. 2:2; cf. Isa. 8:1; 30:8.

investigation of the letter of the Law. Extreme reverence for the Law furthered the aim of securing its sanctions on the most detailed points, and working them out to their ultimate consequences. Thus arose the system of exposition which applied the letter of the Law to the desired purpose, until the slightest matters were made to bear an over-weight of meaning. Every letter contained a lesson.

The gradual tendency developed of tightening the list of Canonical books; and hand in hand with this went a disposition to stereotype the text. There then manifested itself what we might call the almost fatal principle of extension; that is, what originally had reference to some particular portion was extended so as to cover the whole. Thus it was but a step to the full-blown doctrine of verbal infallibility of the whole of Scripture. It was clearly recognized that parts of the Bible contained revelation that could bear the application of the strictest concepts of immediate, literal Inspiration. God had spoken to His chosen instruments throughout the ages, apparently inspiring them as to the very words, and directing that a faithful record be kept of that revelation. In an utterly arbitrary fashion, the idea of verbal infallibility was extended to the whole of the Bible.

When the term "the Law and the Prophets" came to be used for the whole of the Old Testament, it was but natural that the attributes of the Law and the attributes of the Prophets should be extended to all the books and to all the parts of the books in the Canon.<sup>1</sup> As law, the Law was

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1. Cf. Sanday, W., Inspiration, Bampton Lectures, 1893, pp. 263-269. London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1893.

binding; the Inspiration of the Prophets, in some cases and for particular purposes, was verbal. But it does not therefore follow that all parts were of equal importance, or that they could not be corrected or ultimately repealed. For example, the injunctions "thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it"<sup>1</sup> cannot be held to be applicable to the whole of Scripture, since at the time these commands were written there yet remained much more to be added. The true implication of these passages cited would seem to be that the prophetic word must be given in full, and not tampered with or distorted.

We find then, that the Old Testament gives us a number of "Words of God", and that each portion, considered with respect to God as its Author, is truly the Word of God; that is, it is an inspired revelation. However, it is questionable whether we have the right to apply the attributes of these "words" to the Bible as a whole, thus investing it with all the qualities of these individual portions. The aggregation of Words, and the one Word of God is not the same thing; binding the Words together was a considerable human element. What the Rabbis were pleased to call a "setting up a hedge around the Law" was just this inclusion of the words within the larger concept of the one Divine Word. The greater idea protected the narrower, and was more easily adaptable to human understanding; men were less likely to stumble if they were not called upon to separate the Words from the one Word. Furthermore, it is always dangerous to attempt a discrimination between what we conceive to be Divine and human; too often the wheat is

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1. Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Prov. 30:6.

rooted up with the tares.

It has been suggested, and we feel the suggestion is a plausible one, that we might consider as "inspired" only those words of the Prophets which were spoken under the formula of special direction from God:<sup>1</sup>

"Alle Worte der Propheten, welche durch eine Formel als im Auftrag Gottes geredet gekennzeichnet werden, sind nach der klaren Meinung der Propheten inspiriert. Hier und nur hier hat die wirklich biblische Lehre von der Inspiration der Schrift ihre Grundlage. Inspiriert ist im AT jeder Wortlaut, der durch Formeln des Botenspruches oder ähnliches als Wort Gottes gekennzeichnet ist. Aber auch die Negation dieser Position muss beachtet werden. Alles, was durch solche Formeln nicht gekennzeichnet ist, ist nicht inspiriert. Die biblische Lehre von der Inspiration vollzieht ihre Abgrenzung nicht durch Linien, welche das AT als Ganzes von allem übrigen abheben, sondern durch Linien, welche quer durch die einzelnen Schriften hindurchlaufen."

Thus, every expression which bears the characteristics of having been spoken by direct command of God, can be thought of as inspired. We are to think of the Old Testament as inspired, not with reference to its being a separate whole, but rather in respect to lines of division within itself. For instance, we have no warrant to transfer what is said of a Prophet writing as a prophet, to the same or another man writing as a historian. To be sure, the historian was doubtless given a deeper insight into the meaning of history when he wrote under the guidance of God; but in such cases it was not always a direct command to speak or to write.

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1. Köhler, Ludwig, Theologie des Alten Testaments, Tübingen: Mohr, 1936, p. 89.

Without venturing to prejudge the case, we may say that the Bible itself makes no claim to infallible Inspiration of all its parts. On the contrary, some of its greatest writers consider the possibility that they may be mistaken, or admit that on some points they have been mistaken.<sup>1</sup> Isaiah's first sweeping predictions of complete disaster were modified in favour of the survival of a faithful "remnant".<sup>2</sup> In several points Jeremiah found his expectations unfulfilled, and at one time he really wondered whether he had been deceived.<sup>3</sup> He had predicted that the Scythian raid of about 626 B.C. would bring disaster upon Judah, and "it is certain that Jeremiah was left in the end with a considerable margin of unfulfilled predictions on his hands."<sup>4</sup> Apparently he changed his mind about Josiah's reformation between 11:1-8, and the later 8:7-8. Likewise, Ezekiel withdrew his forecast of the fall of Tyre.<sup>5</sup>

The so-called "errors" in Scripture--which are difficult to prove, in the strict sense of the term, and for which reason we prefer to avoid the attempt to do so--are not those of wilful deceit, but rather those of inadvertence; not of falsehood but of lack of knowledge.<sup>6</sup> A witness is not rejected because he betrays errors of detail; on the other hand, his testimony is thereby strengthened because of these

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1. Dodd, C.H., The Authority of the Bible, p. 15; London: Nisbet & Co., 1928.
  2. Cf. Isaiah 6:11 (c. 740 B.C.) and 30:19, 31:4-9 (c.702 B.C.)
  3. Jer. 20:7.
  4. Skinner, J., Prophecy and Religion, p. 45. Quoted by Dodd.
  5. Cf. Ezek. 26-28 (586 B.C.), and 29:18 (568 B.C.).
  6. Briggs, C.A., The Bible, the Church, and the Reason, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1892, p. 93.

marks of human simplicity.

"The infallibility of Scripture consists of no absolute immunity from error in matters of historical and scientific fact.... The Old Testament, in its cosmogony and in its history, fails again and again to satisfy an exact standard of accuracy, and to consist with modern knowledge, while its statistics are not seldom inconsistent in detail....It is now a commonplace of Biblical learning that God has been at no pains to prevent errors of history and knowledge and defects in the text and its transmission from finding an entrance into the sacred pages of His written Word."<sup>1</sup>

We dare not be overdogmatic; we cannot assume the position of those who maintain verbal inerrancy for the Scriptures even in the most insignificant details,<sup>2</sup> nor do we wish arrogantly to carve out of the Bible that which suits our fancy. Wisdom was not born with us, and it will not die with us; our own opinions are not the highest of all revelation. A surer course is to insist upon the supreme authority of the Bible, infallible with reference to its purpose, namely, that of leading men to God and to Christ;

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1. Curtis, Wm. A., Article, "Infallibility", in Hastings Encycl. of Relig. & Ethics, Vol. 7, pp. 262-3.
  2. de Rougemont, Fr., Christus und seine Zeugen, oder Briefe über die Offenbarung und die Inspiration, tr. from Fr. by Edw. Fabarius, Barmen, 1859, p. 356. Criticizing the "ultra-Protestants" who demand an inerrant Bible, he says: "Sie müssen eine Bibel haben genau wie Logarithmen-Tafeln und Automaten-Propheten. Sie wollen einen Felsen, auf dem man nicht sicher Leben, sondern ruhig schlafen kann; eine Rüstkammer, woraus man mit geschossenen Augen die Waffen nehmen darf, die man nöthig hat; einen Führer, der der Mühe überhebt, zuzusehen; eine Maschine, die Gott zieht und von der Andere gezogen werden. Die Freiheit setzt sie in Schrecken, sie halten sich nur dann für folgsame Diener der Wahrheit, wenn sie sich Fesseln anlegen, die diese nicht geschmiedet hat. So aber behandelt Gott die Menschen nicht; er hat sie nach seinem Bilde gemacht, und er errettet sie vom Tode, zerstreut ihre Irrthümer nur unter Mitwirkung ihres Willens."

errors in detail do not disturb our faith in its unique and glorious place as the embodiment of the voice and Word of the Living God.

"If we remember what the Old Testament in Hebrew and in Greek was to Israel, and also bear in mind the profound impression that it made, in spite of its foreign atmosphere and peculiar exclusiveness, upon the cultured classes of neighbouring races among whom it gained thousands of disinterested proselytes by its sheer grandeur, elevation, and spiritual uniqueness, we shall not wonder that from the beginning something verging on Bibliolatry was native to Christianity."<sup>1</sup>

#### B. The New Testament View of Inspiration.

Having examined the evidence with regard to the Old Testament conception of Inspiration, we now turn our attention to that of the New. We shall see that Jesus and His Apostles appealed to the Old Testament as Divinely inspired, that He promised to them a special gift of the Spirit in the proclamation of the Gospel message, and that they claimed to have this Spirit in fulfilment of His promise. However, as a preliminary caution, we wish to point out that it will not be our method to assume that the New Testament teaches the verbal infallibility of the Old, and then to argue a fortiori that, since these later writings are more important and useful, they too must be infallible. While the assertions of the New Testament with regard to the Old do have value in assisting us in the building of a total view, yet we must

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1. Curtis, Wm. A., op. cit., p. 261.

give sufficient place to the statements of the New Testament concerning itself. It is important to know whether the writers themselves believed that they were writing under Divine Inspiration, an inspiration which was strict enough justly to be called "verbal".

The theory of verbal Inspiration would seem to require that every word of Scripture is separately and absolutely true; and whether discourse or record of an act, was set down exactly as it was said or happened. The mere mention of verbal discrepancies and lack of parallelisms in the Gospels suggests the difficulty of supporting such a strict view. Granted, that the substance has been accurately recorded, but the expression of it in varying terms puts a great strain upon the hypothesis of verbal Inspiration. As a convenient example, let us consider the Title over the Cross. Alford (Greek Testament, Proleg., I, 6, 21) points out that the advocates of the verbal theory must not be allowed, with convenient inconsistency, to seek refuge in a common-sense view whenever their theory fails them. The following comparison indicates what is involved:

Matt. οὗτός ἐστιν Ἰησοῦς ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων.

Mark. ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων.

Luke. ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων οὗτός.

John. Ἰησοῦς ὁ ναζωραῖος ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων.

Alford adds: "... this theory uniformly gives way before intelligent study of the Scriptures themselves; and is only held, consistently and thoroughly, by those who have never undertaken that study. When put forth by those who have, it is never carried fairly through; but while broadly



asserted, is in detail abandoned."<sup>1</sup>

1. Jesus' attitude toward the Inspiration of the O.T.

There can be little doubt that Jesus regarded the Scriptures of the Old Testament as a single authoritative writing. His frequent allusions to them, often prefaced by "It is written"<sup>2</sup>, "the Scripture", or "the Scriptures"<sup>3</sup>, give evidence that he accorded to them the highest position. Even a word or a fragment of it was authoritative; whether as γραφή, or γεγραμμένον, or γέγραπται, it constituted the high court to which all men could appeal. We must think of the γέγραπται, and the γεγραμμένον as having a Subject from whom they go forth, and that this Subject has the authority to determine something, simply because He writes.<sup>4</sup> Appealing to an authority, Christ did not say "Thus spake Moses", but "It is written," suggesting that it was Jesus' judgment that this written word derived its Divine authority from the fact that it is written, much in the same way that among us an article of the law has validity because it is in the law. Even though we might not attribute such an authority to the Old Testament, it seems highly probable that Jesus did.

Repeatedly Christ strongly intimates that the reason

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1. Alford, Greek Testament, Prolegomena, I, 6, 21.
  2. Matt. 4:4, 7, 10; Luke 4:4, 8, 10; Matt. 11:10; Luke 7:27; Matt. 21:13; Luke 19:46; Mark 11:17; Matt. 26:31. Mark 14:21.
  3. Matt. 19:4; Mark 10:9; Matt. 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; Matt. 22:29; Mark 12:24; Luke 20:37; Matt. 26:56; Mark 14:49; Luke 24:44.
  4. Cf. Kuyper, A., Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology, pp. 433-435. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1899.

for error with regard to Divine things is simple ignorance of the Scriptures. Rebuking the Pharisees, he says, "Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?"<sup>1</sup> Again, they were condemned by: "Have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?"<sup>2</sup> and "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures."<sup>3</sup> When Scripture was quoted against Him, the Master invariably threw them back upon those very same Scriptures which His opponents professed to honour: "Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the Scriptures?"<sup>4</sup> Even on the Emmaus road He was compelled gently to rebuke His companions for their neglect of that which was written concerning Himself: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:  
 ....And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.  
 .....Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, ....."<sup>5</sup>

One of Christ's most emphatic utterances concerning the eternal validity of the "law",--i.e., the whole of the Scriptures--is to be found in His assertion that "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass

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1. Matt. 21:42; Cf. Psa. 118:22; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17.  
 2. Matt. 21:16; Cf. Psa. 8:2.  
 3. Matt. 22:29; Cf. John 20:9; Psa. 16:10.  
 4. Mark 12:24.  
 5. Luke 24:25, 27, 45, 46.

from the law, till all be fulfilled."<sup>1</sup> The context, however, indicates that Christ felt it was in Himself the Law and the Prophets were to find their fulfilment. For, immediately He proceeds to "repeal" commandments of the Law: "Ye have heard ....but I say". Cf. Luke 21:33: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away".

Occasionally arguments of the greatest importance were based upon the precise use of a single word. For instance, in His controversy with the Sadducees concerning the Resurrection, He weighed heavily upon the present tense of "I AM the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob".<sup>2</sup> He could allow no modification of "I am"; otherwise God would have been the God of the patriarchs; thus Jesus proves the reality of the future state, concluding that "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living".

In reply to the Jews' charge of His making Himself God, and thereby committing blasphemy, Christ argues from the precise use of the word "gods".<sup>3</sup> Christ said that David, by the Spirit, called the Messiah "Lord"; that is, David used that word. From the use of this particular word, Christ maintains that "the Scripture cannot be broken".<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the use of that word, according to Jesus' view of the Scripture, was determined by the Spirit of God,

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1. Matt. 5:18; Cf. Luke 16:17.

2. Matt. 22:32; Cf. Ex. 3:6, 16; Mark 12:26; Luke 20:37.

3. John 10:34-36.

4. John 10:35.

hence inspired. The word "broken" here is the customary one for breaking the Law, or the Sabbath, etc.<sup>1</sup> The Scripture, then, is not to be annulled, nor is its authority to be withstood; and we note that it is in one of the more casual clauses, in fact, in one of the more minute particulars, that its authority is asserted.

"Sein Vertrauen zur Schrift begründet er dadurch, dass er die Inspiration auch auf die Schrift bezieht. 'In heiligen Geist haben ihre Verfasser geredet' (Mt. 22:43). Dieser Gedanke war in der Gemeinde damals schon völlig befestigt. Er bestimmt die Entstehung und das Ziel der Schrift vom prophetischen Vorgang aus, und verbindet die Wirksamkeit des Geistes nicht nur mit dem Wort, das der Prophet mündlich an seine Zeitgenossen richtete, sondern ebenso mit seinem Buch, durch das er zu allen Geschlechtern spricht. Damit ist die Zuversicht da, dass die Schrift ihre Leser mit Gott in Verbindung bringe."<sup>2</sup>

Christ had the completest of confidence in the Scriptures because He recognized that they came from God; but He did not reverence the words of Scripture as Scripture; in them He saw the revelation of the will of His Father. All of the Law would find its higher "fulfilment" in His Person; His words would never pass away. Thus, He looked upon the Old Testament Scriptures as expressing a dispensation of things which were more or less temporary; the final, perfect, and eternal Way was yet to be revealed. The Old was not destroyed nor abrogated; it was absorbed in a higher unity. While He laid great stress on individual words in some cases, in order to prove an important point,

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1. John 5:18; 7:23; Matt. 5:19.

2. Schlatter, A., Die Theologie des N.Ts., Vol. I., p. 201. Stuttgart, 1909.

or to illustrate a needed teaching, yet the spirit of freedom for which He stood would never allow Him to hang the oppressive, legalistic yoke of letter-worship upon those whom He came to bring into newness of Life.

Indeed, the emphasis has been placed on individual words in order that we might appreciate the value of God's communications. The words are to be closely studied when the importance and relevancy of the idea warrant this attention. In other cases, prominence is given merely to the substance, not the words, of the revelation. The letter has value only as it embodies truth.

## 2. Affirmation of the Inspiration of the Old Testament by New Testament Writers.

### (a) Direct affirmations.

It was something of a settled conviction with the writers of the New Testament that God spoke in the Scriptures of the Old. Luke, in bringing to us the moving song of Zacharias, tells us that "He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began".<sup>1</sup> Peter, when exhorting men to repentance, as reported by Luke, speaks of the "restitution of things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began".<sup>2</sup> Paul's apostolic authority lay in the fact that he was "separated unto the gospel of God, which He had promised

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1. Luke 1:70; cf. Jer. 23:5, 6.

2. Acts 3:21.

afore by His prophets in the holy Scriptures."<sup>1</sup> The righteousness of God, eternally enduring, even outside the Law, was "witnessed by the Law and the Prophets;"<sup>2</sup> here an appeal is made to their inspired authority. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews begins by speaking of the revelation of "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets."<sup>3</sup>

Probably the most decisive affirmation of Scripture Inspiration is to be found in Paul's second letter to Timothy: "All Scripture is given by inspiration<sup>4</sup> of God, and is profitable....."<sup>5</sup> Controversy has raged as to whether *πᾶσα γραφή* should be rendered "all Scripture" or "every Scripture" (as the Revised Version has it). The point really does not matter here, as each means practically the same thing. Paul is resuming distributively what he had before advanced collectively; so that "every writing divinely inspired" designates each and every one of the writings comprised under the universally understood collective term, *τὰ ἱερὰ γράμματα*, the holy writings. At any rate,

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1. Rom. 1:1, 2.

2. Rom. 3:21; cf. I Pet. 1:10.

3. Heb. 1:1.

4. In the Vulgate, the only N.T. appearances of the verb "inspiro" are here, and in II Pet. 1:21. The noun "inspiratio" occurs only in Acts 17:25.

5. II Tim. 3:16. Cf. Int. Crit. Comm., in loco: "'All Scripture is inspired by God, and therefore useful'... This is no complete definition of the purposes of Holy Scripture, and cannot be quoted as ruling out other purposes... Here stress is only laid on such as affect the teacher's task in the face of misleading teaching".

Paul was doubtless referring to the whole body of the Old Testament writings; a Jew--and Timothy was of Jewish descent--would have understood him thus.

It is important to note here, however, that nothing is mentioned of the modus operandi. The fact of Inspiration is asserted, but whether it is verbal, plenary or dynamic is not dealt with. In any case, the Scriptures are declared to be of Divine origin; in that faith the Apostles lived and declared their message.<sup>1</sup>

Along with II Tim. 3:16, another locus classicus in the New Testament is II Peter 1:21--"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved, φερόμενοι , by the Holy Ghost". The men who spoke and wrote were "borne along", much as a ship is borne before the wind (cf. Acts 17:15, 17). The term is a specific one, and not to be confused with mere guidance, or direction. The effect produced is specifically assigned to the active agent. That which is borne is taken up by the bearer, and conveyed by the bearer's power, not

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1. Cf. Coleridge, S.T., Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit, p. 30: In loco: "Here I renounce any advantage I might obtain for my argument against plenary Inspiration, by restricting our Lord's and the Apostle's words to the Hebrew canon. I admit the justice, I have long felt the force, of the remark, 'We have all that the occasion allowed'. And if the same awful authority does not apply so directly to the evangelical and apostolical writings as to the Hebrew canon, yet the analogy of faith justifies the transfer. If the doctrine be less decisively scriptural in its application to the N.T. or the Christian Canon, the temptation to doubt it is likewise less".

its own, to the bearer's goal, not its own. Thus, the men who spoke from God are declared to have been carried along by the Holy Spirit to the goal of His own choosing.<sup>1</sup>

However, this does not necessarily prove a verbal Inspiration, for the text apparently refers not to those who, like the writers of the Gospels, recorded those things as historians with which they were personally acquainted, but to those who, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, "testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." This is evident from the context (verses 16 to 21), which distinguishes between prophecy and testimony. Prophecy is represented as "not by the will of man"; testimony, as being the declaration of those who were "eye-witnesses", and of those who "heard". The latter (testimony) is confirmatory of the former (prophecy): "And we have the word of prophecy confirmed--βεβαιότεραν."

The New Testament apologetic was planted squarely upon the Old Testament in the sense that the Apostles proclaimed the Gospel as resting upon the Scriptures. In Thessalonica, Paul for three Sabbaths "reasoned with them (the Jews) out of the Scriptures."<sup>2</sup> Those in Thessalonica who received the Word with readiness of mind "searched the Scriptures daily" as a test of the truth of Paul's message.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Warfield, B.B., Article, "Inspiration", Int. Standard Bible Encyc., Vol. 3, p. 1475. Chicago: Howard-Severance Co., 1930.
  2. Acts 17:2.
  3. Acts 17:11.



(b) Method of quotation from the Old Testament.

In quoting from the Old Testament, the New Testament writers interpreted at second hand from the Septuagint. These writers also probably used to some extent an Aramaic version; seldom do they quote directly from the Hebrew original. It is doubtful whether any New Testament writer except Paul was acquainted with Hebrew, and in seven cases out of eight he followed the Septuagint, sometimes even when that rendering is seriously defective.

"The writers of the New Testament quoted from the Septuagint because it was the only written version of their time. The Jews in general had long ceased, not merely to speak and write, but also to read Hebrew..... The learned Jews read Hebrew; but that they had lost all minute and critical knowledge of it is evident from the puerile interpretations of the rabbis and from the numerous errors of the Septuagint version.....It was necessary for the apostles to appeal to it, since it contained the only documentary evidence to which the great mass of their readers could turn to verify the Christian argument from history and type and prophecy."<sup>1</sup>

This prevailing habit of quoting from the LXX was justified by the fact that familiarity with the current version compensated amply for any slight losses in verbal accuracy.<sup>2</sup> Turpie<sup>3</sup> lists five usages of the versions in Old Testament quotation:

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1. Johnson, F., The Quotations of the New Testament from the Old, Chicago: American Baptist Pub. Soc., 1895, p. 18.
  2. Cf. Swete, H. B., Introduction to the O.T. in Greek, Cambridge University Press, 1900, p. 404.
  3. Turpie, D. M., The Old Testament in the New, London: Williams & Norgate, 1868, p. xvi.

(1) Those agreeing with the Hebrew, when the latter has been correctly rendered in the LXX.

(2) Those agreeing with the Hebrew, when the latter has not been correctly rendered in the LXX.

(3) Those differing from the Hebrew, but agreeing with the LXX.

(4) Those differing from the Hebrew, when the latter has been correctly rendered in the LXX.

(5) Those differing from both the Hebrew and the LXX, which would also themselves be at variance, the latter not correctly rendering the former.

"It is a remarkable fact that, although all the authors of the New Testament seem to have used the LXX translation, yet where that translation--at least as it lies before us--wholly wanders away from the sense of the original, or becomes entirely destitute of meaning, they either resort to another translation, or themselves translate the text independently. We do not recall a single place, either in the Gospels or in the Epistles of Paul, where a text of the Old Testament, as to its essential contents, has been disguised by the use of the LXX version."<sup>1</sup>

In citing the Old Testament, the writers of the New most frequently use the quotation formulae, "It is written" and "according to the Scriptures". "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and was buried, and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Tholuck, F. A. Kommentar zum Briefe an die Hebräer, Eng. tr., Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1842, I, 37.

2. I Cor. 15:3, 4; cf. Psa. 22:15; Isa. 53:5, 6; Dan. 9:26; Zech. 13:7; Luke 24:26, 46; Acts 3:18; 26:23. Also cf. Psa. 2:7; 16:10; Isa. 53:10; Hos. 6:2; Acts 2:25-31.

For the formula: "According to the Scriptures", cf. I Cor. 1:19; 2:9; 3:19; 15:45; Acts 8:35; 17:3; 26:22; Rom. 1:17; 3:4, 10; 4:17; 11:26; 14:11; Gal. 3:10, 13; 4:22, 27; James 2:8.

"It is written": I Pet. 1:16; Acts 23:5; Rom. 12:19; 8:36; 9:33; 11:8; 15:9, 21; II Cor. 4:13.

We find a tendency to base weighty inferences upon the use of a single word; just a few instances: Paul argues for the use of the singular of "seed"-- τῷ σπέρματί σου -- that from the one seed he might deduce "Christ".<sup>1</sup> Another argument is based upon the word "all",<sup>2</sup> and still another upon the words "once more" as employed by the prophet Haggai.<sup>3</sup>

No special effort was made at accurate citation of Old Testament texts; passages widely separated were grouped together in order to prove the writer's point. And above all, we note that great importance is attached to isolated words and phrases--terms often torn from their contexts--in order to set forth some desired teaching. Their accommodation was "verbal" in the sense that they bore down upon chosen words, but their care in handling the Old Testament with reference to its original meaning is not especially evident.

(c) Placing of the New Testament writings on a level with those of the Old.

It is possible that when Paul wrote to Timothy that "all Scripture is God-breathed",<sup>4</sup> he might have been including some of the New Testament writings; for if, as generally held, the Epistle was the last that he wrote, and the date of it was 66 A.D., then it is probable that the Synoptic Gospels had already appeared, as well as the Acts, and almost all the other Epistles, besides those of Paul. From the very beginning

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1. Gal. 3:16; cf. 3:8; Gen. 12:3,7; 17:7.

2. Heb. 2:8; cf. Matt. 28:18; I Cor. 15:27; Eph. 1:22.

3. Heb. 12:26, 27; Hag. 2:6. Cf. Psa. 102:26; Matt. 24:35.

4. II Tim. 3:16.

Paul regarded the Epistles as Scripture, for he directed that they should be read publicly in the churches: "I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren".<sup>1</sup> "And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea".<sup>2</sup>

Paul further declares that the word preached through his writing was of binding authority, hence Scripture. "If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him".<sup>3</sup> Peter recognizes Paul's inspiration, and refers to his writings as Scripture: "even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles."<sup>4</sup>

(d) Tendency to identify God and Scripture.

Personal utterances of God and statements of Scripture are in many instances simply equated. For example, "it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh..."<sup>5</sup> It was not God who directly spoke it, but was recorded by the prophets. Although it was the Psalmist who first used the expression, it was "God, who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?"<sup>6</sup>

1. I Thess. 5:27.

2. Col. 4:16.

3. II Thess. 3:14; cf. verse 6.

4. II Pet. 3:15, 16.

5. Acts 2:17; cf. Isa. 44:3; Joel 2:28, 29; Isa. 44:3; Ezek, 11:19; 36:27; Zech. 12:10.

6. Acts 4:25; cf. Psa. 2:1.

"The Scripture saith unto Pharaoh...."<sup>1</sup>, but it was actually God who said it. "He (God) saith"<sup>2</sup> introduces an Old Testament citation. Apparently from the counsels of eternity (!), "the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham..."<sup>3</sup> Evidently here the Scripture and the Holy Spirit are identified. Judging men in God's stead, "the Scripture hath concluded all under sin."<sup>4</sup>

In the Epistle to the Hebrews we especially have this usage "as if the author quoting felt in every quotation the actual presence of Him who had inspired it, and spoke through it."<sup>5</sup> God or the Holy Spirit is constantly named as the speaker in passages adduced from the Old Testament; even in respect to those in which some man speaks, such as David. Thus we see that the author of the Epistle felt that God was the living agent and speaker all through the Scriptures. A few examples will suffice: "He limiteth a certain day, saying in David...."<sup>6</sup> "Of the angels He saith, Who maketh His angels spirits...",<sup>7</sup> but it was the Psalmist who said it.

The references to the description given by Moses of the Holy of Holies, and of the Temple-rites are followed by an exposition introduced with the words, "The Holy Ghost this signifying."<sup>8</sup> The words of Jeremiah<sup>9</sup> are quoted with the

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1. Rom. 9:17; Ex. 9:16.  
 2. Rom. 15:10,11; Deut. 32:43; Psa. 117:1; Psa.18:49; Isa.11:10.  
 3. Gal. 3:8; Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18;  
 4. Gal. 3:22.  
 5. Westcott, B. F., The Bible in the Church, p. 42.  
 6. Heb. 4:7; Psa. 95:7; cf. Heb. 3:7; II Sam. 23:2; Acts 1:16.  
 7. Heb. 1:7; Psa. 104:4; Cf. Heb. 1:5; Psa. 2:7; Acts 13:33; Heb. 5:5.  
 8. Heb.9:8-14; cf. Heb.10:19,20; Lev. 11:2; Num. 19:7; Zech. 3:9; Dan. 9:24; Lev. 16:14, 16; Num. 19:2, 17.  
 9. Jer 31:31 34.

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  7. Heb. 1:7; Psa. 104:4; Cf. Heb. 1:5; Psa. 2:7; Acts 13:33; Heb. 5:5.
  8. Heb.9:8-14; cf. Heb.10:19,20; Lev. 11:2; Num. 19:7; Zech. 3:9; Dan. 9:24; Lev. 16:14, 16; Num. 19:2, 17.
  9. Jer. 31:31-34.

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4. Gal. 3:22.

5. Westcott, B. F., The Bible in the Church, p. 42.

6. Heb. 4:7; Psa. 95:7; cf. Heb. 3:7; II Sam. 23:2; Acts 1:16.

7. Heb. 1:7; Psa. 104:4; Cf. Heb. 1:5; Psa. 2:7; Acts 13:33; Heb. 5:5.

8. Heb.9:8-14; cf. Heb.10:19,20; Lev. 11:2; Num. 19:7; Zech. 3:9; Dan. 9:24; Lev. 16:14, 16; Num. 19:2, 17.

9. Jer. 31:31-34.

preface, "Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us".<sup>1</sup>

### 3. Inspiration promised by Christ to the Apostles.

Christ promised His disciples that, when they would be called upon to bear witness for Him before judgment seats and councils, "it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak: for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you."<sup>2</sup> Here we seem to have not only the promise of Inspiration as a guiding influence, but of something objective, externally introduced; a message from without was to be put into their mouths.

"In such words Christ plainly declared that they should be guided by a real positive influence from without. A marked distinction is drawn between the result of their own judgment and what the Spirit of God was to effect; --the expression 'it is not ye that speak' being placed in strong contrast to the assurance that 'the Spirit of their Father should speak in them.'

".....repeated pledges were given from the lips of the Son of God Himself, that no occasion should arise during the course of their ministerial labours in which the Holy Ghost should not instruct them 'how and what they should say: '-- in other words, that in every exercise of their Apostolic office, both the form and the substance of their statements should be given them' in that same hour."<sup>3</sup>

When commissioning the Apostles, the Master sent them forth with the encouraging assurance of His continued presence: "lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the

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1. Heb. 10:15, 16.

2. Matt. 10:19,20; cf. Mark 13:11; Luke 12:11,12; 21:14,15.

3. Lee, Inspiration of Holy Scripture, pp. 262-264. Dublin, 1854. Argues that in Matt. 10:19,  $\pi\omega\varsigma$  ἢ  $\tau\iota$  .....  $\pi\omega\varsigma$  indicates the form, and  $\tau\iota$  the substance of the statements which they were to make. However, this passage cannot legitimately be quoted in favour of an hypothesis of verbal inspiration, for it obviously refers to special occasions, and, as such, is irrelevant to the Inspiration of the Gospels.



world."<sup>1</sup> Further, the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, shall "teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."<sup>2</sup> "The Spirit of truth....will guide you into all truth".<sup>3</sup>

"The truth"--"all the truth" into which the Spirit was to lead the Apostles, means all the truth which they as Apostles of Jesus Christ were to proclaim to all the world. It can hardly mean scientific, mathematical, or philosophical truths; Christ apparently did not have these in mind. He meant Christian truth--the good news of salvation which would make men wise and holy. While the Apostles already knew something of this truth, they knew it only imperfectly; of some things they were ignorant, about others misinformed. But the Spirit was to guide them into all the truths of salvation.

Now then, if the Spirit taught them all things concerning Christianity which they did not already know, then everything which they declared of salvation they had received either from His teachings in the days of His flesh, or from the evidences of their senses. Everything which accurately teaches a religious truth must be considered as coming from the mind and will of God, and recorded under the guidance of His Spirit. The general truth holds, although it does not imply direct suggestion or dictation.

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1..Matt. 28:19, 20.

2. John 14:26; cf. 2:22; 12:16.

3. John 16:13; cf. 15:26; 14:17; 16:7.

In this connection, it is interesting to note that Luke, in his Prologue (1:1-4 A.R.V.) does not say, "Now the word of the Lord came to Luke". On the contrary, he points to the fact of his "having traced the course of all things accurately from the first," "even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word." Undoubtedly Luke was intimately conscious of the Divine Inspiration, feeling no incompatibility between it and methods of patient, discriminating, historical investigation; but at the same time, there is not the slightest suggestion of a claim to verbal Inspiration with its consequent inerrancy.

4. Claim of the Apostles to have the Spirit  
in fulfilment of Christ's promise.

It was the firm belief of the Apostles that in their days spiritual gifts were diffused, and were continually being diffused, in a greater degree than in any previous age. Regarding, as they did, the Old Testament as being authoritative because it was "God-breathed", they would thus tend to look upon their own writings as inspired and authoritative. This would be a legitimate inference even though we could not adduce a single direct statement claiming the supernatural assistance which, as authors of the New Testament, they received. Let us grant merely that they remained within the whole framework of the thought of the promises of the gift of the Spirit.

Peter, preaching at Pentecost, quoted the prophecy

of Joel<sup>1</sup> as evidence that even now the Holy Spirit was working, in fulfilment of the ancient promise. This Jesus "being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit hath in turn shed forth this"--that is, this evidence of the Spirit's power--"which ye now see and hear".<sup>2</sup>

James, speaking for the council at Jerusalem, prefaces its judgment with the words, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us...",<sup>3</sup> thus asserting the guidance of the Spirit. Paul claims that he and the Apostles had received "the Spirit which is of God" that they might know the things given to them by God, of "which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but (in the words) which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual".<sup>4</sup> This would seem to indicate not that the words were directly dictated by the Spirit, but that the truths were revealed to the mind either by expressive forms presented to the imagination, or by ideas suggested to the understanding. The apostles were to "interpret spiritual things by spiritual words": Πνεύματικοῖς πνεύματικα συγκρίνοντες.

"What Paul means is that he had arrived at the conclusion that his style of address should be in keeping with his subject, and that 'the mystery of God' did not require the garnishing of meretricious ornament or anything which the world might esteem as 'excellency of wisdom', but simplicity and directness as the Holy Spirit prompted. He is contrasting two methods, two styles, the worldly and the spiritual, and he is justifying the style he himself adopted."<sup>5</sup>

1. Joel 2:28, 29; cf. Zech. 12:10.

2. Acts 2:33.

3. Acts 15:28.

4. I Cor. 2:12, 13.

5. Dods, Marcus, art., "Inspiration", Hastings Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels, Vol. I., p. 833.

We have no evidence here that Paul considered that every word he spoke was dictated by infallible wisdom.<sup>1</sup> All that he was asserting was the possession of, and guidance by, the Spirit of God. The question here is not whether Paul is arguing for an Inspiration of the very words, as opposed to an Inspiration of merely the matter; but rather the point under discussion was this: that his Apostolic teaching and preaching, while unadorned by the cheap glamour of a false eloquence, was nevertheless distinctly superior to that eloquence of men to which his opponents contrasted his diction. He possessed the Spirit of God, not the spirit of self display; the spirit of humility, not of self-exaltation. The Apostles taught the truth of God in a simple, sober, yet earnest style, which resulted from the possession of His Spirit. To teach does not mean to dictate; and yet that which is taught just as surely requires a predisposing and efficient cause as that which is directly suggested or dictated.

He further maintains that what he wrote was done so by God's direct commandment; and insists that men recognize that fact: "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or

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1. Atwell, W. E., The Pauline Theory of Inspiration, p. 225, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1878, summarizes the teachings of the II chapter of 1st Cor. as follows:

- (a) Revelation by Holy Spirit of the deep things of God.
- (b) Personal inspiration as a necessary preparation.
- (c) Understanding of the revelations given.
- (d) Knowledge clear and accurate of the revelation now fully understood.
- (e) Expression of that knowledge in words which through these means "the Holy Ghost teacheth".

spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord."<sup>1</sup> Consequently, "he that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us His Holy Spirit."<sup>2</sup> His Gospel was received not of men, "but by the revelation of Jesus Christ";<sup>3</sup> and he addsthis threat: "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."<sup>4</sup>

No stronger claim did Paul ever make concerning the directing presence of the Spirit in the Apostles; their very lives proved it: "For our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake."<sup>5</sup>

John assures the new converts that the inspiration of the Holy Spirit has given them "an unction", and that therefore, they "know all things."<sup>6</sup> He continues: "The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you."<sup>7</sup>

Hence, we can have no doubt that the Apostles were deeply persuaded that the Spirit was given to them in fulfilment of the promises of Christ. But we must be careful not to draw unjustifiable inferences from that conviction.

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1. I Cor. 14:37.

2. I Thess. 4:8; cf. Luke 10:16; I Cor. 2:10; 7:40; I John 3:24.

3. Gal. 1:12; Eph. 3:3.

4. Gal. 1:9.

5. I Thess. 1:5; cf. Mark 16:20; I Cor. 2:4; 4:20; II Cor. 6:6.

6. I John 2:20; cf. John 10:4,5; 14:26; 16:13.

7. I John 2:27; cf. Jer. 31:33,34; Heb. 8:10,11.

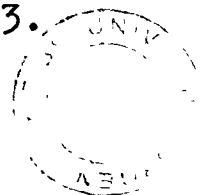
That it was not regarded as conferring absolute infallibility of knowledge and propriety upon the Apostles' speech whenever they were brought before rulers for Christ's sake is shown in Paul's appearance before the Sanhedrim. Was Paul infallible when he blurted out, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall!" and then retracted and apologized, saying, "I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest"?<sup>1</sup> The promise of Christ was that His heralds would be given the courage to testify for Him in whatever trying circumstances they might find themselves. They were not to be handicapped for lack of words: His Spirit would guide them. The Spirit was to be the source of spiritual gifts, enabling His spokesmen to carry on their appointed work. "But the activity of the Spirit in the proclamation of the Gospel is by no means confined to the circle of the Apostles, even with Paul, only in a sense which does not exclude the Inspiration of others."<sup>2</sup>

The claim of the Apostles was that of being inspired teachers, and what they wrote, as such teachers, was authoritative. But there does not seem to be decisive evidence regarding a special Inspiration to write; within limits, of course, we are justified in transferring the Inspiration of the oral teachings to that of the writings. However we cannot build upon this a heavy doctrine of verbal infallibility; not a word is said of any extraordinary guidance of their pens, no commandment is given beforehand as to who should write or as to what should or should not be written. The inspiring

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1. Acts 23:3-5.

2. Weiss, B., Biblical Theology of the N.T., Eng. tr. from 3rd Ed., Vol. II., p. 410. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1883.



presence of Jesus was promised to His Church, but with the possible exception of certain passages in Revelation, there is no record of further special Inspiration for any such documents as now form our New Testament.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Cf. Curtis, T. F., The Human Element in the Inspiration of the Scriptures, p. 208. N.Y.: Appleton, 1867.

Chapter Two: Post-Biblical Jewish Views of Inspiration.

A. Rabbinic Views.

1. General Characteristics of the period.

The period under survey here is what is known as the Later Judaism, constituting the two or three centuries before, and the century or two after, the birth of Christ. "It is distinguished from the Earlier Judaism by the emergence of certain new factors in Jewish life not strictly deducible from the Old Testament or reducible to its prescriptions."<sup>1</sup> One of these factors was the emergence of a tradition, consisting of the minute application of the Law in regard to specific cases. One branch was known as "Haggada" (narrative), and the other as "Halacha" (procedure, walking.) "The tradition grew into a vast luxuriance. But instead of helping the spiritual life, it rather burdened and hindered it. It necessitated a complex, elaborate and not altogether consistent machinery.....which reversed the trend of Old Testament ethical instruction."<sup>2</sup>

The mass of writings embodying the accumulated interpretations, primarily of the Law, and secondarily, of the Prophets and the Hagiographa, is known as the Talmud. The Talmud included the Mishna and comments thereupon, and the Targums (translations into Chaldean, or Western Aramaic). While this group of writings, in its entirety, is of a date subsequent to the Christian era, yet it embodies fragments of

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1. Zenos, A. C., The Plastic Age of the Gospel, p. 13, New York: Macmillan, 1927.

2. Ibid., pp. 13, 14.



pre-Christian origin, and reflects to a considerable extent the religious thought and life of the period under review.

The peculiarity of this period lay in its emphasis upon legalism. In endless detail principles were applied, and all of life was rigidly girded with the belt of legalism; no contingency was to be left unprovided for. Ultimately religion degenerated into mere ritual, and prime importance was attached to the punctilious observance of every jot and tittle of the external commandment.

"The tremendous tyranny of Rabbinism was built upon superstition and exclusiveness.... All liberty of thought was abrogated; all Gentile learning was forbidden; no communion was allowed with the human intellect outside the Pharisaic pale. Within the circle of Rabbinism the Jew was 'the galley-slave of the most rigid orthodoxy'. The yoke of the Romans was not so exacting as that of the Rabbis, which dominated over a man's whole existence and intruded itself into the most trivial actions of life....."

"Their coercion was made yet more terrible by maledictions. 'The whole range of action permitted to the Jewish mind was included in the mazes of a vaulted labyrinth from which there was no outlet but through the terrible gate of excommunication' of which the milder forms blasted the reputation, and the sterner shattered the temporal interests, and ruined the everlasting welfare....'The voice of the Rabbi is as the voice of God.'"<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Methods of Rabbinical exegesis.

The basis of the Rabbinic exegesis was twofold: profound reverence for Scripture, and an unhistorical, unscientific method of studying it. The devout student of the day believed that the sacred oracles contained all

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1. Farrar, F. W., History of Interpretation, pp. 60-61, New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1886.

truth, and that it was only a matter of patience to find in them all that it concerned man to know. The exegesis thus took the two directions of literalness and allegory which, though seemingly mutually contradictory, are the necessary outcome of the Rabbinical feeling. Excessive reverence for the Scripture itself emphasizes the letter; but also, when a desired truth does not offer itself from the letter, a hidden meaning is sought. "The whole method of exegesis may be summed up in the principle that every sentence and every word of the Scripture was credited with any meaning that it could possibly be made to bear; and the interpreter selected .....any sense that suited his argument."<sup>1</sup>

A characteristic Rabbinical method was that of Gematria, or the symbolism of numbers. Every name was thought to represent a number, and therefore cognate to any other name which yielded the same number. For instance, in Zech. 3:8 the promised Messiah is spoken of as "my servant THE BRANCH". Now, the Hebrew letters of Tsemach, "a sprout", are equivalent in value to 138; and since this is also the value of the letters of Menahem, or "Consoler" (Lam. 1:16), Menahem is reckoned among the names of the Messiah.

Isaiah 30:8 is similarly treated: "Blessed are all those that wait upon Him" (יב). The value of יב is 36, so Rabbi Abai said that there were 36 in every generation who receive the presence of the Shekinah.

The profound and superstitious reverence for Scripture, the conviction of the absolute literal perfection of the Law,

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1. Toy, C. H., Quotations in the New Testament, p. xxiii, New York: Scribner's, 1884.

led to the belief that they contained everything. The connections of a passage of Scripture were totally disregarded. Needless to say, such fanciful methods were barren of real results. The classic Jewish interpreters were ignorant of the origin and scope of the various sacred writings. They gave little thought to these matters. "The Jewish doctors allegorized the literal and literalized the allegorical, producing negative morality, rational theology, and Christology without the Cross."<sup>1</sup>

There was still another exegetical method which consisted in altering the words of a text into others resembling them. By a simple alteration of the vowel-points, meanings were elicited of which the writer never dreamed. For instance, the initial words of אֱלֹהֵינוּ were made to stand for אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֵלֵינוּ --Son, Spirit, and Father and so employed as an argument in favour of the Trinity. Again, the Rabbis said that the world was created on the first of Tisri, because the first word of Genesis, Bereshith, can be transposed into Bethisri.<sup>2</sup> Since it was maintained that every word was supernaturally sent from God, they asserted that if words sounded alike, the secondary meaning must likewise be implied.

Several instances from the Mishna will serve to illustrate the casuistry and verse-distortion to which the Rabbis committed themselves:

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1. Scott, J., Principles of New Testament Quotation, p. 105, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1875.
  2. Farrar, F. W., op. cit., p. 104. Cf. Glassius, Philolog. Sacr., pp. 425, 438.

"On that day came Judah, an Ammonite proselyte, and stood before them in the House of Study. He said to them, May I enter into the congregation?

Rabbi Gamaliel said to him: Thou art forbidden.

Rabbi Joshua said to him: Thou art permitted.

R. Gamaliel said to him, Scripture says, An Ammonite or a Moabite shall not enter into the assembly of the Lord; even to the tenth generation.

R. Joshua said to him, But are the Ammonites and the Moabites (still) where they were?--long ago, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came up and put all the nations in confusion, as it is written, I have removed the bounds of the peoples and have robbed their treasures, and I have brought down as a valiant man them that sit (on thrones)(Isa.10:13).

R. Gamaliel answered, Scripture says, But afterward I will bring again the captivity of the children of Ammon (Jer. 49:6), and so they have returned.

R. Joshua said to him: Scripture says, and I will turn again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord (Jer. 30:3), and they have not yet returned. And they permitted him to come into the congregation."<sup>1</sup>

"They said to the High Priest, 'The he-goat has reached the wilderness.' And whence did they know that the he-goat had reached the wilderness?

They used to set up sentinel posts and (from these) towels were waved and (so) they would know that the he-goat had reached the wilderness.....

R. Ishmael says: Had they not another sign also? -- a thread of crimson wool was tied to the door of the Sanctuary and when the he-goat reached the edge of the wilderness the thread turned white; for it is written, Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow."<sup>2</sup>

An example of extreme exegesis was that in which the Rabbis taught that when a man lay three days in the grave, his entrails were torn from his body and cast in his face; because it is written in Mal. 2:3: "Behold, I.....will spread filth upon your faces, even the filth of your solemn feasts."

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1. Mishna, Yadaim, 4.4. Eng. trans. by Herbert Danby, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933.

2. Ibid., Yoma, 6.8.

"From whence is it", asks a Rabbinical interpreter, "that God wears the phylactery? From Isa. 62:8, where it reads, 'Jehovah hath sworn by His right hand, and by the arm of His strength'. The right hand signifies the Law, and the arm of His strength indicates the phylactery, because it is written, 'Jehovah will give strength unto His people.'"<sup>1</sup>

Likewise, we find that a combination of Isa. 62:5, "and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee," and the Jewish saying regarding a thousand years being as one day with God (cf. Psa. 90:4), in view of the seven days of the marriage festival, indicates seven thousand years for Messiah's reign.

### 3. Higher Inspiration of the Torah.

The Pentateuch in its entirety was supposed to have been given directly by God, every verse and letter being consequently inspired. It was claimed that Moses wrote the whole Pentateuch at God's dictation, even, according to R. Simeon, the last eight verses relating to his own death.<sup>2</sup> Every letter of the Torah was fixed by the Massoretes and counted by the Soferim,<sup>3</sup> and on each particle, such as

אלוהים, were based important laws.<sup>4</sup> Rabbi

1. Cf. Farrar, F. W., op. cit., in loco.

2. Mishna, Baba Bathra, 14b. Cited by Kohler, K., art., "Inspiration", in Jewish Encyclopaedia, Vol. VI, pp. 607-608. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1904.

3. Ibid., Kid., 30a.

4. Ibid., Pesh. 22b; Sanh. 70a.

Ishmael said to R. Meïr while the latter was occupied with the professional work of a scribe, "Be on thy guard concerning thy sacred task, for if thou omittest or addest one single letter to the Law thou destroyest the whole world."<sup>1</sup>

In the Palestinian Gemara it is declared that God delivered the Law to Moses engraven with white fire upon black fire; i.e., with fiery white letters upon a background of shining black, as on a monument.<sup>2</sup> Elsewhere it is disputed whether the Law was delivered by God to Moses in separate manuscript-rolls or at once when entirely completed.<sup>3</sup> The Babylonian Gemara in one passage concedes that the last eight verses of Deuteronomy were written by Joshua;<sup>4</sup> but according to the opinion of other Rabbis, it cannot be believed that a single letter was wanting from the MSS of the Law when Moses delivered it to the priests. The conclusion is therefore to be drawn that Moses, being as ever the instrument of God and the subject of Divine dictation, wrote even those words which refer to his own death. And it is added, with an affecting touch of historic probability, that he wept greatly as he wrote.<sup>5</sup>

Special Inspiration and normative authority was given to the Torah; the codex of the Talmud quotes from the Pentateuch alone six hundred times, introduced by various

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1. Ibid., Er. 12b.

2. Ibid., Shekalim, 6.1.

3. Ibid., Gittin, 60a.

4. Mishna, Baba Bathra, 15a.

5. Cited by Ladd, G. T., Doctrine of Sacred Scripture, Vol. II, p. 32. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1883.

formulae of quotation. ".....the other books of Scripture .....are only designated as Qabbala ('received', handed down, tradition).....it was forbidden to put the Law in the same wrapper with the Prophets, so as not to place perhaps the latter on top of the former."<sup>1, 2</sup>

However, not only to the Torah, but also to the prophetic ("Latter Prophets": Isaiah to Malachi) and historical books ("Former Prophets": Joshua to Kings), is attributed Inspiration. This widening tendency gradually grew so that ultimately all the historical writings of the Old Testament were considered to be supernaturally infallible even in details, and were thought to contain hidden treasures of moral and religious truth. These could be secured, of course, only by the methods of allegorical interpretation.

With respect to the writings of the Hagiographa, the third division of the Jewish Canon, we find that there is claimed no special Inspiration save that which was the common possession of wise, discreet, and pious men of Israel. If we take a sufficiently broad view of the Torah, as some of the Rabbis did, and as is the view of modern Judaism, we shall see that the Torah includes the Prophets and the Hagiographa:

"For indeed 'the Torah is a triad, composed of Pentateuch, Prophets, and Hagiographa'. 'Have I not written to thee the three things in counsels and knowledge?' (Taan., B. 2. 37a, and Midrash Prov., 22.19).

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1. Tosephta Megillah, 4.40; Taanith, 15a; Chagiga, 10b.
  2. Edersheim, A., The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Vol. II, pp. 685-686, New York: Longmans, Green, 1883.

That lessons from the Prophets almost always accompanied those taken from the Pentateuch is a well-known fact, as likewise that the Talmid Chacham, or the student, had to beautify himself with the knowledge of the twenty-four books of which the Bible consists, even as a bride adorns herself with twenty-four different kinds of ornaments.

That this injunction was strictly fulfilled by the student is clear from the facility and frequency with which the Rabbis quoted the Prophets and the Hagiographa. A striking instance may be seen in the Mechilta, a small work of not more than about seventy octavo pages when stripped from its commentaries; it has about one thousand citations from the Prophets and the Hagiographa."<sup>1</sup>

#### 4. Influence upon the Early Church's Doctrine of Inspiration.

We shall merely touch upon here what we hope to develop more fully later. On the whole, we must give the Rabbis credit for not formulating a view of Inspiration that savoured of the Greek conception of unconscious ecstasy, a view which we are soon to meet in Philo and the Alexandrian school. But, on the other hand, the elements from Rabbinism which have caused the most difficulty in the Christian Church are those of the Divine dictation of the very words, Inspiration of minor historical portions of the Old Testament, infallibility of details, and a tendency to Bibliolatry.

#### B. Philo and the Alexandrian School.

##### 1. Features of the Period.

From the third century B.C. onwards, Alexandria was

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1. Schechter, S., Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology, pp. 121-122, New York: Macmillan, 1910.



gradually becoming the centre of civilization; literally and metaphorically, she was the heart of the world. As a great international emporium of trade, she stood unrivalled, and afforded ample scope for the trading abilities of the Jews. As the home of science and philosophy, she also provided them with the opportunity of bringing the truths of revelation into fruitful contact with the imagination of the East and the culture of the West. Here Hebrew religion, Greek speculation, and Oriental mysticism acted and reacted upon each other. In their mutual relations there was at once the warlike clash of opposition and the peaceful, but no less effective, process of assimilation. It was a time of religious and philosophical eclecticism.

The Jewish-Alexandrian philosophy reached its fullest development in the writings of Philo Judaeus (c. B.C. 20 to A.D. 50), who not only outstripped all others in the effort to wed Jewish belief to Hellenistic culture, but also very strongly influenced the development of Christian theology.

"A synthesis was reached between the apparently unrelated and alien elements. In its most thorough-going form this fusion was the theory that Hellenism and Judaism are essentially identical. Philo proposed the thesis and supported it by his famous allegorical method. He undertook to demonstrate that what Moses taught was the same as the teaching of Pythagoras and Plato."<sup>1</sup>

It was necessary that the Jewish students of Greek philosophy somehow reconcile their religion with their philosophical studies; in this way they felt that they would be in a better position to give a reasonable account of their faith to the cultured Greeks among whom they dwelt.

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1. Zenos, A. C., op. cit., p. 16.

## 2. Conception of Inspiration.

While Philo may have had in mind the phenomenon of prophetic vision in the Old Testament, he sought to give it a heathen explanation, in order to recommend it more favourably to the Greeks. Thus, he transferred the ideas of the ancients concerning the *μαντική*, under which their oracles were uttered,<sup>1</sup> to the Inspiration of the Old Testament prophets. According to his view the prophet is the interpreter of God, Who makes him inwardly perceive what he is to speak. This divine Inspiration is received by the prophet in a state of *ἔκστασις* in which the self-consciousness is entirely in abeyance. The human *νοῦς* has departed to give place to the Divine Spirit, or *πνεῦμα*, for, as Philo expressed it, if the Divine light is to arise, the human must set; only when the light of reason has set does the light of the Divine Spirit appear above the horizon of the soul.

"A prophet gives forth nothing 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 what he prophesieth."<sup>2</sup>

Within the inspired soul, thinking and purposing have ceased: *ἐνθουσιώσης γὰρ καὶ οὐκ ἐτι οὔσης ἐν ἑαυτῇ διανοίας.*<sup>3</sup> When the soul is made a partaker of divine things

1. Cf. Phocylides, V. 121; Plutarch, De Pythiae Oraculis; De Placitis Philosophorum, V. 1.

2. Philo, De Spec. Legg., II. 343, ed. Mangey.

3. Ibid., Quis rer. div. haer., I. 482.

it must be utterly emptied of all that pertains to sense, intellect, or will. The prison of the body must be transcended, and the soul which yearns to experience this holy influence must abandon not only earth and perception and reason, but must actually run away from itself; that is, it must put itself outside itself and be carried away with a frenzy.<sup>1</sup>

"So long as we are masters of ourselves we are not possessed; but when our mind ceases to shine, Inspiration and madness lay hold on us. For the understanding that dwells in us is ousted on the arrival of the Divine Spirit, but is restored to its own dwelling when that Spirit departs; for it is unlawful that mortal dwell with immortal".<sup>2</sup>

Only the real prophet attains this state of ecstasy; and even when he himself appears to be speaking, he really is in a condition of complete quiet. Another is making use of his vocal organs for the enunciation of whatever that other one wills.<sup>3</sup> A corollary of this position is that the writers of the Old Testament were mere "pen-men" in the strictest sense of the word.

We find Philo holding the most rigid views of Inspiration, and yet when he comes to deal with specific cases he becomes vague and self-contradictory.<sup>4</sup> To him Scripture is "the holy word", "the Divine word", "the right word"; and its deliverances are "sacred oracles"-- *χρησμοὶ λόγια, ἱερὰ βίβλος, ἱερώτατον γράμμα, ὁ ἱερός, or θεῖος λόγος, or ὁ ὀρθὸς λόγος* .<sup>5</sup>

1. Philo, Quis rer. div. haer., I. 482, ed. Mangey.

2. Philo, Ibid., I. 511.

3. Philo, De Monarch., II. 222.

4. Farrar, F. W., History of Interpretation, p. 147.

5. Cf. Philo, De Mut. Nom. 8; Quis res div. 53; Vit. Mos. III. 23; De Monarch., I. 9; De Spec. Legg., IV. 8.

So sincere was he that he even believed himself to be inspired, although not, of course, in the same sense in which the Prophets were inspired. He says that his soul was frequently filled with inspirations (θεοληπτεῖσθαι), and that he exercised divination (μαντεύεσθαι);<sup>1</sup> τὸ ἑμαυτοῦ πάθος ὁ μυριάκις παθῶν οἶδα.....<sup>2</sup>

While considering that the Scriptures were verbally dictated, and thus in every sense infallible, yet he quotes from them with careless variations, and in the freest possible paraphrases, treating them in the most arbitrary manner.<sup>3</sup> In fact, he even went so far as to accept the ridiculous story that the translators of the Septuagint miraculously concurred in their choice of words. He speaks of the translators themselves as "hierophants and prophets."<sup>4</sup> "Basing all his arguments on the LXX, he accords to the Greek text as profound a veneration and faith as if it had been written by the finger of God Himself."<sup>5</sup> More and more the tendency was to raise the Scriptures absolutely above the region of human activity and limitation.

Philo distinguishes three classes of contents in the Pentateuch. First, there are the oracles which God Himself pronounced by means of the Divine prophet as His interpreter.

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1. Philo, De Cherubim, 9.

2. Ibid., De Migr. Abr., VII. 35.

3. Cf. Ewald, Geschichte des Volkes Israels, vi. 276-378; and Siegfried, in Hilgenfeld's Zeitschrift, 1873. Cited by Farrar.

4. Philo, Vit. Mos., II. 5-7.

5. Drummond, James, Philo-Judaeus, or the Jewish-Alexandrian Philosophy, Vol. I., p. 16. London: Williams & Norgate, 1888. Cf. Sanday, W., Inspiration, London 1893, pp.85ff.

Second, we have the matters delivered by Divine direction to Moses in response to his own inquiries. And third, there are the revelations which Moses received when he was in a state of ecstasy.<sup>1</sup> All these three types were considered as being similarly dictated to Moses by God; in fact, the term used to designate the office of Moses in transmitting the first of the three classes of contents is the word ἑρμηνεύς; and this is the same term used to denote the prophet in general as the subject of unconscious ecstasy.<sup>2</sup>

### 3. Allegorizing Tendencies.

In the hands of Philo as an interpreter of the Old Testament, allegorism becomes a fine art. His contention is that while Scripture is the depository of truth, it requires to be interpreted with the aid of allegory. In other words, he starts from the principle that a hidden meaning underlies the sacred narrative. He grants that the legal enactments of Scripture must be strictly and literally observed, but thinks it absurd to suppose that it should occupy itself with simple genealogies, accounts of battles, etc. More especially, the literal sense is inadmissible, where it is obscure or unintelligible, or less elevated than the allegorical sense, or where it ascribes to God anything unworthy of His Divinity.

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1. Philo, De Mos. III. 163.

2. Cf. Ladd, G. T., Doctrine of Sacred Scripture, II. p. 39.

"We should wholly misapprehend the nature of this system, if we supposed that it consisted either in a mere whimsical search for hidden meanings, or in an intentional falsification of the plain sense of Scripture in order to commend it to philosophic minds. However grotesque many of its results must appear to us, and however grossly its whole method departs from the canons of scientific exegesis, Philo employed it with all seriousness, and believed that he was faithfully drawing out the original meaning of the writers whom he expounded.

"When it is laid down as a fundamental and incontrovertible truth that certain ancient writings are in all respects divine, the inference immediately follows that whatever seems undivine in them must be so in appearance only; and men will, with equal honesty and humility, contend that the difficulties arise solely from fallible and unspiritual interpretations long before they can admit that the whole position, which has been so universally accepted as the basis of religion, is itself erroneous.... Philo's difficulties were naturally not of a scientific, but of a religious and speculative character."<sup>1</sup>

While Philo professes to respect the literal sense, it is clear from the tenor of his works, as well as from his special observations, that he regards the literal sense as a sort of concession to the weak and ignorant. The Old Testament for him was not so much of a text for criticism as it was a pretext for theory. Instead of elucidating the literal sense he transforms it into a philosophic symbol. The prophecy, the poetry, the narratives, even the simplest legal ordinances of Scripture are evaporated into commonplaces of philosophy, or turned into a vehicle for the rhetorical expression of moral platitudes.

The theory of verbal Inspiration--with the most

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1. Drummond, J., op. cit., I., pp. 18, 19.

obnoxious mechanical elements unmodified--was taken over from Greek mystical thought. Philo passed it on to the early Christian Church, and from thence it continued to the post-Reformation Protestant scholasticism, where it found its classic expression. Hand in hand went the two deplorable results: slavish literalism, and unbounded allegorizing.

### C. Josephus' View of Inspiration.

The corroborative testimony of Josephus, which we shall mention but briefly, is of value here in that he shares the ideas of the Rabbis concerning Inspiration, and is partially influenced by Philo. While he nowhere formally discusses the question, yet there is some evidence indicating that he held strict views concerning the authority and infallibility of the Scriptures, and believed that the writer of Scripture was under complete control of the inspiring Spirit.

He represents Balaam as saying to Balak: "..... thinkest thou that it rests with us at all to be silent or to speak on such themes as these, when we are possessed by the Spirit of God? For that Spirit gives utterance to such language and words as it will, whereof we are all unconscious. .....For nothing in us, once He has gained prior entry, is any more our own."<sup>1</sup> This apparent adoption of the views of

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1. Josephus, Jewish Antiquities, IV.6.5, ed. H. St.J.Thackeray:  
 δοκεῖς ἐφ' ἡμῖν εἶναι τι περὶ τῶν τοιούτων σιγᾶν ἢ λέγειν,  
 ὅταν ἡμᾶς τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ λάβῃ πνεῦμα; φωνὰς γὰρ ἅς βούλεται  
 τοῦτο καὶ λόγους οὐδὲν ἡμῶν εἰδότες ἀφήσιν..... οὐδὲν γὰρ  
 ἐν ἡμῖν ἔτι φθάσαντος εἰσελθεῖν ἐκείνου ἡμέτερον.

Philo indicates the powerful influence the "great Alexandrian" exercised in this period and subsequent ones. Again, Josephus maintains that when Balaam spoke by Inspiration, he was not in his own senses or power, but caught away and impelled by the Divine Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

Likewise, Josephus held that Moses, as an inspired prophet, wrote even the account of his own death.<sup>2</sup> This same Moses did Balaam--even though he was a false prophet--the great honour to record his prophecies.<sup>3</sup> However, Josephus did not accept the fable of the pseudo-Aristeas concerning the miraculous inspiration of the LXX, for he reproaches the Greek authors for framing their narratives merely to please their readers, and depending upon only hearsay evidence. He supposes that the Hebrew authors, on the other hand--at least partially--took the pains to make reasonable research. Thus his view of the Inspiration of the books comprising the Hebrew Canon is somewhat more tenable than that of Philo.

"Everyone is not permitted of his own accord to be a writer, nor is there any disagreement in what is written,--they being only prophets that have written the original and earliest accounts of things as they learned them of God Himself by Inspiration.....and how firmly we have given credit to those books of our own nation is evident from what we do. For so many ages that have already passed no one has been so bold as either to add anything to them, or to make any change in them; but it has become natural to all Jews immediately and from their very birth to esteem those books which contain divine doctrine, and to persist in them, and, if occasion be, willingly to die for them."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ant., IV.6.5: οὐκ ὦν ἐν ἑαυτῷ τῷ δὲ Θεῷ πνεύματι πρὸς αὐτὰ νενικημένος.
  2. Ant., IV.8.48.
  3. Ibid., IV.6.13.
  4. Contra Apionem, I.7.8.



### Chapter Three: Early Christian Doctrine of Inspiration.

#### A. Formative Factors.

It is interesting to note that in the annals of the Early Church we do not find any elaborate theory or series of systematized propositions with reference to Inspiration. In fact, during the first fifteen centuries of the Church, there is an almost entire absence of dogmatic teaching on this question. This would seem to indicate an unusual harmony of opinion respecting it.<sup>1</sup> The opinion of the Church did not differ materially from that of its Jewish contemporaries; the infallibility of Scripture was taken for granted, and hence there was little disposition to think systematically about the methods through which the Scriptures came into being.

The history of doctrinal controversy within the early Christian Church itself gives us conclusive evidence that the Bible was considered as the authority, the court of ultimate appeal, to which all differences were referred. With regard to the Scriptures there could be no controversy; they

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1. Rudelbach, A.G., Die Lehre von der Inspiration der heiligen Schrift, Kap. II., s. 18, in Zeitschrift für die gesammte lutherische Theologie und Kirche, edited by Rudelbach and Guericke, Leipzig, 1840:

"Die alte Kirche lehrt einmüthig, dass alle kanonische Schriften des Alten und Neuen Testaments vom Geiste Gottes eingegeben sind, und gründet hierauf die Vollkommenheit der Schrift, als eines göttlichen Ganzen, deren Anerkennung durch die menschliche Unvollkommenheit und bruchstückartige Erkenntnis nicht beeinträchtigt werden kann".

were assumed to be above questioning.

"Notwithstanding that the spirit of Christianity in the infancy of the Church was practical rather than speculative, yet it is remarkable to observe how, within not a long period of time, its main doctrines became the subjects of controversy, and received those more precise explanations and that more accurate dogmatic form which controversy and discussion alone necessarily impose upon them. The question of the authority and infallibility of Scripture did not, however, pass through this process until many centuries afterwards. There are no definitions and limitations of the doctrine on one side and another, elaborately drawn out and reduced to systematic form, as if armed on every side to repel assault, or fortified around to prevent controversy or misunderstanding.

"The belief of the early Church in an infallible Bible was too simple to require to be fenced about with the safeguard of explanations, and too unanimous to need support from argument. There was neither controversy nor theorizing demanded to satisfy the faith of Christians; nor did the one or the other appear in connection with Inspiration for the first eight hundred years".<sup>1</sup>

The Fathers were affected by two streams of influence: first, by Philo and his development of the Greek and Roman ideas of human passivity and mantic ecstasy; and second, by the Jewish Kabbalistic tendencies with their ideas of extreme reverence for the letter of the Law and of verbal Inspiration.<sup>2</sup> At first associated more specifically with the Jewish Scriptures, the ideas of verbal Inspiration began to be

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1. Bannerman, J., Inspiration: The Infallible Truth and Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures, p. 123. Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1865.
  2. Bethune-Baker, J. F., An Introduction to the Early History of Christian Doctrine, p. 44. London: Methuen, 1903. Cf. Farrar, F. W., History of Interpretation, p. 165. Dörner, I. A., Geschichte der Protestantischen Theologie in Deutschland, s. 308, 621: completely rejects the Inspiration dogma of the early Church, calling it "die alexandrinische Theorie."

transferred to the New Testament writings. The transition was not difficult; from the original idea of inspired men, it was but an easy step to that of inspired writings.

When they came to interpret their Scriptures, the early Christians were faced with the problems of exploring as fully as possible the depths of the wealth of knowledge stored up in them, and to explain away everything that seemed to them, when interpreted literally, to be offensive to reason or unworthy of God. Thus arose again the disastrous allegorical method--as we have twice before seen--a method resulting directly from the premises of verbal Inspiration and literal infallibility.

"With their high opinion of the Inspiration of the sacred writings, and the dignity of a revelation, we should expect, as a matter of course, to meet with careful interpretation, diligently investigating the exact meaning. But the very opposite was the fact. Inspiration is done away with by the most arbitrary of all modes of interpretation, the allegorical, of which we may consider Philo the master."<sup>1</sup>

It was held that the superficial meaning was far from the real meaning; only as a man was initiated into the Christian mysteries did he receive the key that would unlock the hieroglyphics of Scripture--a key that few possessed. By

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1. Gfrörer, Geschichte des Urchristenthums, Vol. I, s. 69, quoted by Hagenbach, K. R., History of Doctrines, Vol. I, pp. 123-4. Eng. tr. from 5th Ger. ed., Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1880.

Hagenbach comments, p. 124: "However much this may surprise us at first sight, we shall find that the connection between this theory of Inspiration and the mode of interpretation which accompanies it, is by no means unnatural. ....That which has come down from heaven must be interpreted according to its heavenly origin; must be looked upon with other eyes, and touched with other than profane hands."

fulfilling the duty of "pneumatic", or allegorical exegesis, the results of other kinds of exposition could safely be disregarded. Three difficulties which this type of exegesis had to overcome were:

(1) It had to demonstrate the agreement between the two Testaments; that is, the Old Testament had to be completely Christianized, prophecy had to be discovered everywhere, and the literal meaning had to be got rid of wherever it was obnoxious;

(2) It had to harmonize the statements of Scripture with the prevailing dogmatics; and

(3) It had to furnish any verse with a profound meaning, one valuable for the time. Thus exegesis became a kind of black art.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Harnack, A., History of Dogma, Vol. III., pp. 199-200. Eng. tr. from 3rd Ger. ed., 1898.  
Ibid: ".....the impossibility of drawing up a rule deciding how far the letter of Scripture was authoritative, caused more anxiety. Had God a human form, eyes, or voice; was Paradise situated on the earth; did the dead rise with all their bodily members, even with the hair, etc.? -- to all these and a hundred similar questions there was no sure answer, and consequently disputes arose between adherents of one and the same confession. All had to allegorize, and, in turn, all had to take certain texts literally.....Ultimately, in the course of the fifth century, a sort of common sense established itself, which could be taken as forming, with regard to the anthropomorphists, a middle line between the exegetical methods of Chrysostom and Cyril of Alexandria, and which had been anticipated by a few Fathers of the 4th century."

The only text used by the Fathers was the Septuagint, and even when it differs radically from the Hebrew they rely on it. In spite of the fact that some of them look upon the very words of Scripture to be the ipsissima verba of the Holy Spirit, yet the freedom with which they treat them is astounding. With no compunctions about alterations, misquotations, or combinations of irrelevant passages, they adduce obscure incidents borrowed from Jewish legend, and even appeal to apocryphal writings as being inspired.

#### B. Opinions of Representative Fathers.

##### 1. Clement of Rome (d. c.95 A.D.)

Many Scripture citations are introduced with the formulae, "for the Scripture saith", "by the testimony of Scripture", "the Holy Spirit saith".<sup>1</sup> He exhorts his readers "to look carefully-- ἐγ [κυπτετε] εἰς into the Scriptures, which are the true (utterances) of the Holy Spirit."<sup>2</sup> Again, he says, "Ye know, beloved, ye know well the sacred Scriptures, and have looked carefully into the Oracles-- τὰ λόγια --of (God)."<sup>3</sup> "The spirit of lowliness and awe-- τὰ ὑποδεές --through obedience, not only improveth us, but also improved the generations before us, even those who received His oracles in fear and truth."<sup>4</sup> Further, he speaks of the

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1. Clem. Rom., Ep. ad Cor., I. 23, 34; I. 13, 16 (Isa. 53).

2. Ibid., II. 2, 6.

3. Ep. ad Cor., I. 45, 53.

4. Ibid., I. 19.

λειτουργοὶ τῆς χάριτος τοῦ Θεοῦ . . . . --"ministers of the grace of God (the prophets of the Old Testament), who by the Holy Ghost spake of repentance."<sup>1</sup>

He speaks of the Apostles as sent forth "with the full assurance and measure of the Holy Spirit--- μετὰ πληροφορίας πνεύματος ἁγίου . . . . ., when they had received the promises, and been fully convinced-- πληροφορηθέντες -- by the Resurrection, and confirmed in the Word of God-- πιστωθέντες ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ . . . . .<sup>2</sup> Among these he includes "the blessed Paul who at the beginning of the Gospel in very truth wrote by Inspiration-- πνευματικῶς -- to the Corinthians."<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Justin Martyr (d. 164)

Philo was an object of Justin's admiration, and he calls him and Josephus σοφώτατοι .<sup>4</sup> He holds to the theory of verbal dictation, yet quotes the Sibyl and Hystaspes as genuine prophetic books.<sup>5</sup> To him, Scripture is the Word of God, given through the Divine Logos. The Spirit of God is the author of the entire Old Testament, the sole author of one great drama having many actors.

He tells us of the "history which Moses wrote by

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1. Ibid., I. 8.

2. Ibid., I. 42.

3. Ibid., I. 47.

4. In the anonymous "Cohort. ad Graecos" which used to be attributed to Justin; Cohort. ad Graec. 9.

5. Apol. I. 20. 44; Cohort. ad Graecos, 37. Cf. Tertullian, ad Natt. II. 12.

Divine Inspiration"-- ἐκ θείας ἐπινοίας..., "while the Holy Spirit of Prophecy taught through him."<sup>1</sup> Again, he quotes the language of David, "who spake thus (Psa. 19:2-5) through the Spirit of Prophecy;"<sup>2</sup> and of Isaiah who was moved-- Θεοφορεῖσθα, --by the same Spirit (Isa. 65:2; 58:2).<sup>3</sup>

"We must not suppose that the language-- λέξεις -- proceeds from the men who are inspired, but from the Divine Word which moves them"-- μὴ ἀπ' αὐτῶν τῶν ἐμπεπνευσμένων .... ἀλλ' ἀπὸ τοῦ κινουόντος αὐτοὺς θείου λόγου. "Their work is to announce that which the Holy Spirit descending upon them purposes through them to teach those who wish to learn the true religion"-- τὴν ἀληθῆ θεοσέβειαν.<sup>4</sup> So strong is this conviction with Justin that he almost uniformly quotes Scripture with some phrase like the following: λέγει θεός, ἐμβοᾷ τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα, ὀνειδίζει τὸ πνεῦμα ἅγιον, or τὸ προφητικὸν πνεῦμα. . . .<sup>5</sup> The phrase διὰ τοῦ προφήτου evidently has the most strictly passive interpretation placed upon its meaning.

"Neither by nature nor human thought-- ἐννοία --can men recognize such great and divine truths, but by the gift which came down from above upon the holy men (under the Jewish

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1. Cohort. ad Graec. 12; Apol. I. 44.

2. Apol. I. 35, 40.

3. Dial. cum Tryph. 119.

4. Apol. I. 36; cf. I. 33, II. 10; Cohort. ad Graec. 35.

5. Cf. Dial. cum Tryph. 16, 22, 25, 34, 37, 133; Apol. I. 41, 63.

dispensation), who needed no art of words, nor skill in captious and contentious speaking, but only to offer themselves in purity-- καθαρούς παρασχεῖν --to the operation of the Divine Spirit, in order that His Divine power might reveal to us the knowledge of Divine and heavenly things, acting on just men as a plectrum on a harp or lyre"-- ἵν' αὐτὸ τὸ θεῖον ἐξ οὐρανοῦ κατιὸν πλήκτρον, ὡς περ ὄργανω κιθάρας τινὸς ἢ λύρας, τοῖς δικαίοις ἀνδράσι χρώμενον, τὴν τῶν θεῶν ἡμῖν καὶ οὐρανίων ἀποκαλύψῃ γινῶσιν.<sup>1</sup>

Rudelbach, seeking to modify the obnoxious features of passivity, emphasises the active part played by the individual, but we feel that his argument is unconvincing:

"In diesem Ausspruche ist zugleich das Wesen und die Rechtfertigung dieser oft so unverständig gemisdeuteten Ansicht gegeben. Es ist allerdings die Rede von einer Passivität, aber nicht von einer regungs- und bewusstlosen; und man kann doch wohl dem Sinne vernünftiger Menschen so viel zumuthen, dass sie einsahen, ein anderes sei das Saitenspiel, dessen Töne aus der Vibration der Saiten entstehen, und ein anders das beseelte, vom Geiste Gottes berührte Menschenherz, der Geist des Menschen, den der Herr nicht nur erneuert, sondern mit göttlichem Leben erfüllet. Von der Beschaffenheit der Gnadenwirkungen überhaupt werden wir zu einer richtigen Beurtheilung des Verhältnisses des Freithätigen und Leidentlichen auch in der höchsten Gnadenwirkung, die wir mit dem Namen der Inspiration bezeichnen, gelangen; so wie durch jene die Seele, der Unruhe und dem Geräusch des irdischen Lebens enthoben, Gott innerlich vernimmt, so noch vielmehr in dieser, wodurch Gott die Manifestation in seinem Worte bewahrt und fortleitet."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Cohort. ad Graec. 8.

2. Rudelbach, A. G., Die Lehre von der Inspiration der heiligen Schrift, Kap. II., s. 27.



With reference to contradictions in Scripture, Justin dares neither to assert nor to think any. If any apparently contradictory passages be adduced, he will rather confess that he does not understand them.<sup>1</sup>

From Justin's expositions various canons for eliciting the "spiritual" meaning can be deduced:<sup>2</sup>

- (1) If a statement of Scripture in its literal sense contradicts another statement of Scripture, it must have a mystical sense.
- (2) If a thing is unnatural or improbable it is to be interpreted typically.
- (3) Whatever would be immoral if taken literally must be figurative.
- (4) Things unworthy of God must be resolved into types.
- (5) Statements in the prophecies and Psalms, which, according to Justin, cannot be explained of any historical person must therefore be referred to Christ.

### 3. Athenagoras (d. 177)

Here we are given an account of the Inspiration process which is akin to purely pagan theories.<sup>3</sup> "While entranced and deprived of their natural powers of reason-- κατ' ἔκστασιν τῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς λογισμῶν..... --by the influence of the Divine Spirit, they uttered that which was wrought in

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1. Justin, Dial. cum Tryph., 65.

2. Fullerton, K., Prophecy and Authority: A Study in the History of the Doctrine and Interpretation of Scripture, pp. 54, 55. New York: Macmillan, 1919.

3. Bethune-Baker, J. F., op. cit., p. 46.

them--ἀ ἐνηργουῦντο--the Spirit using them as its instruments, as a fluteplayer might blow a flute."<sup>1</sup> In another instance, he characterizes the "Holy Spirit, which works in those who speak prophetically, as an emanation, issuing from God, and carried back to Him, like a ray from the sun"--ἀπόρροϊαν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀπόρρεον καὶ ἐπαναφερόμενον ὡς ἀκτῖνα ἡλίου.<sup>2</sup>

Hence the Christian need "give no heed to the doctrines of men, except those uttered-- Θεοφάτοις --and taught by God."<sup>3</sup> "He has Prophets as witnesses of his creed-- ὧν νοοῦμεν καὶ πεπιστεύκαμεν --who inspired-- ἐνθεοί -- by the Spirit have spoken of God and the things of God."<sup>4</sup>

While the figures used to illustrate the Divine activity upon the subjects of Inspiration suggest mechanical processes, yet it must be pointed out that the quality of the note evoked depends just as much upon the instrument itself, as upon the hand manipulating the plectrum, or the fluteplayer who blows into his flute.

#### 4. Irenaeus (d. 202)

In Irenaeus, a representative of the school of Asia Minor, we have the beginning of a saner critico-historical tendency, and a turning away from the delusions of allegory. While the Prophets spoke and wrote under Inspiration, this

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1. Athenagoras, Leg. pro Christ., 9.

2. Ibid., 10.

3. Ibid., 11.

4. Ibid., 7.

Divine activity was not such as to take away their human individuality. He regards the Inspiration of the writers of the New Testament as different in degree from that of the Prophets of the Old; for in the case of the latter, their writings were full of riddles and ambiguities, in spite of Inspiration. However, with the Apostles it was different:

"For after that our Lord rose from the dead, and they were clothed with the power of the Spirit from on high, they were filled with a perfect knowledge in all things--de omnibus adimpleti sunt, et habuerunt perfectam agnitionem."<sup>1</sup> Thus "they are beyond all falsehood--extra omne mendacium."<sup>2</sup> Therefore, since Inspiration saves them from blunders and the use of misleading words, the Divine message is received in all its purity. The Holy Spirit, foreseeing the corruption of heretics, says, through Matthew, "the generation of Christ", rather than "the generation of Jesus"; unguided, Matthew might have been tempted to use only the human name, but the Holy Spirit insures the use of the title marking His Deity."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Irenaeus, Adv. Haer., III., 1.1. Cf. also III., 12.5:  
 αὐται φωναὶ τῶν μαθητῶν τοῦ κυρίου τῶν ἀληθῶς  
 τελείων μετὰ τὴν ἀνάληψιν τοῦ κυρίου διὰ πνεύματος  
 τελειωθέντων.

2. Ibid., III.5.

3. Ibid., III.17.

However, each writer still preserves his own individuality; thus "Paul frequently uses hyperbata on account of the rapidity of his utterance and the vehemence of the Spirit which is in him--propter velocitatem sermonum suorum, et propter impetum, qui in ipso est spiritus"; for instance, in Gal. 3:19 we must suppose a man asking the question and the Spirit answering it; and likewise in II. Thess. 2:3<sup>1</sup>

Irenaeus is fond of emphasizing the literal text of Scripture; so strictly does he adhere to it that he tends to draw arguments from isolated details of parables.<sup>2</sup> "Nothing in the Scriptures is in vain, neither without significance nor argument--Nihil enim otiosum, nec sine signo, neque sine argumento apud eam."<sup>3</sup> He definitely opposed the Gnostics, many of whom based the truth of their opinions on numerical analogies and symbolisms; however, he himself allows such subtle inquiries only if used to illustrate that which has already been admitted on other grounds.<sup>4</sup>

##### 5. Clement of Alexandria (d. c. 216)

In common with the allegoric mode of interpretation characteristic of the Alexandrine Fathers, Clement seeks for a wider and more certain knowledge--  $\gamma\nu\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma$  --which alone can be elicited from the deep mysteries of the Bible,

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1. Ibid., III. 7.

2. Ibid., IV..33; II. 34.

3. Ibid., IV. 34.

4. Also cf. Irenaeus, Adv. Haer., II. 47; III. 16; IV. 14; IV. 36.

when they are viewed "by the light which dawns on those who are truly initiated into knowledge, and seek the truth in love."<sup>1</sup> Through the agency of the "Masters of Israel"<sup>2</sup> God led men to the Messiah, delivering His message to them in the Law,<sup>3</sup> the Psalms,<sup>4</sup> and the Prophets.<sup>5</sup>

"Disregarding the lifeless instruments--lyre and harp--the Word of God reduces to harmony by the Holy Spirit not only this world, but man the microcosm, both body and soul, and so makes melody to God through that many-voiced instrument, and says to man: Thou art my harp, my flute, my temple: my harp, from the harmony (of many notes)--my flute, from the Spirit that breatheth through thee--my temple, from the Word that dwelleth in thee.... Truly of man the Lord wrought a glorious living instrument after the fashion of His own image; one which might give every harmony of God, tuneful and holy"-- ὄργανον Θεοῦ παναρμόνιον, ἔρμελές καὶ ἅγιον, σοφία ὑπερκόσμιος, οὐράνιος λόγος. . Thus the foundations of our faith rest on no insecure basis, "for we have received them from God through the Scriptures."<sup>6</sup>

1. Clem. Alex., Strom., VI. 15.129.

2. Ibid., Paed., I. 2.96; Protr., I. 5.

3. Ibid., Strom., II. 23.146.

4. Ibid., Paed., II. 10.110: 'Ο λόγος τοῦτο ψάλλει διὰ Δαβὶδ περὶ τοῦ κυρίου λέγων. . . . (Psa. 45:8ff).

5. Ibid., Protrep., VIII. 78: Ἰερεμίας δὲ ὁ προφήτης. . . μᾶλλον δὲ ἐν Ἰερεμίᾳ τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα ἐπιδείκνυσι τὸν Θεόν.

6. Clem. Alex., Strom. II., 4.12.

"Not one tittle shall pass away without being accomplished; for the mouth of the Lord, the Holy Spirit, spake it." <sup>1</sup> "We have believed on Him through His voice; and he that believeth on the Word knoweth that the thing is true, for the Word is truth; but he that believeth not on him that speaketh disbelieveth God."<sup>2</sup> To reject this is to reject "that which hath been spoken by the Holy Spirit for our salvation"-- τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος σωτηρίως εἰρημένα . . . . .<sup>3</sup>

Quoting Paul's words to Timothy (II Tim. 3:15), Clement says: "the Scriptures are truly holy, for they are writings which make us holy and make us Godlike-- τὰ ἱεροποιούντα καὶ θεοποιούντα γράμματα; and of these holy writings and words the Bible is composed, which the same Apostle calls inspired by God, being useful for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."<sup>4</sup>

#### 6. Tertullian (d. 220)

Tertullian represents the standpoint of Montanism which held that the annihilation of all human elements in the reception and recording of revelation was of prime importance. Unconsciousness on the part of the person

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1. Ibid., Protr., IX. 82.  
 2. Ibid., Strom., II. 4.12.  
 3. Ibid., Strom., VI. 15.126.  
 4. Ibid., Protr., IX. 87.

through whom the Holy Spirit operated was of the essence of Inspiration.<sup>1</sup>

He holds that in the Scriptures we are given the very letters and words of God, arguing that no doctrine or view could be held for which such a letter or word of God could not be adduced as proof. Also, the converse was asserted: that Scripture denies that of which it does not give instances, and prohibits that which it does not expressly permit.<sup>2</sup>

God was the author of Scripture, and every word was dictated by the Holy Spirit.<sup>3</sup> In controversy with Valentinian, Tertullian will not admit of any degrees of Inspiration; nor will he allow to Marcion that Paul might have possessed deeper insight than some of the other Apostles. He maintained that Scripture contains all truth, without any contradiction, and is accurate and infallibly inspired with regard to details of cosmogony,

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1. Bethune-Baker, J. F., op. cit., p. 47. Cf. Bannerman, J., Inspiration, p. 123:

"The idea of a state of total unconsciousness and prostration of mind and body ascribed to the inspired person in the systems of ancient heathenism, and borrowed from thence by the adherents of the Montanist heresy, towards the end of the second century, was rejected by the early Church as inconsistent with the facts of an inspired Bible; but no elaborate attempt was made to erect over against the error a theory adequate to explain the results."

2. Tertullian, De Monog. 4; de Cor. 2.

3. Ibid., Apol. 18.

history, and chronology.<sup>1</sup> To grant these views as true would mean that we should likewise be compelled to accept the authority of the Book of Enoch, and "the Sibyl who lies not."<sup>2</sup>

"God sent forth the first men who by their justice and innocency were worthy to know God, and to make Him known, and filled them to overflowing (inundatos) with the Divine Spirit."<sup>3</sup> In such a fashion did we receive our "written Testament (instrumentum litteraturae), that we might more fully and more deeply learn of Him and of His counsels and of His will." Tertullian does not hesitate to call the Scriptures the "writings (litteras Dei)"<sup>4</sup> and the "words of God (voces Dei),"<sup>5</sup> to which the Christian looks "as the food of his faith, the spring of his hope, and the bulwark of his trust."<sup>6</sup>

The four Gospels are dependable because of their Apostolical authority, and possess a much higher Inspiration than the writings of spiritual Christians:<sup>7</sup> "all the faithful, it is true, have the Spirit of God, but all are not Apostles."<sup>8</sup> "The Apostles have the Holy Spirit in a peculiar sense; they have it in the works of Prophecy, and in the operation of mighty powers (efficacia virtutum), and in the gift of tongues, not as possessing the influence in

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1. Ibid., De Anim. 1, 2; contra Hermog. 38, 40.

2. Ibid., De Idol. 15; De Cult. Fem. 1:3: "Legimus omnem Scripturam aedificationi habilem, divinitus inspirari." ad Natt. 2:12. Cf. Farrar, F.W., History of Interpretation, pp. 177-178.

3. Tertullian, Apol. 18; cf. Adv. Marcion., IV.22: "In spiritu enim homo constitutus, praesertim quum gloriam Dei conspicit, vel quum per ipsum Deus loquitur, necesse est excidat sensu obumbratus scilicet virtute divina."

4. Ibid., De Anima, 2.

5. Ibid., Apol. 31.

6. Ibid., Apol. 39.

7. Ibid., Adv. Marc. III.6; IV.13.

8. Ibid., De Resurr. Carn. 22; De Praescr. Haer. 25.



part as the rest."<sup>1</sup>

### 7. Origen (d. 254).

Origen is one of the first expressly to reject the pagan notion of Inspiration . He takes for granted the general acceptance of the fact of Inspiration--for it was the same Spirit who had been working throughout all ages--but this quickening influence did not cloud or confuse the natural powers of the prophets as did the Pythian deity, who was akin to those demons which Christians are wont to drive out by prayers and adjurations; for the Divine messengers "by the contact of the Holy Spirit with their soul-- *διὰ τῆς πρὸς τὴν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτῶν ἀφῆς τοῦ καλουμένου ἁγίου πνεύματος* --so to speak, gained a keener and a clearer intuition of spiritual truth"-- *διορατικώτεροι τὸν νοῦν καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν λαμπρότεροι . . . .*;<sup>2</sup> thus they became wiser and more perfect.

Speaking of the remarkable consistency of the various parts of Scripture, Origen keenly observes: "Scripture, as a whole, is God's one, perfect, and complete instrument; giving forth, to those, who wish to learn, its one saving music from many notes combined; stilling and restraining all strivings of the evil one, as David's music calmed the madness of Saul".<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid., Adv. Marc. IV.22; De Exh. Castit. 4.  
 2. Origen, Contra Celsus, VII. 4.  
 3. Comm. in Matt. 5:9.

Origen felt that, in spite of apparent discrepancies-- which, incidentally, could always be resolved by a flight to the allegorical method--the Scriptures were "inspired by the fulness of the Spirit; there is nothing in the Prophets, the Law, the Evangelists, or the Apostles which has not descended from the fulness of the Divine Majesty."<sup>1</sup> In his judgment, the details of cosmogony and the records of the Jewish people were as truly written by the Spirit of God as the works of the Prophets. He asserts that "the records of the Gospels are oracles of the Lord, pure oracles as silver purified seven times seven in the fire (Psa. 12:6)"<sup>2</sup> and that the Scriptures are inerrant, since they were "accurately written by the cooperation of the Holy Spirit."<sup>3</sup>

"...I hold that every wonderful letter written in the oracles of God has its effects. There is not one jot or one tittle written in Scripture which, for those who know how to use the power of the Scriptures, does not effect its proper work... Those who desire to devote themselves to study should be induced not to let a single letter pass without examination and enquiry."<sup>4</sup>

The opening words of Luke's Gospel offer convincing proof to him of this kind of Inspiration; without the gift of God's grace--*χωρίς χάρισματος*--men could only "attempt"--*ἐπέχειρησαν*--to write histories; the Evangelists, on the other hand, did not "attempt" that which they did by

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1. Ibid., Homilia II., in Jeremia, 50.
  2. Ibid., De Princ., IV. 14.
  3. Ibid., Comm. in Matt. 15:8
  4. Hom. in Jer. 39.

the motion of the Holy Spirit-- ἔγραψαν ἐξ ἁγίου κινούμενοι πνεύματος-- hence their books alone we receive on the authority of the Church of God.<sup>1</sup> Origen speaks as though it were a settled belief among Christians that the words of Scripture could in no wise be amended, or conceived of as having any fault or lack.<sup>2</sup>

When discussing the apparent discrepancies of the Evangelists, he says that "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-- ἐν τοῖς σωματικοῖς χαρακ- τήρσι...."<sup>3</sup> However, he somewhat limits himself in the use of the allegorical method by the observation that "those things which are true historically are many more than those which contain merely a spiritual sense."<sup>4</sup> Paul's expressions in his Epistles would indicate that at some times he was speaking in his own person, and at other times with direct Divine authority. None of the objections alleged against the Scriptures in any way invalidated their claim to be received as containing a true revelation from God. Whatever seemed to be unworthy of God should be understood as an accommodation to the intelligence of men, and those things which we are unable to explain we should know hereafter.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Origen, Hom. I. in Luc.

2. Ibid., Comm. in Matt. 15:14; Comm. in Ose.

3. Ibid., Comm. in Joan. 10:2.

4. Ibid., De Princip., IV.19.

5. Ibid., De Princip., IV.

Unfortunately, Origen missed much of the true significance of Scripture by his allegorizing. In support of this method, he appeals to the Apostolic doctrine

"that the Scriptures were composed through the Spirit of God and that they not only have that meaning which is obvious, but also another which is hidden from the majority of readers. For the contents of Scripture are the outward forms of certain mysteries and the images of Divine things, On this point the entire Church is unanimous, that while the whole law is spiritual, the inspired meaning is not recognized by all, but only by those who are gifted with the grace of the Holy Spirit in the word of wisdom and knowledge."<sup>1</sup>

Adopting the Platonic trichotomy of body, soul, and spirit, he maintains that likewise Scripture must have a three-fold sense: literal, moral, and mystical.<sup>2</sup> Explaining the remark of John the Baptist, "whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose," he says ingeniously: "I think that one of the shoes is the Incarnation, when the Son of God assumes flesh and blood, and the descent into Hades, whatever Hades may be."<sup>3</sup>

Again, he cannot for a moment believe that the Evangelist makes the statement concerning the blind man throwing off his coat when he came to Jesus, without a precise purpose.<sup>4</sup> This must necessarily be so, for not a jot or a tittle is in vain. No wonder that a single word from the mouth of a prophet is so powerful, for each particle of the message--for those who understand how to make full

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1. De Princip., I, 8.

2. Origen, De Princip., IV.8, 11, 12, 14, 19; Hom. in Levit. V.

3. Ibid., Hom. in Joann. VI. 18-23.

4. Ibid., Comm. in Matt. 15:12.

use of the power of the letters--shall accomplish its work.<sup>1</sup>

He asks: how could hearers possibly be edified by the trivialities of Leviticus or Numbers? How could the great God have given minute regulations about fat and leaven? How could God Himself have said that Abraham betrayed the chastity of his wife? How could He have justified bloody wars and fierce imprecations? Origen feels that the Scripture weaves into its narrative some things which have never happened, and which never could have happened. What advantage would it be to anyone to read about the drunkenness of Noah, or about Jacob and his wives and concubines, or about the horrid incest of Lot, or about the foul story of Judah and Tamar? All these things, he says, are not facts, but "mystic economies".<sup>2</sup>

### 8. Cyprian (d. 258)

Cyprian's view of Inspiration, while not as systematically worked out, nor as prominent as those of some of his predecessors, is none the less emphatic. When writing to future martyrs, he says that his "poor skill, aided by Divine Inspiration, shall bring forth armour for them from the precepts of the Lord."<sup>3</sup> Again, "I know that the intricacies of human speech must be removed, and only those things set down which God says, and by which Christ exhorts His servants to martyrdom."<sup>4</sup>

1. Ibid., Hom. in Jer. 39.

2. Ibid., De Princip., IV. 9-27; contra Celsus, IV. 48.  
Farrar, F. W., The Bible; Its Meaning and Supremacy, pp. 66-67. London: Longmans, Green, 1901. 2nd Ed.

3. Cyprian, Ep. XXXI. 26.4.

4. Ibid., de Exhort. Mart., Praef. I. 4.

"By Him the Prophets were quickened to a knowledge of the future."<sup>1</sup> Through His Inspiration the Apostles teach us "what they learnt from the precepts of the Lord and heavenly revelations (coelestibus mandatis)," being "full of the grace of the Inspiration of their Master (Dominicae inspirationis)"<sup>2</sup>. In the hour of death, the Christian will be able to answer his accusers, "for it is not we who speak, but the Spirit of the Father, who departs not from His confessors, and Himself speaketh in us, and shares our crown."<sup>3</sup>

In one place, he seems to draw a distinction between various writings of the Bible: "Much hath God chosen to be spoken and heard through His Prophets; yet how much greater are those words which the Son of God speaketh--which the Word of God, who was in the Prophets, testifieth by His own voice."<sup>4</sup> He cannot quite free himself from the allegorical method; although with him it does not run riot, as in the case of Origen. As types of the Church he quotes the "robe without seam",<sup>5</sup> the Ark, and Rahab. He sees a spiritual meaning in the account of the raising of the Shunammite's son, and from this he deduces the propriety of infant baptism;<sup>6</sup> he discovers a symbol of the Eucharist in the bread and wine which Melchisedec offered to Abraham,<sup>7</sup> and again in the blessing of Judah.<sup>8</sup> He recognizes the authority and the mystery of Scripture.

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1. Ibid., Ep. LVIII.
  2. Ibid., Ep. LVIII. 3; de Op. et Eleem. 9.
  3. Ibid., Ep. LVIII. 5.
  4. Ibid., de Orat. Dom. I.
  5. Cyprian, De Unit. Eccles. 7.
  6. Ibid., Ep. 69:2, 4.
  7. Ibid., Ep. 64:3.
  8. Ibid., Ep. 63:4, 6.

### 9. Theodore of Mopsuestia (d. 429)

The most distinguished representative of the Antiochene school, Theodore, in contrast to the Fathers whose views we have summarized, emphasized the critical and historical methods. Close attention was paid to linguistic details, particles, moods, prepositions, and terminology in general. He points out the idiosyncrasies (*ιδιώματα*) in Paul's style. One of the earliest writers to give attention to hermeneutic matter, he studied each passage as a whole, and not as an isolated series of separate texts. The Antiochene school held the Scriptures themselves to be the basis of knowledge, not the esoteric Gnosis of the Alexandrians, nor the ecclesiastical tradition to which Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Cyprian had appealed. Further, this group recognized the "grace of superintendency" (*εὐδοκία*), and admitted degrees of Inspiration. Thus Theodore understood the Psalms in their historic sense; he pointed out that the Song of Solomon does not mention the name of God, and rejected its mystic application. He subjected the Canon to the most rigorous criticism, and insisted on the primary meaning of Old Testament prophecy. The Apocalypse, II Peter, II and III John, Jude, and James were omitted in his Canon. The Book of Job he regarded as a production of a pagan Edomite, and a work of dramatic fiction which was lacking in higher Inspiration. Likewise, he denied higher Inspiration to Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. Since the Song of Songs lacked the authority of both the Synagogue and the Church, he considered it as merely a marriage-song of Pharaoh's daughter. Partly owing to doubts

as to their acceptance in the Jewish Canon, and partly because they seem to lack the prophetic insight which marked the other historical books, Theodore assigned little value to Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther.

While recognizing the real and full influence of the Holy Spirit upon the writers, Theodore maintained that the individual character of the authors was still imprinted on the style of the books. He saw that the principle of accommodation to the time and circumstances of those addressed was operative; revelation he recognized to be progressive. He was especially determined in his opposition to Alexandrian allegory.<sup>1</sup>

Against Origen the Antiochenes maintained that the historical books contained true history, and that as such they are to be interpreted historically. However, the history contains spiritual lessons which are to be deduced from it, and not arbitrarily imposed upon it.

The typical character of the Old Testament narratives is also recognized; the incidents, persons, and objects mentioned are types of realities found in the New Testament, but types only in a figurative sense.<sup>2</sup> This harmony between type and antitype was foreseen and foreordained by the Divine purpose in order to assist men in recognizing the truth.<sup>3</sup> The language of the Old Testament is often hyperbolic and figurative, if referred to its original object, and finds its full content only in the higher realities of the Gospel.<sup>4</sup>

1. Theod. Mops., Comm. in Gal. 4:24; prooem. in Ose.

2. Theod. Mops., prooem. in Jon.

3. Ibid., prooem. in Ose. 1:1; prooem. in Am. 66:125,141 (Migne).

4. Ibid., prooem. in Joel, 2:38.



"...he had grasped the difference which separates the Jewish from the Alexandrian theory of Inspiration, a difference which fundamentally affected the methods of the two schools. To some of the ablest thinkers among the Jews Inspiration was ethical in its character; it consisted in the dilatation and ennoblement of the individual consciousness. To the Alexandrians, misled by Plato, Inspiration was pathological; it consisted in a trance, and depression of the individual consciousness. The difference is that which also separates the ecstasy of the Montanists from the inspired Christian preaching, to which the Apostles give the name of 'prophecy'. The different theories led to different methods of interpretation."<sup>1</sup>

#### 10. Augustine (d. 430)

Two later tendencies are traceable back to Augustine: the extreme Biblicism of later times is due to his exaltation of the Scriptures; few Western theologians before him had lived so much in Scripture, or had taken so much from it as he. But, on the other hand, the appeal to the doctrinal authority of the Church is also traceable to him. At the same time he makes Scripture the source and a means. He felt that it was possible, when love had reached its highest point, that Scripture could be discarded as a man discards a crutch. "Therefore, a man who depends on faith, hope, and love, and holds by them invincibly, only needs Scripture to instruct others."<sup>2</sup>

While somewhat vague as to the relative importance of "matter" and "form", he held the strictest of theories

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1. Harnack, A., History of Dogma, V., pp. 98, 99.  
2. Augustine, De Doctr. Christ., 39.

with regard to the full Inspiration of Scripture.<sup>1</sup> For instance, in one place he says, "Christ is the head and His apostles are the members. Whatever He wished us to read concerning His words and deeds, He ordered to be written down as if with His own hands; and he who reads the narratives of the evangelists will believe them as if he saw Christ Himself writing by their hands and pens."<sup>2</sup>

It was unthinkable to him that Scripture could err; he was more ready to confess that he could not understand it, rather than to attribute imperfection to it. "I confess that I have learned to yield this respect and honour only to the canonical books of Scripture; of these alone do I most firmly believe that the authors were completely free from error. And if in these writings I am perplexed by anything which appears to me to be opposed to truth, I do not hesitate to suppose that either the MS is faulty, or the translator has not caught the meaning of what was said, or I myself have failed to understand it."<sup>3</sup> In a similar vein, he insists upon Scripture and reason as the two sources of knowledge:

"For if reason be found contradicting the authority of the Divine Scriptures, it only deceives by a semblance of truth, however acute it be, for its deductions cannot in that case be true.

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1. Harnack, A. History of Dogma, V., p. 103: "By his Biblicism he prepared the way for the so-called pre-Reformation movements, and the criticism of all extra-Biblical ecclesiastical traditions."
  2. Augustine, De Consensu Evangelistarum, I. 35.
  3. Augustine, Letters, I. 319 (Dod's' trans.).

On the other hand, if, against the most manifest and reliable testimony of reason, anything be set up claiming to have the authority of the Holy Scriptures, he who does this does it through a misapprehension of what he has read, and is setting up against the truth not the real meaning of Scripture, which he has failed to discover, but an opinion of his own; he alleges not what he has found in the Scriptures, but what he has found in himself as their interpreter."<sup>1</sup>

At the same time though, Augustine was not blind to the fact that the revelation came through men, and as such, was limited; he says of John that he was "inspiratus a Deo sed tamen homo."<sup>2</sup>

It was to be hoped that Augustine could avoid the fatal trap of allegorizing. But such was not the case. He admitted that there were many passages "written by the Holy Ghost" which are untenable to human reason when taken in their obvious sense.<sup>3</sup> While he takes pains to defend the account of Noah's Ark against mathematical and physical objections--even supposing a miracle by which carnivorous animals were changed into herbivorous--nevertheless he is of the opinion that all

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1. Letters, 143, sec. 7 (Cunningham's trans.).

2. Ibid., De Consensu Evv. II. 28. In his first homily on the Gospel of John, Augustine compares the Biblical witnesses with the eternal hills, from which, according to Psalm 121, comes our help. But it is not from the hills as such, but rather from God, the creator of those hills: "Audeo dicere, fratres mei, forsitam nec ipse Joannes dixit ut est, sed et ipse ut potuit: quia de Deo homo dixit: Et quidem inspiratus a Deo sed tamen homo. Quia inspiratus, non totum quod est dixit, sed quod potuit homo dixit." In another passage he distinguishes between what "veritas incommutabilis per se ipsam ineffabiliter loquitur rationalis creaturae mentibus" and its language "per mutabilem creaturam", by means of spiritual images, a voice, etc.

3. Ibid., De Doctr. Christ. III. 14.

this had happened only ad praefigurandam ecclesiam, and feels that the clean and unclean animals are types of Judaism and paganism.<sup>1</sup>

There are indications that Augustine had an exaggerated opinion of the sacredness of the Septuagint translation; in fact he speaks of it as though it were inspired: "For the same Spirit who was in the prophets when they spoke these things was also in the seventy men when they translated them, so that assuredly they could also say something else, just as if the prophet himself had said both, because it would be the same Spirit who said both; and could say the same thing differently, so that, although the words were not the same, yet the same meaning should shine forth to those of good understanding; and could omit or add something, so that even by this it might be shown that there was in that work not human bondage, which the translator owed to the words, but rather divine power, which filled and ruled the mind of the translator."<sup>2</sup>

He wonders whether the errors themselves might not even be of Divine origin; when the Septuagint in Jon. 3:4 reads: "Yet three days and Nineveh shall be destroyed", he argues as though the "three" were prophetically significant of the time between the death and the resurrection of Christ.<sup>3</sup> So, we see that Augustine's view of Inspiration is rather

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1. Ibid., De Civ. Dei, XV. 27.

2. Augustine, Civ. Dei., XVIII.43; De Doctr. Christ., II.15; Ep., XXVIII.2; Qu. in Gen. 169.

3. Ibid., De Cons. Evv. II.66; De Doctr. Christ., IV.15.

confused; he understands Scripture in its literal, historical sense, and yet at the same time leaves the door open wide for allegorical interpretation.

### C. Summary.

While it is impossible to represent the Early Church as possessing a single, generally agreed upon view of Inspiration, there are certain common tendencies. Almost without exception, Irenaeus and Theodore of Mopsuestia stand against the allegorizing methods of the Alexandrian school; they are the inaugurators of what might loosely be called the critico-historical method. A corollary of this is that the corresponding view of Inspiration is dynamic rather than mechanical, and allows greater expression of the human personality. If all of the Fathers do not follow Philo into his worst excesses, at least most of them habitually exaggerate the passivity of the mind; thus the other noetic elements of the Inspiration-process are threatened with destruction.<sup>1</sup>

We may say, though, quite conclusively, that the Early Church accepted the New Testament as standing on the same level of authoritative Inspiration with the Old; that it believed in the infallibility of the inspired writings; and that error or contradiction in the Bible was quite generally denied.

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1. Hence, we cannot agree with Rudelbach, Die Lehre v.d. Insp., II., s. 26,27, who says: "Die Inspiration ist, nach dem Sinne der ältesten Kirche, zunächst als ein leidenschaftlicher Zustand zu fassen, wobei das Menschliche nicht sowohl zurücktrat oder niedergedrückt, als von der göttlichen Erleuchtung erfüllet und erhoben wurde." Indeed, too many of the Fathers, as we have seen, practically annihilate the effectiveness of human personality in Inspiration.

Chapter Four: Mediaeval Roman Catholic Conception of Inspiration.

A. The Scholastic Spirit.

The dominating principle of the Middle Ages was the authority of the Roman Catholic Church, a symbol which embraced the whole of Western Christendom. The domination of the Church was felt in the educational and social spheres, and most of all, in the world of thought. Thinking was absolutely conditioned by the Church, and thus by preserving the continuity with the past, much of value was saved which otherwise might have been irretrievably lost.<sup>1</sup> The chief problem to which the Scholastics addressed themselves was the relationship between reason and revelation, between philosophy and theology; first one was held to be prime, then the other, and endless disputes ensued as to what knowledge could be gained by each.

At the death of Gregory the Great in 604, five centuries of comparative theological darkness set in. From the twelfth to the 16th centuries there were few who contributed anything of originality to the exegesis of Scripture. Scholastic theology recognized a double rule of faith, Scripture and tradition; but it was always the Scripture principle which suffered under the tyranny of the prevailing Church tradition and dogmatic. Having only

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1. Ueberweg-Heinze, Geschichte der Philosophie, p. 146, "Die Scholastik ist die Philosophie im Dienste der bereits bestehenden Kirchenlehre oder wenigstens in einer solchen Unterordnung unter dieselbe, dass auf gemeinsamem Gebiete diese als die absolute Norm gilt."

the Vulgate at their disposal, the Schoolmen were hopelessly fettered by tradition in their exegesis. We find Anselm, Hugo St. Victor, and Peter Lombard using the two rules promiscuously; and, while Abelard, Thomas Aquinas, and Duns Scotus make a distinction and give Scripture precedence, it is only a theoretical distinction; in practice, tradition was dominant.<sup>1</sup>

As a matter of fact, from the time of the Fathers to the opening of the Reformation, there were no opinions with regard to Inspiration that differed materially from those previously held. Indeed, the Schoolmen indulged in subtle speculations, tending to give greater minuteness and a more dogmatic shape to the doctrine, but there was no essential development in the thought of the Church upon this matter.<sup>2</sup>

"However much the scholastic divines have done in the development of the other fundamental ideas which determine the sphere of revelation... their definitions on this point (of Inspiration) are very scanty. The doctrine was assumed as an ἀρχὴ πρώτη which needed no further proof, inasmuch as the whole Christian Church moved in this element."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Rohnert, W., Die Inspiration der heilige Schrift und ihre Bestreiter, p. 126, Leipzig, 1889: "Was speziell die Scholastiker betrifft, so sprechen wohl noch viele derselben der heil. Schrift die erste Autorität zu, wenigstens in der Theorie (Anselm), und lassen die Tradition teils gegen die Vernunft (Erigena), teils gegen das Buch der Natur (St. Bernhard) zurücktreten; thatsächlich aber stellen sie die Tradition zum wenigsten der Schrift gleich. Einigen von ihnen suchen auch die Inspiration durch genauere Merkmale zu bestimmen (Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus)..."
  2. Bannerman, J., Inspiration, p. 133.
  3. Rudelbach, A. G., Die Lehre von der Inspiration der heiligen Schrift, s. 48f.

When Abogard, archbishop of Lyons (A.D. 841) asserted that the sacred writers had not always adhered to the rules of grammar, he was bitterly opposed by Frédégis, the abbot of Tours, who wished to extend infallibility even to the translators and commentators. Concerning the penmen of Holy Scriptures, Frédégis wrote: "Turpe est credere Spir. Sanctum qui omnium gentium linguas mentibus Apostolorum infudit, rusticitatem potius per eos, quam nobilitatem uniuscuiusque linguae locutum esse"; thus, he further maintains, "Ut non solum sensum praedicationis et modos vel argumenta dictionum Spir. S. eis inspiraverit, sed etiam ipsa corporalia verba extrinsecus in ore illorum ipse formaverit."<sup>1</sup>

Due to the neglect of philological studies--even the greatest of the Schoolmen being ignorant of Hebrew and cognate languages--a sound, grammatico-historical exegesis was hardly possible; only toward the close of the period was progress noticeable. Scripture was interpreted either in accordance with ecclesiastical tradition, or else in an arbitrary and allegorical fashion, subordinate to subtle scholasticism or refined mysticism.<sup>2</sup> Inspiration was confused with verbal dictation; thus transformed into a fetish, Scripture was at the mercy of hierarchical perversion. Under the name of "the Church", the living Word of God as a Divine record of the dealings of God with men was nullified. The voice of God was no longer heard; merely the hollow tones of an oracular wisdom sounded forth. Regarded as one contemporaneous

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1. Agobard ad Fredegisium Abbatem, Opp. Par., p.157 sqq. Cf. Hagenbach, History of Doctrine, Vol. II., pp. 166-167.  
 2. Hagenbach, op. cit., p. 170.



production, without reference to the men to whom, and the circumstances in which, the Scripture was addressed, the Bible was expounded utterly out of its context. "The piety of the Schoolmen became a superstition, transubstantiating the Word of God into the verbal elements by which it was signified."<sup>1</sup>

### B. Views of Representative Schoolmen.

Erigena (815-875), the first great figure of the Middle Ages, anticipated the discussion of some later fundamental themes, maintaining that true philosophy and true religion are one.<sup>2</sup> However, he does not seem to have had any perceptible influence upon Scholastic thought in general. The really outstanding days of mediaeval thought do not begin until the 11th century.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Hampden, R. D., The Scholastic Philosophy Considered in its Relation to Christian Theology, Bampton Lectures, 1832, 3rd ed. 1848, p. 88. Cf. pp. 88-92. See also:
    - Haureau, B., De la philosophie scholastique, 2 Vols. Paris 1850
    - Kaulich, W., Geschichte d. scholast. Philos., Prag., 1863.
    - Maurice, F. D., Mediaeval Philosophy, London, 1870.
    - Bach, J., Dogmengesch. d. Mittelalters, 2 Vols. 1873-5.
    - Schwane, J., Dogmengesch. d. mittleren Zeit, 1882.
    - Schaff, D., History of the Christian Church, Vol. V., Ch.12 New York: Scribner's Sons, 1923.
    - Cf. Schaff, D., Art., "Inspiration" in Relig. Encycl. of Biblical, Historical, Doctrinal & Practical Theology, Vol. II., p. 1102.
  2. Cf. De Divisione Naturae.
  3. We may distinguish three main periods of Scholasticism: (I) Rise: Anselm (d. 1109), Roscellinus (d.c.1125), Abelard (d.1142), Bernhard (d.1153), Hugo St. Victor (d.1161), Richard St. Victor (d.1173), and Gilbert of Poitiers(d.1154). (II) Full development: Peter Lombard (d. 1160), Alexander Hales (d. 1243), Albertus Magnus (d. 1280), Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274), Bonaventura (d. 1274), Roger Bacon (d. 1294), and Duns Scotus (d. 1308). (III) Decline: Durandus (d. 1334), Bradwardine (d. 1349), and Occam (d. 1367).

In common with other Scholastics, Erigena was fond of "spiritualising texts." He thus comments at John 1:27: "Potest etiam per calceamentum Christi visibilis creatura et Sancta Scriptura significari; in his enim vestigia Sae veluti pedes Suos infigit.....Duo pedes Verbi sunt, quorum unus est naturalis ratio visibilis creaturae, alter spiritualis intellectus Divinae Scripturae."<sup>1</sup> At John 3:34, he observes: "Verba prophetarum verba Dei sunt, quia verba Dei locuti sunt. Sanctus enim Spiritus locutus est in eis, nec tamen illa verba referuntur ad illos, ut illorum verba sint, sed veri Dei verba."<sup>2</sup>

1. Anselm (1033-1109)

Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, rightly called "the father of Scholasticism", marks a definite advance from the

1. Erigena, Comm. in Evang. sec. Joan., ed. Floss, Paris, 1853, p. 307.

2. Ibid., p. 329. Cf. De divis. Naturae, V, p. 1010 (cited by Lee, Inspiration, p. 519):

"Et mihi valde arridet duplex ista Evangelicarum paraboliarum species. Non enim solummodo in parabolis, verum etiam in multis Divinae Scripturae locis talis formae locutionis divinum nectar eructat.....Non enim alio modo sanctorum prophetarum multiplex in divinis intellectibus contextus potest discerni, nisi per frequentissimos, non solum per periodos verum etiam per cola et commata, transitus ex diversis sensibus in diversos.....concatenatus quippe est Divinae Scripturae contextus. Neque hoc Spiritus S. invidia voluit intelligendi, quod absit existimari, sed studio nostram intelligentiam exercendi, sudorisque et inventionis praemii reddendi; praemium quippe est in sacra Scriptura laborantium pura perfectaue intelligentia. O Domine Jesu, nullum aliud praemium, nullam aliam beatitudinem, nullum aliud gaudium a Te postulo, nisi ut ad purum absque ullo errore fallacis theoriae verba Tua, quae per Tuum Sanctum Spiritum inspirata sunt, intelligam."

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anti-rational attitude of the Dark Ages, and strongly influenced the subsequent course of Christian speculation. He contends that a man must begin at belief, and then attempt to justify his convictions by reasoning; hence the famous dictum: "credo ut intelligam".<sup>1</sup> He argues that the mind cannot adopt the reverse procedure; "Christianus per fidem debet ad intellectum proficere, non per intellectum ad fidem accedere, aut si intelligere non valet, a fide recedere; sed cum ad intellectum valet pertingere, delectatur, cum vero nequit, quod capere non valet veneratur."<sup>2</sup> Whenever a conflict between reason and faith arises, reason must give way, for the human mind is incapable of plumbing the profound mysteries of the faith: "Certus enim sum, si quid dico quod Sacrae Scripturae sine dubio contradicat, quia falsum est, nec illud tenere volo, si cogovero."<sup>3</sup> Religious knowledge is not obtained as the conclusion of a syllogism; the duty of reason is to reflect upon faith already held. To Anselm, philosophy was inextricably bound up with theology, and theology was

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1. Anselm, Proslogium, I.

2. Anselm, Ep., II. 41 ("ad Falconem").

3. Anselm, De Condord., qu. III., c. 6. Ibid: "Nam, si quid ratione dicamus aliquando, quod in dictis eius (sc. Sacrae Scripturae) aperte monstrare aut ex ipsis probare nequimus, hoc modo per illam cognoscimus utrum sit accipiendum aut respuendum. So enim aperta ratione colligitur et illa ex nulla parte contradicit; ....nulli favet falsitati....At, si ipsa nostro sensui indubitanter repugnat; quamvis ratio nostra videatur inexpugnabilis, nulla tamen veritate fulciri credenda est. Sic itaque Sacra Scriptura omnis veritatis, quam collegit, auctoritatem continet, cum illam aut aperte affirmat aut nullatenus negat."

prime in importance.<sup>1</sup> He held the prevailing Church doctrine of Inspiration, and his writings are unusually free from references to Scripture and the Fathers. He makes no distinction between truths which are discoverable by reason and those given by revelation, through faith.

## 2. Abelard (1079-1142)

Although Abelard was a capable defender of the dialectic method, it would be a mistake to call him a rationalist in the modern sense of the word; he believed in a Divine revelation, and accepted the authority of the Scriptures. He tried to steer a middle course between the extreme dialectics of the ultra-conservatives of his day, as represented by Bernard of Clairvaux. However, his prominence as a teacher, and his uncompromising polemic as well as his bitter invective, made him the object of the most determined attack. His standpoint is still essentially that of Anselm, but he lays a greater emphasis upon the dialectical exploration of the mysteries of the faith. In a sense, the charge of rationalism which was brought against him by the orthodox was not entirely without foundation. His attempts to reconcile pagan

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1. Gilson, Études de Philosophie Médiévale, p. 17: "La foi cherchera donc toujours l'intelligence. Mais il est également vrai que l'intelligence n'a pas d'autre objet à poursuivre que celui de la foi. Et c'est ce que S. Anselme ne manque pas de nous rappeler au début de ceux de ses ouvrages qui nous sembleraient contenir le plus de philosophie, au sens moderne du mot. Dans la mesure où la philosophie correspond pour nous à une recherche qui part de prémisses rationnelles pour aboutir à des prémisses rationnelles, on peut dire que S. Anselme n'a pas écrit un seul ouvrage de philosophie."  
Cf. Harris, C.R.S. Duns Scotus, Vol. I., p. 45.

philosophy with Catholic theology seemed to derogate from the peculiar and unique features of the Christian revelation.<sup>1</sup>

Still, he holds to the "credo ut intelligam" of Anselm. Writing to Héloïse, he says: "I would not so be a philosopher as to rebel against Paul; nor so be an Aristotle as to be cut off from Christ."<sup>2</sup> He concedes that there might be individual doctrinal errors in Scripture. He says:

"It is certain that the prophets themselves were at times destitute of prophetic grace, and that in their official capacity as prophets, while believing that they were in possession of the spirit of prophecy, they declared, by their own spirit, some things that were fallacious; and this was permitted them in order to preserve their humility,--in other words, that they might more truly know the difference between themselves as persons receiving Divine assistance, and as relying solely upon the guidance of their own spirit."<sup>3</sup>

Having adduced the circumstance of Peter's being censured by Paul on account of his deviation from the truth, he then observes:

"What wonder is it, therefore, seeing that it is certain that even prophets and apostles were not entirely free from error, if in the great multiplicity of writing by the holy Fathers a few errors should appear to have been published?"<sup>4</sup>

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1. Harris, C. R. S., Duns Scotus, Vol. I., pp. 47-48.
  2. Abelard, Ep. 17, ad Heloissam: "Nolo sic esse philosophus, ut recalcitrem Paulo; nolo sic esse Aristoteles, ut seculari a Christo, non enim aliud nomen est sub coelo, in quo oporteat me salvum fieri."
  3. Ibid., Sic et non, ed. Cousin, p. 11: "Constat et prophetas ipsos quandoque prophetiae gratia caruisse, et nonnulla ex usu prophetandi, cum se spiritum prophetiae habere crederent, per spiritum suum falsa protulisse; et hoc eis ad humilitatis custodiam permissum est, ut sic videlicet verius cognoscerent, quales per Spiritum Dei, et quales per suum existerent." Cf. Tholuck, F., Journal of Sacred Literature, VI (1854), pp. 340, 341.
  4. Sic et non, p. 11: "Quid itaque mirum, cum ipsos etiam Prophetos et Apostolos ab errore non penitus fuisse constat alienos, si in tam multiplici sanctorum patrum scriptura, nonnulla erronea prolata viderentur."

He accepted implicitly the teaching of the Fathers as accurately reflecting the Scriptures. The fact of Inspiration he recognized, but held that the writers were in no sense passive. The authority of the Scriptures and the Fathers does not preclude critical, independent investigation.

"By doubt we are brought to search, and by searching we perceive the truth, as He, who was the Truth said, 'Seek, and ye shall find, knock, and it shall be opened unto you.'"<sup>1</sup>

What was manifestly written in the Scriptures was to be accepted without question. He deplored, however, the practice of reading into the text things which were not there; his own exegesis was remarkably restrained and sane. His view of Inspiration was broader than that of his contemporaries; he held that it was not confined to the sacred writers, but was shared by philosophers and wise men everywhere. Moreover, it consisted, not in external control, but in enlightenment of the mind which enables one to discover truth for oneself. Because the Biblical writers had this Inspiration in greater measure than others they were qualified to speak with special authority.<sup>2</sup>

Although Abelard was discredited by the Church, yet his "Sic et Non" was the basis of his pupil, Peter Lombard's (more reverent) "Sententiae" which became the very canon of

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1. Abelard, Sic et Non, Dubitando ad inquisitionem venimus, inquirendo veritatem percipimus, Migne, p. 1349.
  2. McGiffert, A.C., A History of Christian Thought: (Vol. II) The West from Tertullian to Erasmus, p. 206, New York: Scribner's Sons, 1933.

orthodoxy of the later Middle Ages.<sup>1</sup>

### 3. Peter Lombard (d. 1160)

The Lombard's "Sententiarum libri quattuor" or "Sentences" was the most used and admired Scholastic textbook ever produced. In it he sought to reconcile reason and revelation, philosophy and theology.<sup>2</sup> Adopting the method of his master, Abelard, he ranges authorities both for and against the propositions under consideration. He took his quotations not only from Scripture and the Fathers, but likewise from the creeds and conciliar decisions. He cites Augustine over a thousand times, more than twice as often as all the others combined. However, he was far more constructive than Abelard; rather than leave the bewildered student to decide for himself from the maze of contradictions, he endeavours to reconcile apparent discrepancies. The Lombard sought to encourage faith in the Fathers, and hence he was followed by all the great Schoolmen of the thirteenth century.

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1. A brief word regarding the St. Victorians is in order here. Hugo St. Victor (d. 1161), an independent and judicious thinker, has left us voluminous writings. He recognized a triple sense of Scripture: historical, allegorical, and anagogical; but he laid stress on the historical, a tendency unusual for his day. Richard St. Victor (d. 1173) was more dialectical and allegorical in his treatment of Scripture than his brother, being often fanciful and extravagant in his interpretation (cf. Liebner, Hugo von St. Victor, und d. theol. Richtungen s. Zeit, pp. 81ff, Leipzig, 1832). He magnifies the Scriptures and makes them the test of spiritual states. Everything must conform to the letter of Scripture: "suspecta mihi est omni veritas, quam non confirmat scripturarum auctoritas." (De Prep. 81; Migne, 196. 57).
  2. For The Lombard's sources see Baltzer, O. Die Sentenzen des Petrus Lombardus.



While his great compendium contained little that was new, it was a very convenient summary of the Roman Catholic faith of the day, the more useful because of its loyal adherence to the traditions of the past. Commentaries without number came to be written upon it, and it was made the basis of theological discussion everywhere. It is significant that he does not touch at all upon the doctrines of Scripture, tradition, and the Church; as he presupposes their absolute authority as an incontrovertible axiom.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4. Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274)

Without doubt the greatest of the Schoolmen,<sup>2</sup> Thomas carefully distinguishes natural theology from sacra doctrina, the theology of revelation, and seeks to accommodate Aristotelian philosophy to the truths of Christian theology. He contends that our knowledge is of three kinds: reason, faith, and the beatific vision. Certain truths are ascertainable by human reason, such as God's existence, His unity, etc.,

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1. McGiffert, A. C., A History of Christian Thought, Vol. II, pp. 250-252.

2. Schaff, D., History of the Christian Church, Vol. V, pp. 664-665: "With Augustine and John Calvin, Thomas Aquinas shares the distinction of being one of the three master theological minds of the Western world...He gave to it its most perfect form. His commanding eminence rests upon his clearness of method and his well-balanced judgment rather than upon his originality of thought." Quotes Eucken, Die Philosophie d. Th. von Aq., p. 4: "...er gehört nicht so wohl zu den schaffenden als zu den ordnenden Geistern."

but a mystery such as that of the Holy Trinity is accessible to the mind only through revelation. By natural reason we can know only the fact of God's existence, but not what He is.<sup>1</sup> Thus, there are two sciences dealing with the same subject-matter, but from different standpoints; of these, theology is superior. Human reason is liable to err, but theology can never deceive; hence theology judges the other sciences.

Thomas refers to Scripture texts more frequently than any of the other scholastics; however this did not regulate his theology, but helped to confirm his independently arrived at ecclesiastical doctrines. The Scriptures contain what is to be believed, but the authority of the Church establishes what these truths are. For instance, a doctrine such as the descent into hell, which is not found in Scripture as a doctrine, is nevertheless to be believed because it is found in the Apostles' Creed. Other truths the Church possesses which are not found in the Scriptures. Hence, our belief in the Scriptures rests ultimately upon the authority of the Church.

Thomas's exegetical principles are wholesome; he recognizes the existence of figures of speech, various interpretations, etc., but commended the principle of literal interpretation: "all the interpretations of Scripture are founded upon one--the literal--from which alone can any

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1. Th. Aquinas, Summa Theol., I., qu. 2, art. 2.

argument be drawn,<sup>1</sup> and not from those intended in allegory...." "...it is plain that nothing false can ever underlie the literal sense of Scripture." In spite of these enlightened views, he could not free himself from the dominance of ecclesiastical authority.

In speaking of the vision of God, and thus going far beyond his model, Aristotle, Thomas appealed significantly to Scripture rather than to Aristotle, and settled the matter for himself by declaring that the denial that man may see God "contradicts the authority of Holy Scripture" and thus "is to be rejected as false and heretical."<sup>2</sup>

The prophet's way of knowing was different from ours; under supernatural control, his mind was Divinely illuminated, and the truth was communicated to him either when he was in ecstasy or out, but always beyond sense experience. Definite items of knowledge were imparted by Inspiration through the means of transient impression (impressionis transeuntis). "Prophecy is a certain knowledge (quaedam cognitio) impressed upon the mind of a prophet by Divine revelation through some manner of instruction (per modum cuiusdam doctrinae)". While the prophet did not see the Divine essence, Thomas feels that Moses and Paul actually did.<sup>3</sup> We note that the view taken here of Inspiration is quite moderate.

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1. Th. Aquinas, Summa Theol., I., qu. 1, art. 10: "omnes sensus scripturae fundantur super unum sensum literalem ex quo solo potest trahi argumentum..."

2. Ibid., Summa contra gentiles, Bk. III. 54.

3. Ibid., Summa contra gentiles, Bk. IIb, 171-175; IIb, 175:3.

God is the real author of Holy Scripture: auctor sacrae Scripturae est deus.<sup>1</sup> "The authority of those should be believed to whom revelation has been made."<sup>2</sup> "One uses the authorities of the canonical Scripture properly and in arguing from necessity; the authorities of other teachers of the church in arguing, as it were, from one's own resources, but with probability. For our faith rests upon the revelation given to the apostles and prophets who wrote the canonical books, not upon revelation, if such there were, given to other teachers."<sup>3</sup>

#### 5. Duns Scotus (d. 1308)

Known as "Doctor subtilis", Duns Scotus had in his day the reputation of being the keenest dialectician and most vitriolic critic. Essentially not a constructive thinker, he exposed the teachings of others to the minutest scrutiny. His principal works are his commentary on Lombard's Sentences, known as the Opus Oxoniense, and a smaller work, the Reportata Parisiensia. Of the many other writings ascribed to him, most are probably spurious.<sup>4</sup>

He is in essential agreement with Thomas upon main

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1. Aquinas, Summa Theol., I, 1, 10.

2. Ibid., I, 1, 8.

3. Ibid. Cf. Ibid., I, 12, 26: "The sayings of expositors do not carry with them necessity, that it should be necessary to believe them, but alone the canonical Scripture which is in the Old and New Testaments."

4. Longpré, La philosophie du B. Duns Scot, in Études Franciscaines, Vol. 34, pp. 448 ff.

issues, although the latter was often the object of his merciless attack; the differences are rather in details than fundamentals.<sup>1</sup> With Thomas he affirmed that philosophy and theology cannot really contradict each other, and shared with him a confidence in human reason; but man, as an end-seeking creature, is in need of a special revelation.<sup>2</sup>

Duns' famous doctrine of voluntarism, or the supremacy of the will has been over-emphasized as a point of disagreement between himself and Aquinas. It is true that he did declare that the sole ground of right and wrong is the will of God. However, he never taught that this will was arbitrary or subject to unbridled caprice; for he also held that an evil act is not thereby made good merely by being commanded.<sup>3</sup>

His view of the Inspiration of the Scripture was substantially that of the other Schoolmen. God's revelation was contained in the Bible, but it was the task of the Church to define what that revelation was. The results were to be governed absolutely by ecclesiastical tradition and Church dogma. "Prima traditio talis doctrinae dicitur

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1. Cf. Schmid, A., Die Thomistische und Scotistische Gewissheitslehre, p. 48.

2. Op. Oxon., Prol., qu. 1.

3. Rep. Par. II. 22: qu. unica; IV. 28: qu. unica. Cf. Harris, Duns Scotus, Vol. II., p. 332. See also Ritschl, A., Duns Scotus (Jahrb. für deutsche Theologie, Bd. X., 1865; XIII., 1868). Also Seeberg, Die Theologie des Johannes Duns Scotus.

revelatio."<sup>1</sup> Much, he contended, was taught the disciples by Christ, which is not contained in the Scripture; this the Church has preserved to us by means of its traditions. So ultimately, the authority of Scripture rests upon the authority of the Roman Church.

#### 6. William of Occam (d. 1349)

Occam was a member of the stricter group within the Franciscan order, and as such, championed the principle of voluntary poverty. Here he came into conflict with Pope John XXII, who denounced the opposing group as heretical. Occam wrote against him, appealing to the Scriptures; however this was tantamount to an appeal to the authority of the Church, for he understood the Scriptures only as interpreted by the Church.<sup>2</sup> Nominalist though Occam was, and in spite of his efforts to sunder completely philosophy and theology and thus give up trying to show the rational character of Christianity, he remained a devout, orthodox believer. Christianity

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1. Duns Scotus, Sent. prol., qu. 1, 16. 21 f.  
Cf. Seeberg, R., Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte, Bd. III., pp. 651-652: "Das Resultat lässt sich in zwei Sätze zusammenfassen: quod doctrina canonis est vera, und: quod sacra scriptura sufficienter continet doctrinam necessariam viatori (Sent. prol. qu. 2, 14). Wie Thomas lässt nun auch Duns diese Wahrheit in dem apostolischen Bekenntnis oder auch in den drei altkirchlichen Symbolen zusammengefasst sein (Ibid., IIIId 25, qu. 1, 4; Id 26, 25; IVd 43, qu. 1, 11). Er hat aber auch neben die Autorität der Schrift und dieser Symbole als gleichwertig die Lehre der 'Authentischen Vater' und der 'römischen Kirche' gestellt (Ibid., Id. 26, 26)."
  2. McGiffert A. C., History of Christian Thought, p. 311.

is to be accepted because it is revelation, but it is beyond rational inquiry.<sup>1</sup>

His challenging of the power of the pope was most decisive and revolutionary; the pope's chief function was to be that of administering the devotional services of the church, and he is to be subject to the positive instructions laid down for a bishop in the New Testament. Like other man, he too is fallible. Thus, no new articles of faith may be established by him. Merely because he gives a declaration on an issue, that does not make it heretical or orthodox; the decisive test of every doctrine is whether it can be supported by Scripture.<sup>2</sup> Occam argues that our faith should never be dependent upon a man, for in I Cor. 2, Paul tells us that our faith should not rest upon human wisdom, but upon the power of God.<sup>3</sup> For the first time, let us note, the infallible Scriptures are being set up over against a fallible pope.<sup>4</sup> "Holy Scripture cannot err" (errare non potest); however, on the other hand, "the pope....can err."<sup>5</sup> And, should the pope fall into error, he may reasonably and legally be deposed.

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1. Cf. "This is my faith because it is the Catholic faith. For whatever the Roman Church believes that alone and nothing else do I believe either explicitly or implicitly" de sacr. alt. 1.16; quodl. IV., qu. 35. (Quoted by Hoffmann, Die Lehre von der fides implicita innerhalb der katholischen Kirche, 1903, p. 161.

Cf. Pelzer, Les 51 articles de Guillaume Occam censurés en Avignon en 1326 (Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique, 1922).  
Kugler, Der Begriff der Erkenntniss bei Wilhelm von Occam.

2. Occam, Dialogus, p. 420.

3. Ibid., Compendium errorum papae, p. 976.

4. Cf. Seeberg, R., Textbook of History of Doctrines, 1895, II, 169.

5. Occam, Compend. err., p. 843.

"....it is the same juristic, abstract infallibility which had been ascribed to the pope, which is here transferred to the Scriptures. It is based upon a strict theory of Inspiration, and falls short of the evangelical view of the Scriptures. But it is yet important to observe that it was practical considerations which determined the attitude of Occam. His religion drove him to the Scriptures."<sup>1</sup>

Occam seeks to identify the laws of God and the laws of nature. Natural law, he says, is the law of reason, and likewise it is Divine law. "Employing the natural dictate (dictamen) of reason, this is employing natural law"; or, "natural reason (ratio) is natural law".<sup>2</sup> These innate ideas of law and order which have been implanted in man have similarly been imparted through Inspiration in the Holy Scriptures. Wherever canonical law is opposed to the Divine law, that is, to the Scriptures or to right reason, it is not to be observed.<sup>3</sup> On this path Occam postulates the authority of the Scriptures; he makes Scripture and reason identical. The Scriptures do not give us positive revelation, but the universal truth of reason. In this way the Scriptures came more and more to be regarded from the legal point of view.

Only those truths are to be construed as Catholic which the Scriptures teach: "....the Christian is not by the necessity of salvation bound to believe; nor is he to believe what is neither contained in the Bible, nor can be inferred by necessary and manifest consequence alone from the things contained in the Bible."<sup>4</sup> These doctrines are true because

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1. Seeberg, R., op. cit., p. 169.  
 2. Occam, Dialogus, p. 629, 568.  
 3. Ibid., p. 630.  
 4. Ibid., p. 411, 769f.



inspired by God, whether innate in all men, or specially revealed and recorded in Scripture. The Scripture is to be believed because it has been written and asserted by suggestion (instinctu) of the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup> If anyone dares to call the Scriptures in question he is to be regarded as a heretic. "Whoever says that any part of the New or of the Old Testament asserts anything false, or is not to be received by Catholics, is to be regarded as heretical and stubborn."<sup>2</sup>

Having thus examined all too briefly the views of these six representative Scholastics, we are impressed with the paucity of material relative to the conception of Inspiration. The idea was assumed as being axiomatic; Scripture was regarded as one inspired whole, given by revelation of God, and authenticated by the witness of the Church. Scripture and tradition were accounted as of equal authority.

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1. Ibid., p. 822, 834.  
2. Ibid., p. 449.

PART II.            REFORMATION VIEW OF INSPIRATION.

Introductory.

A. Influence of Humanism.

It is not our purpose to treat of the manifold causes nor of the extensive background of the Reformation; upon this subject there is already an abundance of literature. However, among the significant tendencies such as the rise of the new nationalism, social unrest, the corruption of the Church, the worldliness of the laity, and the development of humanism, it is the latter which has particular meaning for us.

Humanism was essentially a negative revolt; an effort to escape from the fetters of traditional usage and interpretation in which human thought had been confined. The positive contribution of this movement was that it brought a new sense of freedom limited by responsibility, and a rebirth of individualism. It is most relevant to our purpose to trace the effects of the new learning upon the interpretation and study of the Scriptures. For, now for the first time, it was becoming possible to study the Scriptures in their original languages, unhampered by the distorting medium of allegorical interpretation or of ecclesiastical authoritarianism.

One of the first significant results of the humanistic movement was this so-called "discovery of the Bible"; and the Scriptures were made abundantly available by the publication of the original texts. However, even more important than this in the spreading of the knowledge of the Scriptures, was the publication of the vernacular translations. It was from Erasmus' edition of the Greek New Testament that Luther

directly made his great German translation; and in the preparation of a German translation of the Old Testament, Luther was capably assisted by Melanchthon (who was an accomplished classical scholar), Aurogallus, Roerer, and Foerster. Appearing in parts, the translation was not completed until 1532. Two years later that of the Apocrypha appeared.<sup>1</sup>

Increasingly the tendency was manifested to go behind the earlier Schoolmen to Augustine, and to Neo-Platonic, rather than to Aristotelian conceptions; thus was made possible the dominance of the Augustinian ideology so characteristic of the Reformation Age.<sup>2</sup>

We mention but four of the outstanding contributions which the humanists made to the cause of the Reformation: first, they were critical of traditionalism; second, they discredited the later scholastic theology; third, they led men to study the Christian sources afresh; and fourth, they introduced new and more natural methods of exegesis. These all had a profound influence in undermining the theory of verbal Inspiration; when men were once introduced to the texts of the Scriptures themselves, and began to study them

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1. Brief mention might be made here of the English version of William Tyndale (1477-1536), although our study is confined principally to the Continent. Tyndale's work is significant in that he was a good Greek and Hebrew scholar, and had come under humanistic influences, having translated Erasmus' Enchiridion into English. His Old Testament translation, which was completed as far as Deuteronomy, is important because it was rendered directly from the Hebrew.
  2. Walker, W., History of the Christian Church, pp. 327, 328.

with discriminating candour, their faith in verbal infallibility was greatly shaken.

The Waldenses had made the Bible their sole authority; Wiclif had translated and distributed it; the Hussites, the Brethren of the Common Life, and other mediaeval groups were peacefully engaged in studying the Scriptures. But, as yet, their influence was not fully felt. The Protestant reformation brought with it a new method of Biblical interpretation. Denying the right of the Fathers and Church councils to decide with finality upon Scripture, there remained only the method of private interpretation. So, in a sense, we might say that the Bible was not so much the cause of Protestantism, as Protestantism was the stimulus to a new interpretation of the Bible.

When Luther appeared upon the scene the stage was already set. He played his part, and that most nobly; however "he was but one among many influences mightier than himself, and his work was but a single current in a tide of which the forces are to this day unspent. The Reformation was 'the life of the Renaissance infused into religion under the influence of men of the grave and earnest Teutonic race; a return to nature which was not a rebellion against God, an appeal to reason which left room for loyal allegiance to the Bible and to Christ!'"<sup>1</sup>

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1. Beard, C., The Reformation of the 16th Century, Hibbert Lectures, 1883, p. 2.

### B. Some Precursors of Luther.

An amusing comedy was played at Augsburg in 1520 in the presence of Charles V. and his court, parodying quite neatly the birth and progress of the Renaissance and the Reformation. A man clothed in the robe of a doctor threw on the stage a bundle of sticks, some straight, some crooked, and retired. This was Reuchlin. Another entered, endeavouring to arrange them side by side, but, not succeeding, he gathered them into the shape of a pile, then fled. He was Erasmus. An Augustinian monk came next with a burning chafing-dish, flung the crooked sticks into the fire, and blew into it to make a blaze. He was called Luther. A new man, bearing the Imperial insignia, tried to extinguish the fire with his sword, which naturally kindled the flames all the more. This was the Emperor. Last of all came one with pontifical robe and triple crown. Startled by the blaze he looked about and saw two buckets, the one filled with oil, the other with water. He seized the water first, but emptied in mistake the oil upon the fire, which naturally assumed such enormous proportions that he fled in dismay. This was Leo X. This play needed no commentary. The Court officials endeavoured to find the actors who had taken part in the comedy, but they had disappeared the moment the acting ceased.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Related by Murray, R., Erasmus and Luther, pp. 318, 319.  
London: S.P.C.K., 1920.

1. A chief link between the Renaissance and the Reformation was Lorenzo Valla (d. 1457), who ranks as one of the pioneers of intellectual freedom in his day. The appellation "praecursor Lutheri," applied sarcastically to him by Bellarmine is, however, not strictly accurate. In a sense, though, he might be regarded as the father of modern criticism.<sup>1</sup> The revival of letters influenced him to recognize that the Scriptures must be interpreted in accordance with the laws of grammar and of language.<sup>2</sup>

He wonders why Schoolmen who were ignorant of Greek should dare to comment on Paul: "Quem (Remigium) et item Thomam Aquinatem.....ignaros omnino linguae Graecae, miror ausos commentari Paulum Graece loquentem."<sup>3</sup> He rejected the legend that Paul had appeared to Aquinas: "if so, why were not his mistakes corrected?"<sup>4</sup>

His Annotationes profoundly influenced Erasmus, who found them in a monastic library in Brussels, and republished them at Paris in 1505, forty years after their author's death. In a warm eulogy, Erasmus enthusiastically commended their use. Although Valla remained a humanist, he did render valuable service in his efforts to get at what the writers of Scripture really wrote and meant. Luther spoke of him as

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1. Cf. his Declamatio, 1440; and the Elegantiae, c. 1433.  
 2. See further, Oudin, Script. Eccl., p. 2439; Fabric, Bibl. Lat., VI. 282; Meyer, Gesch. der Schriffterklärung, I. 155.  
 3. Valla, Annott. in I Cor. 9:26.  
 4. "Peream nisi id commenticium, nam cur eum Paulus non admonuit erratorum suorum, cum ob alia tum de ignorantia linguae graecae" (Annott. in I Cor. 9:13; cf. in Acts 13:9).

"the like of whom neither Italy nor the whole Church produced in many centuries."<sup>1</sup>

## 2. John of Goch (d. 1475)

Although he was little known, and laboured in calm and contemplative retirement, John of Goch was very influential in shaping the theology of the Reformers. He was profoundly affected by the Germanic mysticism current in Germany and the Netherlands, the mysticism characteristic of late mediaeval theology in its transition to the Reformation, and which, containing the elements of a new vitality, increasingly appropriated the new stress on an emerging Biblicism.

Goch's theological tendency is predominantly Biblical. All authoritative and certain instruction in Divine truth emanates from the revelation in Jesus Christ, and is deposited in the Holy Scriptures, which are therefore called canonical. Every other doctrine concerning supernatural things, no matter how brilliant and closely reasoned, is valuable only in so far as it is in agreement with Scripture. Goch asserts his determination to adhere to the truth of the canonical Scriptures, so far as the Lord shall open up to him their meaning.<sup>2</sup>

In all his doctrinal exposition, he begins with Scripture, and only on the basis of texts already comprehended does he proceed to the discernment of the matter at hand. Likewise,

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1. Luther, Responsio ad Lovan. theol., Briefwechsel, IV, 189.  
 2. Goch, Dialogus de quatuor erroribus, Antwerp, ed. Grapheus, 1521, 10:131. Quoted by Ullmann, C., Reformers Before the Reformation, Edinburgh, 1855, I, 33.

in judging of heresy, he lays down the rule that "it consists in obstinate adherence to an opinion, contradictory to canonical truth, as that is simply and clearly expressed in Sacred Scripture."<sup>1</sup> Similarly, in opposing the various tendencies of his day which he deemed unchristian, he appeals in every case to the authority of Scripture.

Scripture is the light of the intellect, and as the human intellect is enlightened by a two-fold light, so is there a two-fold Scripture: philosophy, and canonical Scripture. The second, by far the more important, gives the knowledge of the highest truth, and the will to love the summum bonum. Only the Scripture possesses incontrovertible authority, to which nothing can be added, and from which nothing can be taken away; other writings are important only as they are in harmony with Scripture.<sup>2</sup>

While Goch unfortunately allows the four-fold sense, yet he maintains that when a doctrinal dispute arises, no argument, conclusive for the refutation of error, can be drawn except from the literal sense. In his opinion, the literal interpretation ought to be applied in almost every case to the Epistles of Paul.<sup>3</sup> On the one hand, he sanctions the use of the Fathers, adherence to the Church, and the employment of the mystical sense, which was cultivated by the Alexandrian school, and so prominent in the exegetical defence of the later Roman Catholic Church. But on the other, we can

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1. Ibid., 22:227.

2. Goch, Dialogus, Bk. I, ch. 1.

3. Eiusd., De libertate christiana, Antwerp, 1521, I, 3, 2.



trace the emergence of new, reformatory principles, in that he insists that the Scripture shall be explained principally by itself, and that the literal and historical senses are to be given precedence over the mystical.

He holds a liberal view with regard to the assent due to the statements of Scripture, although he recognizes that it contains infallible truth. With reference to its doctrinal and moral importance, he distinguishes between what is simply and directly affirmed, and what is derivatively intimated. Goch is not a believer in the mere letter of Scripture; however, he continues to maintain its full authority.<sup>1</sup>

### 3. Johannes Wessel (d. 1489)

Both the scholastic and mystical trends of thinking in the late Middle Ages found a wholesome equilibrium in the mind of Wessel, for they rested upon a hearty and intelligent conception of Biblical Christianity. Ullmann<sup>2</sup> describes him as

"a Biblical theologian, who was equally pious and fond of truth, equally liberal and judicious, who turned the logical proficiency which he had won from Scholasticism against the degenerate form of Scholasticism itself, who had all the deep feeling of mysticism, but was elevated above its subjectivity, and who in this way secured a position which partly vanquished the antagonisms of the Middle Age, and partly at least made a highly successful commencement towards their overthrow."

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1. Goch, De libertate, Bk. I, ch. 11.

2. Ullmann, C., Reformers Before the Reformation, Eng. tr. Edinburgh, 1855, II, 395.

Wessel seems to hold at the same time both a broad and a narrow view of the Inspiration of Scripture; the two sides received an organic connection through the doctrine of the inner illumination of the Holy Spirit. The Old Testament, he asserts, is insufficient in the knowledge of God it conveys to us; it must be supplemented by the New. That the New Testament contains the Divine revelation, he is certain, but of the manner, he is in doubt. Even here, the Word of God has not been pronounced fully, but only in an abridged and imperfect way.

"in the Gospel, and in the New Testament, the Word itself is abridged; for although it reflects the splendour of the truth that shines upon it, still it does not adequately express the Word, which for our sakes became a little child. . . . . On both sides, accordingly, has God abbreviated His Word, in Creation and in Scripture, and on no side has He perfected it."<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, he recognizes the full and sole authority and Inspiration of Scripture. All Scripture is a connected whole (una copulativa), whose several parts must necessarily be inspired by the Holy Spirit, and true; for the whole cannot be true if even the smallest part be false. Not a jot or a tittle of the law shall fail; therefore, the Divinely inspired Scripture must be perfectly fulfilled.<sup>2</sup>

"The Holy Scripture cannot be taken to pieces (non solvi potest), for all Scripture forms a necessarily connected whole, so that not even the smallest occasional statement

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1. Wessel, De Causis Incarnat., Opera, V. 422, Gröningen, 1614.  
 2. Wessel, Farrago rerum theol., De purgat., Opera, 858.

(contingens categorica) therein can be false."<sup>1</sup> In another passage this same polemical interest appears, where Wessel is opposing the authority of the Apostle Peter and of his first Epistle, as a book inspired by the Holy Spirit, to the authority of the Pope, arguing that the Scripture in question is perfectly free from error, even in respect to single words, while the Pope is definitely subject to error.<sup>2</sup>

Artless simplicity in the interpretation of Scripture was prized, above all, by Wessel. Whoever seeks to interpret a passage must adhere to the words of the text, and give no forced explanation. Otherwise, heresy is encouraged. Further, he read the Bible in a practical spirit, with direct application of it to life and moral improvement. He used to say: "The man who, in reading the Bible, does not daily learn to think less of himself, and does not grow in self-dislike and self-humiliation, reads it not only in vain, but even not without danger."<sup>3</sup> He required of an expositor a high sense of truth, which would lead him not merely to seek Biblical proof-texts in favour of his cherished doctrines, but an openness of mind which fairly weighs all that he meets in the Bible.

Luther's testimony as to Wessel's influence upon him is significant; in the fullest sense he acknowledges him as his precursor. In the preface to a small collection of Wessel's essays, Luther selects the strongest terms to express his indebtedness:

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1. Ibid., p. 863.

2. Eiusd., De Comunione Sanctor., Opera, pp. 811f.

3. Eiusd., Opera, p. 845.

"And now too, this Wessel comes forward into the light....who possessed a noble intellect, and great mind, such as are now rarely to be found. It is evident that he was truly taught of God, as Isaiah prophesied of Christians like him; for we cannot suppose that he received his doctrine from man any more than I myself did. And if I had read Wessel sooner, my adversaries would have presumed to say, that I had borrowed my whole doctrine from him. Our minds are so consonant to each other.

"From this I derive a peculiar joy and fortitude; and no longer doubt that my doctrine is sound, seeing that such a person (although living in another age and climate, accustomed to another mode of life, and placed in other circumstances) not only always agrees with me in meaning, but even uses the self-same words."<sup>1</sup>

Hence, there can be little doubt that for a long while Wessel's writings continued to influence the great Reformer's opinions, and consequently, the whole Lutheran doctrine of Inspiration.<sup>2</sup>

4. In 1498 Colet was lecturing in London on Paul's Epistles, applying the critical methods of the new learning to an exact exegesis of the Scriptures. He insisted that the Bible was a personal, and not a dogmatic revelation. The mediaeval concepts of mechanical Inspiration, and of allegorical interpretation, he discarded completely.<sup>3</sup> It

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1. Luther, Werke, Walch, 14:220f.

2. Luther likewise acknowledges his indebtedness to Hus; in 1520 he wrote (Briefe, ed. De Wette, p. 425): "I have hitherto unknowingly held and taught all John Hus's doctrines; in a like unknowingness has John Staupitz taught them; briefly, we are all unconscious Hussites. Paul and Augustine are Hussites to the letter."

3. Lindsay, T. M., History of the Reformation, 2nd ed., Vol. I., p. 165. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1907.

was he more than anyone else who diverted Erasmus from the exclusive study of the classics to the New Testament and the Fathers.

Colet's lectures on the Epistle to the Romans were not textarian, but dealt with the subject matter as a whole; rejecting the favourite method of the catena aurea, formed by connecting citations from the Church Fathers and ecclesiastical authorities, he sought to educe the clear, natural, literal meaning of the Epistle--the meaning which it had for those to whom it was written. To him, the Scripture was a personal revelation, vouchsafed to living men by men who were thoroughly alive; to be sure, these men were only instruments, but they were in no wise passive. Colet did not hesitate to point out in Paul's style "that vehemence of speaking" which did not give him time or opportunity to polish his sentences.<sup>1</sup>

It is evident that Colet held to no theory of verbal Inspiration which did not give due allowance to the human element in Scripture, and above all, he rebelled against the idea of manifold senses and allegorical interpretation. Precisely because he held such a high view of the Scriptures, he was anxious to free its exegesis from human accretion. He remarked "how mysterious the Inspiration of the Scriptures was; how the Spirit seemed to him, by reason of its majesty, to have a peculiar method of its own, singularly absolute and free, blowing where it lists, making prophets of whom it will, yet so that the spirit of the prophets is subject to the

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1. Colet, MSS G. g. 4, 26, fol. 23, in loco. Rom. 9:22, quoted by Seebohm, F., Oxford Reformers, London, 1867, p. 16: "... est ex vehementia loquendi imperfecta et suspensa sententia."

prophets."<sup>1</sup> He stated that he admired the completeness of the Scriptures, not because each word could be understood in several different senses, but because quot sententiae totidem sunt verba, et quot verba tot sententiae.

5. Another notable figure in this period was Reuchlin, who achieved for the study of the Old Testament what Erasmus was to do for the New. A man of the most diverse accomplishments, he had learned Hebrew in his youth from Wessel, and thenceforth devoted himself with assiduity to a mastery of the original languages.<sup>2</sup> He states this as the secret of his method: "Novum Testamentum graece lego, Vetus hebraice in cuius expositione malo confidere meo quam alterius ingenio." The ignorance of Hebrew in his day was so complete that in his Rudimenta Linguae Hebraicae, he had to begin by a full and emphatic notice that the language was to be read from right to left!<sup>3</sup> Incidentally, it was partly from this textbook that Luther learned Hebrew. The controversies in which Reuchlin subsequently became involved opened men's eyes to the arrogant pretensions of infallibility on the part of an ignorant clergy.<sup>4</sup>

6. Valuable as was the contribution of those who preceded him, it was really Erasmus (1466-1536) "who laid the

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1. Colet to Erasmus, Eras. Opp. 5:1291-1294, quoted by Seebohm, F., op. cit., p. 68.

2. Cf. Beard, C. Reformation of the 16th Century, p. 43.

3. 1st ed. published at Pforzheim, 1506.

4. Cf. Geiger, L., Johann Reuchlin, sein Leben und seine Werke, Leipzig, 1871.

egg that Luther hatched." The Reformation was due to him more than to any man except Luther; and while his vacillating attitude was certainly not commendable, yet in a sense his method of attack against the Church was more devastating than Luther's, for he bored from within. Ever a champion of liberty and reform, yet he wished it to be within the lines of the existing Church. He loved unity and hated schism; moreover, he did not possess those striking personal qualities of practical leadership that characterized Luther. In view of his extreme individualism, it is surprising to see him as such a defender of ecclesiastical authority; he lays stress upon the agreement of the Fathers, regarding this as peculiarly valuable.<sup>1</sup> "What has been transmitted by the general assent of the orthodox doctors, and what has been clearly defined by the Church must no longer be discussed, but believed."<sup>2</sup> His first edition of the Greek New Testament in 1516 "formed a great epoch in the history of Western Christendom, and was a gift of incalculable value to the Church."<sup>3</sup> It was his desire to see Christ honoured in all languages, to hear the Psalms sung by the ploughmen at their labours, and the Gospel read to poor women as they sat spinning. "I should prefer to hear young maidens talking about Christ than some who in the opinion of the vulgar are consummate Rabbis." As a result of his labours he could conscientiously claim that "the veil of the Temple has now been rent in twain, and it is no longer a single High

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1. Erasmus, Diatrobe, p. 1219.

2. Erasmus, Hyperaspistes, p. 1259; cf. Ibid., p. 1297.

3. Cf. Westcott, History of the English Bible, pp. 26, 140, 203-205.

Priest who can enter into the Holy of Holies."<sup>1</sup>

Erasmus was particularly concerned to pierce through to the literal and original meanings of the Biblical writers. In order that the real meaning of the text might be ascertained, it was necessary to study the original Biblical languages, namely, Hebrew and Greek. We have already spoken of the influence of Valla, and of Erasmus' commendation of his work. In the preface to the Annotationes of Valla, Erasmus points out that

"in many passages the Vulgate was manifestly at fault. It was a bad rendering of the original Greek or had itself been corrupted. Should any reply that the theologian is above the laws of grammar, and that the work of interpretation depends solely upon inspiration, that were, indeed, to claim a new dignity for divines. Were they alone to be allowed bad grammar? .... Again, how was it that Paul was evidently so much more at home in Hebrew than in Greek?

"Finally, he (Valla) urged, if there be errors in the Vulgate, is it not lawful to correct them? Many indeed, he knew would object to change any word in the Bible, since fancying that in every letter is hid some mystic meaning. Were it so, would it not be the more needful that the exact original text be restored?"<sup>2</sup>

Thus Erasmus may be regarded as one of the great founders of modern textual and Biblical criticism. He acknowledged the possibility of inconsequential errors and discrepancies in the record,<sup>3</sup> and admitted that the Holy Spirit was frequently found wanting in the apostles, and

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1. Erasmus, Praef. in Paraphr. Matt.

2. Quoted from Seebohm, H. E., Oxford Reformers, London, 1906, p. 178.

3. Ibid., Annott. in Luke 22:36; John 2:19, 20, etc.



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that they sometimes erred. Christ alone is called the Truth, and He alone is free from error; the disciples were but men, and hence ignorant of some things, and mistaken in not a few.<sup>1</sup> He did not confuse Inspiration with infallibility in expressions and details, and allowed for the human element, with the consequent possibility of error, in the Scriptures. Furthermore, Erasmus never hesitates to reject a so-called "Scripture proof" when it seems to him to be misapplied or untenable,<sup>2</sup> nor to retain any phrase that might seem liable to abuse.<sup>3</sup>

The method of critical exegesis employed by Colet was advantageously adapted by Erasmus; similarly Erasmus was decisive in his rejection of the theory of verbal Inspiration. He sought to explain Scripture on the basis of facts given, rather than in the light of a priori theories. For instance, Erasmus notices the discrepancy between Stephen's speech in Acts 7:16 and the narrative in Genesis, and makes no attempt to reconcile them.<sup>4</sup> He

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1. Ibid., Annot. in Matt. 2, 27; in Acts 10.

2. Ibid., Annot. in Matt. 2:5; Rom. 5:12; Phil. 2:6; I Tim. 1:17; I John 5:7, 20.

3. Ibid., Annot. in Matt. 24:36.

4. Erasmus, Annot. in Acts 7:16: "Et hunc locum annotavit Hieronymus in libro ad Pammachium de Optimo Genere Interpretandi, qui secus habeatur in Genesi, ubi legitur quod Abraham emerit ab Ephron Etheo filio Saor juxta Hebron quadringentis drachmis speluncam duplicem, et agrum circa eam, sepelieritque in ea Saram uxorem suam; atque in eodem legimus libro postea revertentem de Mesopotamia Jacob cum uxoribus et filiis suis posuisse tabernaculum ante Salem, urbem Sichymorum, quae est in terra Chanaan et habitasse ibi et emisse partem agri, in quo habebat tentoria, ab Emor patre Sychem, centum agnis, et statuisse ibi altare et invocasse deum Israhel. Proinde filio Saor, nec sepultus est in Sychem sed in Hebron, quae corrupte dicitur Arboch. Porro duodecim patriarchae non sunt sepulti in Arboch sed in Sychem, qui ager non est emptus ab Abraham sed a Jacob. Hunc nodum illic nectit Hieronymus nec eum dissolvit."

quotes with approval Jerome's suggestion that Mark (2:26), having a lapse of memory, wrote "Abiathar" instead of "Abimelech",<sup>1</sup> and that Matthew (27:9) was really quoting from Zachariah, rather than Jeremiah, as stated in the text.<sup>2</sup>

It is indeed unfortunate that Erasmus was unsympathetic toward Luther's overtures for co-operation in the carrying forward of the Reformation; but they were antithetical personalities. Luther, by his coarseness and uprightness and downrightness, repelled the sensitive, scholarly instincts of the great humanist. And Erasmus none the less exasperated the impatient Luther by his want of enthusiasm for the new movement.

"No one can study the Renaissance and the Reformation without seeing that Erasmus came a generation too soon, whereas

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1. Ibid., in Mark 2:26: "Divus Hieronymus in libello de Optimo Genere Interpretandi indicat nomen Abiathar pro Achimelech esse positum, propterea quod libro Regum primo, capite 22, ubi referetur huiusce rei historia, nulla mentio fiat Abiathar sed duntaxat Achimelech. Sive id acciderit lapsu memoriae, sive vitio scriptorum, sive quod eiusdem hominis vocabulum sit Abiathar et Abimelech; nam Lyra putat Abiathar fuisse filium Achimelech qui sub patre functus sit officio paterno, et eo caeso iussu Saulis comes fuerit fugae Davidicae".
  2. Ibid., in Matt. 27:9: "Annotavit hunc quoque locum divus Hieronymus in libro cui titulus de Optimo Genere Interpretandi, negans quod hic citat ex Hieremia Matthaeus, prorsus exstare apud Hieremiam, verum apud Zachariam prophetam, sed ita ut quae retulit evangelista, parum respondeant ad Hebraicum veritatem, ac multo minus ad vulgatam editionem Septuaginta. Etenim ut idem sit sensus tamen inversa esse verba, imo pene diversa. Caeterum locus est apud Zachariam, cap. ii, si quis velit excutere. Nam res perplexior est quam ut hic paucis explicari possit, et prope παράπερον est. Refert Hieronymus Hieremiam apocryphum sibi exhibitum a quodam Judaeo factionis Nazarenae in quo haec ad verbum ut ab evangelista citantur haberentur. Verum non probat ut apostolus ex apocryphis adduxerit testimonium, praesertim cum his mos sit evangelistis et apostolis ut, neglectis verbis, sensum utcumque reddant in citandis testimoniis."

Luther arrived at the exact moment: there was the man and he came at the right time. The training of Erasmus, his scholarship, and his genius seemed to acclaim him as the man who would advance freedom of discussion. Luther was incalculable, concentrated, forceful, autocratic, infallible. Nothing is more pathetic than Erasmus, who arrived too soon..... The Renaissance and the Reformation parted company when Luther abused reason and liberty, when he denied the free-will of man, when he insisted that he was not a co-operator with God."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Murray, R. H., Erasmus and Luther, pp. 381, 382.  
See also: Nichols, F. M., The Epistles of Erasmus, from his 51st year, London, 1901-18.  
Drummond, R. B., Erasmus, his Life and Character, London 1873.  
Geiger, L., Renaissance und Humanismus in Italien und Deutschland, Berlin, 1882.

Chapter Five:                    LUTHER'S VIEW OF INSPIRATION.

A. Contradictory elements in Luther's teaching.

In the writings of the great Reformer we find no systematically developed doctrine of Inspiration, for, as great a thinker as he was, he was not a systematic theologian, in the proper sense of the term, as were, for instance, Thomas Aquinas and Calvin. However, his industry and indefatigability over a long and eventful period has left us a mass of writings which amply reward those who take the pains to ascertain his teachings on the great Christian doctrines.<sup>1</sup>

Luther asserted the verbal Inspiration of Scripture, and at the same time he denied it. While, unfortunately, he could not disentangle himself from the Biblicism of the Middle Ages, he nevertheless clearly perceived that it was the "Word of God" contained in the Scriptures that was of prime authority. He scathingly criticized the Scriptures, and yet set up the very letter as the Word of God, and required of others unconditional submission to it whenever he felt the occasion demanded. His theory and his practice did not coincide.<sup>2</sup>

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1. The outstanding editions of Luther's works are the Walch, 24 vols. (1739-1751), the Erlangen, 67 vols. (1826-68), and the Weimar, 54 vols. of which have already appeared (1883-1928). Likewise, the Weimar editions of the "Briefe" (1930-5), 6 vols., and of the "Tischreden" (1912-21), 6 vols., have been most generally consulted.
  2. Cf. Loofs, Fr., Leitfaden zum Studium der Dogmengeschichte, 4te Aufg. Halle, 1906, s. 741: "Nicht minder verhängnisvoll ist es geworden, dass Luther, zu theologisch-lehrhafter Ausprägung der neuen Gedanken der Reformation weder geneigt, noch im besonderen Masse geschickt, bei der Formulierung seiner Grundgedanken teils zu metaphysischen Traditionen zurückgriff, deren Einfluss für seine religiösen Gedanken nur trübend sein konnte, teils haften blieb in mancherlei Widersprüchen und Unfertigkeiten, die eine Quelle künstiger Verwirrung wurden und Anlass zu ungenügenden Korrekturen geboten haben."

This contradiction in Luther's position is not entirely resolvable, but is historically understandable; it was not so much the power of traditionalism alone that influenced him when forming his conservative views, as it was the necessity for an undisputed authority in dealing with the sectaries, and "Schwärmgeistern" who, with their doctrines of the "inner light" seemed to him to be overthrowing all wise restraint. Hence, we find him clinging to the most literal sense in his interpretation when fulminating against them.

The paucity of ordered, apologetic discussion of the doctrine of Inspiration is partially explainable by the fact that every one in Luther's day accepted the Divine origin of Scripture, and hence there was no need for defending it. "Every mediaeval theologian declared that the whole doctrinal system of his Church was based upon the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.....Hence Luther made his appeal with the same serene unconsciousness that anyone could gainsay him, as he did when he set the believer's spiritual experience of the fact that he rested on Christ alone for salvation against the proposal to sell pardon for money. His opponents believed that they were able to meet Scripture with Scripture. They were confident that the authority appealed to--Scripture--would decide against Luther."<sup>1</sup> However, Luther's grasp of Scripture was much firmer than theirs; they looked upon it as a collection of fragmentary texts; he saw it as a complete whole. He could use the Word with reference to its inner

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1. Lindsay, T. M., A History of the Reformation, Vol. I, pp. 454-455.

unity; against the scraps of proof-texts which his enemies hurled at him he was invulnerable. At one time he remarked that there was no longer any need of miracles, since the Scriptures were now accepted by even the Papists and all the sects.<sup>1</sup> If he had been compelled to deal with those denying the authority of Scripture, there is no doubt that he would have given more attention to argument in its defence.<sup>2</sup>

It is our purpose to be as objective as possible; but after examining Luther's writings in almost every instance in which he speaks of Scripture, we cannot help but feeling that Luther's real mind lay in the direction of a broader view of Inspiration. It is our opinion that his stricter utterances were aberrations, accommodations to the needs of the situation. And yet, it is granted, the tension between his two views is not removed with such facility. Everywhere he speaks of Scripture with the utmost reverence, insisting upon its absolute authority as the sole rule of faith and life; but it is extremely doubtful whether he really held to verbal Inspiration in its strictest sense.

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1. Werke, Erl. 1:87.

2. Farrar, F. W., History of Interpretation, pp. 325-327, in speaking of the superiority of Luther's approach to the Scriptures, rightly emphasizes these 6 characteristics: (1) He held to the supreme authority of Scripture itself, refusing to discuss this, since it was admitted by his opponents; (2) asserted the sufficiency of Scripture; (3) set aside the fourfold sense, emphasizing the literal; (4) rejected allegory; (5) maintained the perspicuity of Scripture; and (6) maintained the right of private judgment.

### B. Luther's exegetical methods.

In his exposition of Scripture, Luther's chief aim was to get at the meaning of the writer; allegories are "awkward, unclean, earthy, sluttish rags and shags of interpretation."<sup>1</sup> In his controversy with Emser, he declared that "the Holy Ghost is the plainest writer and speaker that there is in heaven or on earth; therefore His words can have no more than the one simplest meaning, which we call the scriptural or literal."<sup>2</sup> Until Luther's time, few dared to question the fourfold sense of Scripture--the literal, the allegorical, the tropological, and the anagogical--of which the last three were spiritual, or mystical, in distinction from the first.<sup>3</sup> Against these allegorizing tendencies Luther stoutly and quite consistently set his face. He speaks as though he considered it irreverent treatment, and work fit only for children and fools. His firm position here with regard to the decisive

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1. Werke, Walch, 1:925; 2:692, 814f.; 3:1032; 15:944; 21:854; 22:1982.

2. Werke, Walch, 18:1602f.

3. "Litera gesta docet, quid credas Allegoria,  
Tropologia quid agas, quid speres Anagogia."  
Roughly translated: the literal sense preserves the record of facts; the allegorical, what we are to believe; the tropological (or moral) what we are to do; and the anagogical, what we are to hope.  
Dobschütz, in Hastings, Dictionary of Religion and Ethics, art. The Bible in the Church, Vol. 2, p. 598, gives the following example. Luke 2:21: "And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called Jesus, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb." This means (1) literally, Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day; (2) allegorically, the eight parts of Holy Scripture; (3) tropologically, the eight stages of repentance; (4) anagogically, the octave of the Resurrection, the eight ages of the world, the eight blessings of future salvation.



rejection of the multiple sense was the axe at the root of the mediaeval dogmatic system. Emser, in his rage, complained to Luther that if this were so, one might better read a legend of Virgil's than the Bible.<sup>1</sup>

".....this principle of the Reformation effected a greater change than is implied in the mere simplification of exegesis, by cutting away all that undergrowth of mystical teaching which hid the plain significance of the text. It converted the Scriptures from a dialectic armory from which weapons of argument could be drawn in favour of any dogmatic subtlety or extravagance, into an historical record of God's dealings with mankind, full of life and inspiration and comfort. The soul had hitherto been nourished on sacraments alone: it was now to hold converse with the Spirit in the pages of the Bible."<sup>2</sup>

Further, Luther would not allow the quotation of II Cor. 3:16--"the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life"--as implying two senses in Scripture, a literal and a spiritual. He held that the reference was to two offices and types of preaching; that the Law brought spiritual death and that the Spirit brought Life. That was the only sense which he would allow. As the Holy Spirit is the sole author and authority, in whom there can be no contradiction, so there can be only one sense in Scripture.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, Luther recognized the homiletical value of symbols, tropes, and figures of speech; at times he allowed allegory to illustrate that which first had been verified upon other grounds. As embellishments for teaching the unlearned, allegory may be employed; the sixth chapter of Isaiah is an

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1. Werke, Walch, 18:1601, 1602.

2. Beard, Reformation of 16th Century, p. 120.

3. Werke, Walch, 18:1909, 1604, 1602.

example, showing the legitimate use.<sup>1</sup> On the whole, though, Luther would admit only unus simplex solidus sensus,<sup>2</sup> otherwise Scripture would "lead us by the nose."<sup>3</sup> The true sense the Spirit teaches by "right understanding and experience in the heart."<sup>4</sup> Any teaching thereby obtained is of value only in so far as it does not contradict the "Rule of Faith".<sup>5</sup>

In his disputation with Eck at Leipzig, Luther insisted that if Scripture was to be quoted, it was to be germane to questions under discussion; a mere throwing together of unrelated passages was not to be tolerated:

"It grieves me to the heart that we must suffer these mad saints to tear asunder and blaspheme the Holy Scrs with such insolence, license, and shamelessness, and that they make bold to deal with the Scriptures, whereas they are not fit to care for a herd of swine. Heretofore, I have held that where something was to be proved by the Scriptures, the Scripture quoted must really refer to the point at issue. I learn now that it is enough to throw many passages together helter-skelter, whether they are fit or not. If this is to be the way, then I can easily prove from the Scriptures that beer ('rastrum': an extraordinarily bad Leipzig Beer) is better than malvoisie (a highly prized, imported wine, known in England as 'malmsey')."6

1. Werke, Walch, 6:15, 99; 8:2518.

2. Briefe, 1:441.

3. Werke, Weimar, 5:280.

4. Werke, Weimar, 12:439.

5. Werke, Weimar, 3:517f.; 4:4.

6. Werke, Weimar, 6:301: "Es thut mir aber in meinem hertzen wehe, das wir leyden müssen von solchen tollen heiligen, das sie die heiligen schrift also frech, frey und unvorschamt zureissen und lestern, sich unterstehen die schrift zuhandeln, szo sie nit gnugsam sein, das sie der sew hutten solten. Ich hab biszher gehalten, wo man etwas mit der schrift sol bewerren, muste die selb schrift eygentlich zur sach dienenn. Aber nw lerne ich, das es gnug sey, vil schrift rips raps zusammenn werffen, es reyme sich odder nit: wen die weysze gilt, so wil ich ausz der schrift wol bewerren, das rastrum besser sey dan malmesier."

In his preface to Isaiah (1528), Luther lays down what he conceives to be the true rules of Scripture interpretation:

- (1) Accurate grammatical knowledge is necessary.
- (2) The times, circumstances, and conditions must be taken into consideration.
- (3) The context must be observed.
- (4) The need of faith and spiritual illumination must be recognized.
- (5) The "analogy of faith" must be observed.
- (6) All Scripture must be referred to Christ.

#### C. Critical judgments upon the Canon.

Luther's judgments with reference to some of the books of the Canon are among the most outspoken of all his utterances; it is chiefly in the "Prefaces" to the various books that we find these strong statements. His purpose was to provide the common people with an intelligent grasp of Scripture, and with an ability to discriminate between the various components. This method of criticism was definitely incompatible with any belief in the verbal Inspiration of the Bible.

With reference to the Old Testament, Luther asserted that Moses probably utilized many sources, borrowing the Law fundamentally from the customs of the fathers, and that it is indifferent whether the Pentateuch was composed by

him.<sup>1</sup>

In Genesis 15:13, the duration of Israel's sojourn in Egypt is given as four hundred years; Exodus 12:40 states it to be four hundred and thirty years. Paul, on the contrary, in Gal. 3:17, following the reckoning of the Septuagint and the Samaritan Pentateuch, computes the time from the period when the promise was first given to Abraham until the end of the Captivity, at four hundred and thirty years. Luther seeks, at first, under the guidance of Nicholas of Lyra, by ingenious wresting of texts to reconcile Paul's calculation with the Old Testament reckonings, and then at Gen. 15:13, he admits that here the historian "does not very closely and accurately calculate the time."<sup>2</sup> However, questions of purely historical discrepancy do not bother Luther; regarding these he says: "These mistakes are of such a nature as to do no damage to the faith, nor do they prejudice our cause; concerning Truth alone must we firmly adhere to the Sacred Scripture, and rigidly defend it, while we leave to others things that are darker, to be settled by their own judgments."<sup>3</sup> The chron-

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1. Werke, Weimar, 43:54; Tischreden, 1:121: "Cum quidam quaererat de Mose, quomodo potuerit scribere de creatione et aliis rebus tanto ante se factis, dicebat: Ego puto multa scripta esse ante Mosen, das es Moses darnach hat genommen und dazu gemacht, was yhm Gott befohlen hatt."; 3:23: "Deinde Magister Forstemius dixit multos asserere ΠΕΝΤΑΤΕΥΧΟΝ a Mose non fuisse scriptum. Respondit Dominus Doctor: Quid hoc ad rem? Esto Moses non scripserit, attamen est Mosi liber; hic enim liber solus mundi conditionem optime describit."; 4:594; cf. Walch, 7:2044.

2. Werke, Walch, 11:1448.

3. Ibid., p. 1089.

ological difficulties of Old Testament history after the time of Elijah and Elisha lead Luther to remark that, as the situation was full of confusion, so likewise the record is "confusissima."<sup>1</sup>

"As far as the utterances of Luther upon the subject (the Historical books of the Old Testament) go, they fully justify the inquiry, whether the sacred writers were not perhaps only impelled to their task, guided in their contemplation of the great divine realities, and directed in the choice and arrangement of their materials--but left in other respects to go about their work in precisely the same way as other historians; and whether, consequently, their writings are not entitled to a place in the book which 'God, the Holy Ghost, has given to the Church' only in view of their historical contents, and such an influence of the Holy Spirit upon the manner of presentation as above indicated".<sup>2</sup>

He wished that the book of Esther were not in the canon, because of its too Jewish tendency,<sup>3</sup> and discerned the dramatic character of the book of Job, arrangement to that of the comedies of Terence.

"This book, excellent as it is, was not written by him (Job), nor concerning him only, but all the afflicted. Job did not actually utter the words ascribed to him; but his thoughts were such as are there represented. The book unfolds itself before us, both in matter and execution, much after the manner of a comedy, and the strain of its argument is almost that of a fable."<sup>4</sup> He doubted the Solomonic authorship of

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1. Werke, Erl., 1:308ff., 325.

2. Köstlin, J., Luthers Theologie, Vol. II, p. 253.

3. Werke, Erl., 62:131.

4. Tischreden, 4:405, 406: "Liber Hiob optimus, non ab illo, nec de illo tantum, sed omnibus afflictis scriptus--Hiob non ita locutus est, sicut in ipsius libro descriptum est, sed ita cogitavit--sic evenit re et opere, estque fere ut argumentum fabulae sicut comedia aliqua agitur."

Ecclesiastes, but thought it rather the production of Sirach, thus belonging to the time of the Maccabees.<sup>1</sup> The prophetic utterances originally pertained to concrete situations, and were only later pieced together, and that not in too orderly a fashion.<sup>2</sup> The later Prophets depended upon the former, and upon the groundwork which they took over, they did not always build with "silver and gold".<sup>3</sup> When they sought to prophesy concerning the future course of the world they often were mistaken.<sup>4</sup> The books of Kings were superior to those of Chronicles as historical records.<sup>5</sup>

He points out that the prophecies of Jeremiah are not in chronological order, but were worked over by a redactor.<sup>6</sup> With a candour that astonishes us, he stigmatizes the book of Jonah in the strongest terms as being absolutely incredible, and says that it is "more lying and more absurd than any fable of the poets; and if it did not stand in the Bible, I should

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1. Werke, Erl., 62:128.

2. Tischreden, 2:234: "Keines propheten sermones sein gar beschriben worden, sonder haben zu zeitten ein spruch gefast, darnach aber ein, und also zusammen getragen, und ist also die bibel nerlich erhalten worden"; Werke, Weimar, 25:138: "Cum verisimile sit hos sermones non a Propheta aeditos sed a scribis exceptos esses nullam seriem historiae ab eis esse observatam....Id quod ab aliis Prophetis quoque est factum" (Vorles. über Isa. 13); Erl., 62:132; 63:57, 74.

3. Werke, Erl., 63:379.

4. Werke, Erl., 8:23f.: "Alle Propheten des Alten Testaments, damit den Namen haben allermeist, dass sie Propheten heissen, dass sie von Christo geweissagt haben,...vielmehr denn darum, dass sie zuweilen von den Königen und weltlichen Laufen etwas verkündigten, welches sie auch selbst übten und oft auch fehlten."

5. Tischreden, 1:364.

6. Werke, Walch, 14:50.

laugh at it as a lie."<sup>1</sup>

Luther's assertions regarding the worth of the New Testament books were just as pointed. He laid it down as a universal principle that any Scripture was to be judged by whether or not it "preached Christ".<sup>2</sup> The New Testament books were valued above those of the Old, and especially the Messianic contents of the latter were esteemed before all other. In the New Testament he made a rather vague, threefold division of the books.<sup>3</sup> The genuine works of John stood in the highest rank along with those of Paul and Peter; then came the Synoptic Gospels; and in the lowest rank were the Anti-legomena. The Gospel of John is far to be preferred to any of the Synoptics,<sup>4</sup> and the Epistle to the Romans is characterized as "the genuine masterpiece of the New Testament.... the purest of all the Evangels".<sup>5</sup> Paul's writings were considered superior to those of the Synoptists because Luther saw in them

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1. Tischreden, 4:418; Weimar 19:219: "Wer wollts auch gleuben und nicht fur eine lügen und meerlin halten, wo es nicht ynn der schrift stünde?"
  2. Werke, Walch, 1:230; 14:148ff.
  3. Werke, Walch, 14:98-106.
  4. Werke, Weimar, 33:167: "Mattheus der Euangelist aber treibet den hohen rechten Artikel vom Glauben an Christum nicht so seer als Joannes,....dagegen Joannes der Euangelist höher und stercker ist zu treiben den Christlichen Glauben denn die andern Euangelisten..."; 46:577, 611; Tischreden, 1:333: "Johannes streycht den heubthandel aus..."; 1:339: "Iohannes est valde simplex et simpliciter loquitur...Ein iglich wort in Johanne gilt einen zentener."
  5. Werke, Walch, 14:109.

more of the "grace" and the "Word" and the "doctrine" of Christ, than in the latter.<sup>1</sup>

Apparent contradictions in the record of the Evangelists do not seem to have bothered Luther at all. For instance, those in connection with the purification of the Temple, and the place in which Peter's denial occurred, do not trouble him. With regard to this latter instance, he says that John makes confusion, and may not have strictly observed the order of events. However, that really is of no importance, nor will he attempt to harmonize the difficulties. The main concern is whether or not we are holding fast to the chief articles of faith, that is, the fact that Christ, the Son of God, gave His life for us; then we should not worry about questions which we are unable to answer. Suppose we should, in violation of the order given by John, place the denial of Peter entirely in the house of Caiaphas? That surely will not take us to heaven or to hell.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Vorrede zur Auslegung des ersten Briefes Petri: "Darum sind St. Pauli Episteln mehr ein Evangelium als Matthäus, Markus und Lukas. Denn diese beschreiben nicht viel mehr denn die Historie von den Werken und Wunderzeichen Christi. Aber die Gnade, die wir durch Christum haben, streicht keiner so tapfer heraus als St. Paulus. Weil nun viel mehr am Wort gelegen ist denn an den Werken und Thaten Christi, und wo man deren eines entrathen müszte, besser wäre, dasz wir der Werke und Historien mangelten denn des Wortes und der Lehre, so sind die Bücher billig am höchsten zu loben, die am meisten die Lehre und das Wort von Christo handeln."
  2. Werke, Erl. 50:308f.: "Johannes alleine macht hier Verwirrung....; aber man fährt darum weder gen Himmel, noch zur höllen, ob man schon dafür hält, dass alle drei Verläugung in Caiphaz Haus geschehen sind."



"The Evangelists do not maintain the same order, and what one places first another places afterward....It may well be, indeed, that the Lord did such a thing more than once....If a contradiction originates in Sacred Scripture, and one cannot reconcile it, one can let it go. There is no contradiction to the articles of faith."<sup>1</sup>

He notices the variation in order in the eschatological discourses as given by Matthew and Mark, compared with those recorded by Luke.<sup>2</sup> Stephen, as recorded in Acts 7:2, even though he was declared to be full of the Holy Spirit, was capable of error, and this error was set down in Scripture. Here it is indicated that the call came to Abraham while he was in Mesopotamia; but according to Gen. 12:1 the call did not come until his arrival in Haran. Luther knows that it is customary to assume a double call, but feels that the difficulty is not to be thus easily escaped; on the contrary, he acknowledges that this was but a minor error, possible to one who was speaking only in incidental allusion.<sup>3</sup>

Luther will not accord Apostolic authorship to the

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1. Werke, Erl. 46:174: "...wenn wir den rechten Verstand der Schrift und die rechten Artikel unseres Glaubens haben, dass Jesus Christus, Gottes Sohn, für uns gestorben und gelitten hab, so hats nicht Mangel, ob wir gleich auf alles, so sonst gefragt wird, nicht antworten können. Die Evangelisten halten nicht einerlei Ordnung; was einer vornen setzet, das setzet der andere bisweilen hinten."

2. Walch, 11:2496.

3. Werke, Erl. 46:174; 14:319, 324.

Epistle to the Hebrews, appealing to chapter 2, verse 3, to prove that the author must have belonged to a post-Apostolic generation.<sup>1</sup> "Who wrote it, is unknown, but also it does not matter;"<sup>2</sup> since it was probably put together from several sources.<sup>3</sup> Further, it is a "hard knot" that repentance should be refused to sinners after baptism.<sup>4</sup>

For the Epistle of James he had only criticism; it was "a right strawy epistle", having no evangelical tone to it,<sup>5</sup> teaching nothing of Christ, and making righteousness dependent upon works.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, he declares that James "raves",<sup>7</sup> and will not admit that it is possible to reconcile his

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1. Heb. 2:3: "...which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him."
  2. Werke, Walch 14:146, 147.
  3. Werke, Weimar, 8:667. Cf. Ibid. 10:1, 143: "Es ist yhe war, das keyn Epistel mit solchem gewallt die Schrifft furet als disse, das eyn trefflicher Apostolischer man gewesen ist, er sey auch, wer er woll. Nu disse Epistel thut nitt mehr denn grundet und foddert den glawben von der gottheit Christi.....das fast keyne ortt der Biblie sso krefftig denselben artickel drauff bringt: drumb müssen wyr drauff bleyben und sie von stuck tzu stuck handellnn."
  4. Werke, Walch, 14:146.
  5. Werke, Erl., 63:115.
  6. Ibid., 63:156f.
  7. Werke, Weimar, 43:231. Cf. Ibid., 6:568: "...si uspian delyratum est, hoc loco praecipue delyratum est. Omitto enim, quod hanc Epistolam non esse Apostoli Iacobi nec apostolico spiritu dignam multi valde probabiliter asserant, licet consuetudine autoritatem, cuiuscunque sit, obtinuerit."

teaching with that of Paul.<sup>1</sup> "Herein agree all the genuine ("rechtschaffene") holy books, that they all preach and exhibit Christ. This, indeed, is the right touchstone ("der rechte Prüfestein") to test all the books: if one sees whether or not they present Christ, for all Scripture witnesses to Christ (Rom 3:21); and St. Paul will know nothing but Christ. That which does not teach Christ is not Apostolic, though St. Peter or St. Paul teaches it. That which preaches Christ is Apostolic, though Judas, Annas, Pilate, or Herod teaches it."<sup>2</sup>

Luther asserted that the Epistle of Jude was either an extract from or a mutilated copy of II Peter, and that it was post-Apostolic.<sup>3</sup> The Apocalypse was likewise rejected as being neither prophetic nor Apostolic, since Christ was neither taught nor set forth in it. "My Spirit can't accommodate itself to this book: the reason being that I do not think Christ is taught therein."<sup>4</sup> As a matter of fact,

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1. Werke, Weimar, 2:161. Cf. Ibid., 2:425: "Quod autem Iacobi Apostoli epistola inducitur 'Fides sine operibus mortua est', primum stilus epistolae illius longe est infra Apostolicam maiestatem nec cum Paulino ullo modo comparandus, deinde de fide viva loquitur Paulus." Cf. Ibid., 4:425; 30:2, 664. Luther even offered to put his doctor's cap on him who could reconcile James and Paul: Tisch. 3:253: "Multi valde sudant, ut concordent Iacobum cum Paulo, ...Pugnantia sunt: Fides iustificat, fides non iustificat. Wer die zusammen reymen kan, dem will ich mein pirreth auffsetzen und wil mich yhn einen narren lassen schelten."
  2. Werke, Walch, 14:149.
  3. Ibid., 14:150.
  4. Werke, Erl. 63:169f. Cf. Werke, Weimar, 8:416: "Quamvis autem liber Apoc. veterum calculo non sit plenae auctoritatis in contentione, tamen visum est adversariis etiam ex ipso testimonia opponere, in quibus certum est verba fieri de omnibus Christianis eosque sacerdotes et reges appellari."

Luther tended to discredit all prophesying of outward events; he placed the Apocalypse in the same category as Joachim von Floris and Lichtenberger.<sup>1</sup>

D. His broad view of Inspiration.

1. Rejection of verbal, mechanical conceptions.

Luther's estimate of Scripture must be examined in the light of his total religious viewpoint; the Scriptures did not measure his theology, but rather, his theology--and particularly, the Pauline conception of justification by faith alone--governed his evaluation and treatment of Scripture. The Word of God was to him a living thing, a means of Divine grace, a speech of God to men. This speech was continually proceeding from Him outward unto all the world, cleansing, sanctifying, as it found acceptance. Utterly apart from anything vulgarly magical, this Word was conceived of in a sacramental sense; it was essentially redemptive. God was dealing with men in a saving way, through Jesus Christ.

Inspiration was vouchsafed to holy men; their natural faculties were heightened, their spiritual insight was deepened and their moral perception strengthened. However, in no sense were the words of the Scriptures dictated to the writers; to be sure, God is the Author of Holy Scripture, but only in so far as He provides the illumination necessary to the human authors. This Divine enlightenment was especially imparted to the Apostles, because they were chosen instruments, and

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1. Werke, Erl. 8:22; Weimar, 44:247.

particularly to the authors of sacred Scripture. In this way, the Divine and the human were for the time being united. The writers wrote as men and as historians, and their knowledge was historical; they arranged and investigated materials, and under the guidance of God they were enabled to set forth His will for mankind.<sup>1</sup>

Luther often spoke of the Scriptures as coming from the Holy Spirit; this was, indeed, his only consistent view. But it is historically unjustifiable to make him the representative of a strict view of verbal Inspiration that was not developed until later. His great concern was that men should hear God speaking to them through the outward means of grace, the preaching of the Word, and the total message of redemption

1. Werke, Erl., 26:100 (Comm. zu Galat.).

From the recognition of this human element, Luther could speak of Joel as "ein gütiger und sanfter Mann"; and of Amos as being "auch heftig und schilt das Volk Israel fast durch das ganze Buch aus.....dass er wohl mag heissen Amos, d. i., eine Last, oder der schwer und verdriesslich ist."

Cf. also Kahnis, Dogmatik, III., 142ff.: "Den Standpunkt der Freiheit vertritt Luther. Es ist ebenso unhistorisch als ungerecht, Luthers allerdings oft kühne Aussprüche für wilde Schösslinge seines Genius zu halten.....Wie bei Origenes liegt allen seinen Aussprüchen die Ueberzeugung zu Grunde, dass der heil. Geist den heil. Schriftstellern nicht mechanisch Inhalt und Worte eingegeben habe, sondern vielmehr ihrer menschlichen Individualitäten sich als freier Organe bedient habe. Luther hat daher die Schriften der Propheten und Apostel nicht losgelöst von ihren Reden, sondern dafür gehalten, dass dieselben so geschrieben wie gesprochen haben. In dieser Unterscheidung der göttlichen und menschlichen Seite liegt der Grund seiner doppelten Art, von der Schrift zu reden."

in Christ.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Distinction between "Word of God" and "Scripture".

Luther's protest was essentially one against all external authority; it is a grave mistake to say that since he rejected the authority of the Church, he set up that of the Scriptures in its stead. His followers may have been guilty of that, but not Luther. In rejecting ecclesiastical infallibility, he likewise rejected the infallibility of the letter of Scripture. The Bible does not seek to bind men to itself by rigid bands of conformity, but points them to the living Christ, to Whom they testify. Thus, faith born of the Holy Spirit and the "Word", that is, the Gospel, occupies an independent position, in that it can judge of the revelation given in the Scriptures.

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1. Cf. Romberg, Die Lehre Luthers von der heiligen Schrift, Wittenberg, 1868, p. 27: "Luther die göttliche Offenbarung nicht als mechanische Mittheilung übernatürlicher Erkenntniss sondern als dynamische Lebensentwicklung auffasst."

Seeberg, R., Die Lehre Luthers, Leipzig, 1933, p. 420: "Luther spricht oft von Gott als dem Autor der Bibel, aber nirgends die mechanische Inspirationstheorie entwickelt oder auch nur deutlich voraussetzt. Dann hat man aber angesichts seiner sonstigen Gedanken kein Recht, sie ihm aufzubürden.....Eine Lehre von der Inspiration der Schrift hat Luther uns nicht hinterlassen. Man kann es sicher bezeichnen, dass er eine mechanische Verbalinspiration nicht gelehrt hat, dass er sich aber die Schrift stets als von Gottes Geist erfüllt und von ihm gewirkt gedacht hat."

Cf. Thimme, K., Luthers Stellung zur heil. Schrift, 1903, p. 87f.; Köstlin, J., Luthers Theologie, 2te Ausg., Stuttgart, 1883, Vol. II., pp. 39ff.; Ritschl, O., Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus, Leipzig, 1908, I, p. 69f.; Brieger, Th., Luther und Wir, 1916, pp. 40ff.

This difference between the Word of God and Scripture--and we must always bear in mind that it was a most reverent distinction with Luther--applies not merely to form but also to subject-matter. The Bible was not an arrangement of equally valid parts; it was to him a living organism. So, as we have seen, admissions of error in and critical judgments upon Scripture were quite compatible with this viewpoint. Christ and Christ alone was without error, for he was the true Word of God.<sup>1</sup> The Scriptures are the highest testimony of the most perfect revelation; and they serve their purpose in that they bring to us the Word of God, but they are not that Word. The Word of the Scriptures should bring us to Christ.

For the sake of the traditional usage, and in order not to make the break too abrupt and thus give needless offence, Luther commonly designated the Scriptures as the "Word of God", and in this he was quite right. Arrogant, unsympathetic, hypercritical handling of the Scriptures only mutilates them, and does grave disservice to intelligent, devout historical criticism. By the phrase "the Word of God", Luther generally meant the Gospel of God's redeeming love in Christ, and finding this Gospel set forth in most parts of Scripture, he found it easy to employ the designation that was most easily understood by those with whom he had to deal. He

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1. Werke, Erl., 22:654: "Gesetz und Evangelium sind zwei ganz widerwärtige Dinge die sich mit oder neben einander nicht leiden oder vertragen können." The ceremonial law, in some parts, was "gleich närrisch und vergeblich anzusehen." Cf. Werke, Erl. 8:23; 46:174.

says: "It is all God's Word, it is true. But with God's Word here, and God's Word there, I must consider to whom the God's-Word is spoken. It is still a long way to the conclusion that you are the people with whom God has spoken."<sup>1</sup>

So, we are led to the conclusion that not the Bible is the basis of Luther's teaching about the Word of God, but rather that the living Word of God is the formative factor in his theory of the Inspiration of the Bible. The Holy Spirit, who has led the Apostles into all truth, has likewise been active and effective in the hearts of later believers.<sup>2</sup> The writers of Scripture were partakers of this Inspiration; in a special way, they received the assurance of the presence of the Spirit. Only in this sense, then, can Luther's judgment be formulated.<sup>3</sup>

### 3. Emphasis upon the spiritual content of the Scriptures.

The principal judge of the worth of the Scriptures, according to Luther, was the saving matter, as approved by faith to the individual heart. The subject-matter of the Word of God, standing by itself, in all its Divine power, was most attractive, and received the greatest emphasis. It was because the Bible was such a fresh phenomenon in Luther's eyes that he took such a living and discerning view of it; he was

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1. Werke, Walch, 3:14.

2. Werke, Weimar, 46:53, 54.

3. Ibid., 30:2, 682: "verbum dei est verbum dei originaliter et autoritative, non ecclesiae nisi passive et ministerialiter."



vividly aware of its great spiritual worth and efficacy. Hence, in contrast with later dogmaticians, he utilized intelligent discrimination between its various parts, avoiding all dull and superstitious reverence for it. Faith must be united, he said, with the Word of God contained in the Scriptures; it is important "that we equate the Scriptures and the (Christian) conscience."<sup>1</sup> In this way, the subjective and the objective aspects of the Scriptures are most effectively fused.

When Luther spoke of the "Word of God" he most commonly meant "the teaching of the Gospel", or the articles of faith, comprehended in a total sense. That is, their validity for him lay, not in the historical revelation, or in the fact of their having been brought into existence, but rather in their religious contents, as apprehended by the individual believer. For instance, he frequently adduces the Lord's Prayer, the articles of faith, or forgiveness of sins, as the criteria by which Scripture is to be evaluated.<sup>2</sup> He demanded of preaching that it conform to "the Word of God, the Ten Commandments, the articles of faith, the Lord's Prayer, and the teaching of the Gospel",<sup>3</sup> or the analogia fidei, that is, the rule of faith,

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1. Werke, Walch, 11:1888.

2. Werke, Weimar, 46:780: "...lass uns gehen zum Streichstein und lass uns mit der rechten ellen messen und sehen, ob sichs reime mit dem Vater unser und den Artikeln des Christlichen Glaubens, und ob er auch lere und gleube vergebung der sünden, reimet sichs denn mit dem, so Christus gelehret hat, so lass uns annemen und nach thun. Darumb so mus man hie habe zum Prüfestein lauffen und sehen, obs damit uberein stimme, ehe denn mans anneme."

3. Werke, Weimar, 33:304.

the generally accepted Christian belief; by these standards the Scripture itself was to be tested.<sup>1</sup> The religious and instructive content was of supreme importance; only as Christ and His redeeming work were faithfully represented, was the particular Scripture under consideration to be given credence. "If", says Luther, "I know what I believe, then I know what stands in the Scripture, for Scripture must have Christ and Christian faith in it."<sup>2</sup> Here we see the precise formulation of his standard of judgment by which all Scripture is to be tested: "whether it preaches Christ". Again, he says, "If any adversary urges Scripture against Christ, we urge Christ against the Scripture."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Werke, Weimar, 42:668. Cf. Ibid., 43:226: "Quod si praeter haec aliquid revelatur, ut habeat Analogiam fidei, et sit revelatio intellectus scripturae. Alioqui diabolica est.." Ibid., 43:228: "Iudicandi enim sunt spiritus per Analogiam fidei." Ibid., 30:3, 374, 375: "Wir wollen bey dieser regel bleiben die uns Sanct Paulus lehret Rom. xii. Alle weissagung sol dem glauben ehnlich sein; Welcher lerer nũ so leret, das dem glauben an Christo gemes ist, den wollen wir leren und halten; Welcher aber nicht dem glauben gemes leret, den wollen wir weder horen noch sehen." Cf. Werke, Erl., 12:150.
  2. Werke, Weimar, 8:236. Cf. Seeberg, R., Die Lehre Luthers, 4te Bd. of Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte, Leipzig, 1933, p. 418: "Luther glaubt also der Schrift, sofern sie sich als erlösende Geistkraft in der Seele bewährt. Aber dieser Glaube bezieht sich eben nur auf die innerlich in sich zusammenhängende Gedankenwelt der göttlichen Offenbarung in der Schrift. Das geht mit voller Gewissheit aus den dargelegten Gedanken und dem deutlichen Zusammenhang, in dem sie zueinander stehen, hervor. Hiernach hat also die Schrift zum Inhalt die in Christus geschichtlich offenbarte neue Ordnung Gottes, welche sich durch den Geist fortdauernd als wirksame Gnade erweist. Hierin zeigt sich also, dass Christus und sein Erlösungswerk der eigentliche Inhalt der Schrift ist".
  3. Werke, Erl., 4:381: "quodsi adversarii scripturam urserint contra Christum, urgemus Christum contra scripturam."

By Scripture, then, Luther meant the total complex of ideas concerning Christ and His redemptive work, comprehended by the "fundamental articles" ("Hauptartikel") of faith. As formulations for "the sum of the Gospel", he most generally employed these terms: grace and the forgiveness of sins;<sup>1</sup> repentance, justification, or forgiveness;<sup>2</sup> grace, forgiveness, justification, freedom;<sup>3</sup> often, Christ and His work, with special emphasis upon His Deity;<sup>4</sup> the doctrine of the Trinity;<sup>5</sup> the contents of the Apostles' Creed, or of the entire Catechism;<sup>6</sup> faith and love;<sup>7</sup> faith and baptism;<sup>8</sup> and even faith and works.<sup>9</sup> All the articles of faith are beyond the reach of reason, "placed by God in the Scriptures."<sup>10</sup> The historical aspects of Scripture were to Luther relatively indifferent: "if I were to be deprived of the work or of the preaching of Christ, I would prefer rather to be without His works than His preaching; for the works do not help me at all, but His words give life."<sup>11</sup>

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1. Werke, Weimar, 32:381; 38:113; Erl., 8:184, 236; 11:157; 14:188; Briefe, 8:224.
  2. Werke, Weimar, 40:2, 315; 45:677; Tisch. 1:487; Erl. 11:279.
  3. Ibid., Weimar 40:1, 48, 296, 355f., 670; 31:1, 254; Erl. 13:30.
  4. Ibid., Weimar, 46:65, 19, 557, 599; 47:59f., 78, 113; 36:366; Erl., 13:49, 56, 204; 15:155; 16:254; 9:213; 10:346; 12:246f.; 18:24; Weimar 36:451.
  5. Ibid., Weimar, 18:23f.
  6. Ibid., Weimar, 11:450f.; 10:2, 229f.; 45:467; 46:436; Erl., 13:221f.; 58:240f.; Erl., 9:1.
  7. Ibid., Erl., 14:73; Weimar, 19:77; 30:3, 366.
  8. Ibid., Erl., 12:204.
  9. Ibid., Weimar, 51:123.
  10. Ibid., Weimar, 18:143; 36:504; 47:188.
  11. Ibid., Erl., 63:115.

So, we see that this is what the Inspiration of the Scriptures meant: the working of the Spirit in the hearts of the holy writers, so that they gave effective expression to the saving work of Christ. All else is incidental. Indeed, we might say that Luther's idea of justification is the very key to his "Schriftprinzip". Entertaining such a comprehensive view of Scripture as this, he could well say: "Therefore, if any one should press thee with expressions, which speak of works, and which thou canst not bring into concord with the others, thou oughtest to say, since Christ Himself is the treasure whereby I am bought and redeemed, I care not the slightest jot for all the expressions of Scripture, to set up by the righteousness of works and to lay down the righteousness of faith. For I have on my side the Master and the Lord of the Scripture, to whom I will keep, and I know He will not lie nor deceive me,--and let them go on in their hostile cry, that the Scriptures contradict themselves. At the same time it is impossible that the Scriptures should contradict themselves, save only that the unintelligent, coarse, and hardened hypocrites imagine it....For this I do not care in the slightest; boast away of the servant, I, however, glory in Christ, who is the true Lord and Sovereign of the Scriptures, who has by His death and resurrection merited and procured for me righteousness and salvation; Him have I, and by Him I abide."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Werke, Walch, 8:2138ff.; Erl., 1:387.

Luther continues to develop the principle that the Scriptures are to be interpreted by the Gospel; he harks back to the time before there was any written record: "Look at Adam and Eve; they are full of sin and death: yet because they hear the promise of the seed of the woman, who shall bruise the serpent's head, they hope for the same things as we, namely, that death will be done away, and sin wiped off, and righteousness, life and peace restored."<sup>1</sup> Noah and Shem were preachers of the promise;<sup>2</sup> Jacob "lived in faith in Christ"<sup>3</sup>, and therefore his works, no matter how contemptible in themselves, were well-pleasing to God. Abraham and Moses were "two good Christians"<sup>4</sup>, the former especially being "a right, yea, a perfect Christian, who lived in the most evangelical fashion possible, in the spirit of God and in faith."<sup>5</sup> These instances are but additional corroboration of the principle which Luther establishes, that the Scriptures are to be interpreted by the Gospel, and not the Gospel by the Scriptures.<sup>6</sup>

He was of the opinion that whoever possessed the same Spirit of the Biblical writers could thus write a new Decalogue or a newer New Testament.<sup>7</sup> As a matter of fact, preachers

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1. Ibid., Walch, 1:362.
  2. Ibid., Walch, 1:700; 2:131.
  3. Ibid., Walch, 2:2574.
  4. Werke, Walch, 3:997.
  5. Ibid., Walch, 3:410.
  6. Ibid., Walch, 4:1728.
  7. Ibid., Erl., 11:248.

today who proclaim the Word are not speaking merely human words, but in truth the Word of God; their tongues are "pencils of good writers", that is, organs of the Divine communication.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, when the apostles spoke--apart from any writing--they were "organs of the Spirit" through which Christ was speaking.<sup>2</sup>

"In many places he calls preaching, which nevertheless takes place by means of men and not merely in words of Scripture, pure doctrine, the sacred hymns and prayers of the Church, also words of God. He is on that account able to allow so high and free a position to Christian science, art, and preaching, and if a later period was forgetful of this eternal self-renovation and rejuvenescence, this fructification of the Word in the spirit of the believers, and so took up a lifeless conception of the holy Scriptures as a mere law, Luther, on the contrary, would not by his doctrine regarding the Scriptures hinder the pure current of the Holy Spirit in the Church, this true tradition."<sup>3</sup>

#### 4. The experience of the Spirit in the heart of the believer.

We develop more fully here what we have intimated above, namely, that Luther frequently stressed the importance of an inner experience of the power of the Word of God in the heart of the man who approached the Scriptures; as the outer Word was heard, an inner understanding and relationship must

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1. Ibid., Erl., 57:39f.; Weimar, 47:183f.

2. Ibid., Weimar, 40:1, 373f.

3. Dorner, I. A., History of Protestant Theology, Vol. I., p. 248.

be effected.<sup>1</sup> Only as this takes place does God really speak through the Word to the soul of man. In this he goes back to Augustine, who made the distinctions between letter and spirit, matter and form, and a hearing with the ear, and a grasping with the soul. However, he pushes this further than Augustine; he thinks of the Spirit as being more actively conscious.<sup>2</sup>

Each man himself must find the Word of God; that is, when it comes to him, he must verify it inwardly, that it actually is the Word of God, and not subjective illusion.<sup>3</sup> By no

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1. Werke, Walch, 4:253, 23: "auditio....interior conscientiae, quae est vermis et murmur syntheresis vel gaudium et surrus spiritus sancti."  
Ibid., Walch, 3:255, 41ff.: "et in isto verbo miro modo erudit nos, quomodo sit verbum dei audiendum aut legendum; scilicet quod non ex nostris viribus illud aggrediamur, sed nec litera contenti simus et foris audito verbo, sed spiritum ipsum quaeramus audire."
  2. Ibid., Walch, 4:305, 8ff.: "magis autem forte, quia absconditus est et in spiritu nimium interiori loquens, unde non possit eius causa et motivum videri, cur sic et non aliter dixerit et ordinaverit, ab iis qui non eosdem motus habent. Nam nullus alium in scripturis spiritualibus intelligit, nisi eundem spiritum sapiat et habeat."
  3. Werke, Weimar, 10:2, 90: "Es muss eyn iglicher alleyn darumb glewben, das es gottis wort ist und das er ynnwendig befinde... das es warheyt sei."  
Ibid., Weimar, 33:147f.: "Aber darnach, wenn du gerne mit dem wort umbgehest, liesest, hörest es predigen und liebest dasselbige, so wirts ein mal und balde dazu komen, das du sagest: Gott hats selber geredet, und sprechest; warlich das ist Gottes wort."  
Tisch. 1:196: "Ich habe oft erfarn, wie der nham Christus hilfft....Die selb experentia macht mir die Schriftgewiss." Cf. Ibid., 2:361; 3:261, 438.

other means can certainty come than through this experience of the power and reality of the Word. The witness of the Spirit ("Geistzeugnis") which is effective in the thoughts of the Scripture, awakens faith, and thence comes certainty.<sup>1</sup>

"For no one may rightly understand God or God's Word unless he have the means thereto directly from the Holy Spirit. But no one can have this from the Holy Spirit unless by experiencing, trying and feeling, and in this same experience the Holy Spirit teaches as in His own school, outside which there is nothing taught save empty show, words and idle talk."<sup>2</sup>

"Believest thou, so hast thou: believest thou not, so hast thou not."<sup>3</sup> "Christ is in the soul through faith as King, the will as servant."<sup>4</sup>

"The Bible is no mere collection of authentic Scriptures. It is the Word of the living God which reveals His will and purpose to sinful man, and arrests and grips the soul. In its incisive appeal it certifies the divine origin and authority and power. In the assertion of this doctrine the experimental attitude to the Bible again comes into marked relief..... The infallible Pope, the inerrant Council, the Fathers and the Schoolmen, yea, a merely mechanical Biblicism, are at a stroke deposed from the seat of authority, which is transferred to the judgment and conscience and experience of the individual in immediate touch with the

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1. Werke, Weimar, 30:2, 688: "Certus erit de euangelio unusquisque in semetipso testimonium habens spiritus sancti, hoc esse euangelion ..... credens fit certus, incredulus manet incertus."
  2. Werke, Erl., 45:215f.
  3. Ibid., 27:180.
  4. Ibid., Weimar, 1:263.



living Word."<sup>1</sup>

### E. Stricter Aspects.

We are never more aware than here, as we attempt to set forth the more conservative elements of Luther's Inspiration theory, of the amazing and glaring contradictions confronting us. He apparently held to both strict and liberal views of Inspiration; however, as Harnack points out,<sup>2</sup> the flagrant contradiction that something at the same time does not, and does, hold good, can only have the solution that it does not hold good. This of course follows, as we have seen, from Luther's view of faith; namely, that it is wrought by the Holy Spirit by means of the preached Word of God.

#### 1. Contributing factors.

##### (a) Inheritance from mediaevalism.

Luther could never completely disentangle himself from the bondage of the ecclesiastical and scholastic trad-

1. Mackinnon, J., Luther and the Reformation, Vol. IV., p.296. Cf. Ihmels, L., Das Christentum Luthers in Seiner Eigenart, Reformationsjubiläumsfeier, Leipzig, 1917, pp. 46-47:

"Dadurch wird nicht etwa das Christentum Luthers zu einer Buchreligion, als dürfte sich ein Buch zwischen Gott und den Menschen drängen. Vielmehr bleibt es durchaus dabei, dass es sich für Luther um ein ganz unmittelbares Verhältnis zu Gott handelt. In dem Wort kommt ja gerade Gott zu dem Menschen; ja dies Wort macht es erst möglich, dass der Mensch heute Gott ganz unmittelbar zu erleben vermag und dass es für ihn eine persönliche Gewissheit um Gott gibt....."

2. Harnack, A., History of Dogma, 3rd Ed., Vol. VII, p. 24, note 1.

itionalism out of which he sprang, and which profoundly influenced his every attitude and pronouncement. Luther knew Biel and Occam practically by heart; and through Biel's Commonitorium he was familiar with many excerpts from the older scholastics.<sup>1</sup> He was content to employ the accustomed expressions and designations when speaking of Scripture; for instance, he characterized the Holy Spirit as the actual writer of the Bible.<sup>2</sup> Practically everywhere he is fettered by the principles and prejudices of the mediaeval exegete; it was difficult for him to perceive the growth and progress of revelation and knowledge within history. And the contradiction lies here, in that while he assumed the mediaeval theory of Inspiration, actually he was so bold as to strike out bravely in freer directions when confronted with the necessity for so doing. He did not accurately foresee what contradictions would result from his untenable scholastic premises; observed in the light of his total religious view, and especially his emphases upon the religious content of Scripture as constituting the essential Word, we see here an almost irreconcilable contradiction. This inheritance was one of the most potent contributing elements in the formulation of his opinions.

(b) Sacramental controversy.

At the famous controversy with Zwingli in Marburg, in 1529, as is well known, Luther stood adamant upon the "hoc est

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1. Cf. Tschackert, P., Die Entstehung der lutherischen und der reformierten Kirchenlehre, Göttingen, 1910, p. 257.  
 2. Werke, Walch, 18:1456.

corpus meum," and would not allow even the slightest modification. This was in marked contrast to his other free utterances upon the Scriptures. However, his position is partly explicable by the fact that he wished to have a decisive passage in support of his dogmatic view. He felt that here, beyond all controversy, the Lord was truly speaking, and that He desired to express unmistakably in these words the revelation of salvation.<sup>1</sup> It is unfortunate, however, that Luther did not seek to interpret this passage a little more freely in the light of his elsewhere expressed, and most cherished, fundamental principles. For this identification-- or at least, the inauguration of the tendency to do so--of faith and dogma was most fertile in later results; the distinction between foundation and superstructure was being practically denied. But Luther was ever suspicious of "Reason", by which he meant rationalism, and he felt that his opponents were resorting to purely human analogies for the

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1. Werke, Erl., 3:340: "Haec sunt verba, quae neque ipsi, neque etiam Satanas negare poterit, in quae figendus pes est, ut firmiter in iis consistamus. Sunt autem nuda ac planissima, quae nullis interpretationibus eludi possunt, quod et panis sit Christi corpus pro nobis traditum, et calix Christi sanguis pro nobis effusus." Ibid., Erl., 6:421: "Non enim corpus suum accepit, benedixit et fregit, sed panem, ideo non demonstrat corpus, sed panem. Haec sunt clara verba." Ibid., Erl., 54:288: "Zudem, so ist dieser Artikel (vom Abendmahl) nicht eine Lehre oder Aufsatz ausser der Schrift von Menschen erdichtet, sondern klärlich im Evangelio durch helle, reine ungezweifelte Wort Christi gestiftet, und gegründet, und von Anfang der christlichen Kirchen in aller Welt bis auf diese Stund einträchtiglich gegläubet und gehalten."

explanation of something which he felt could be accounted for only upon the basis of the external Word.<sup>1</sup>

(c) Reaction against the "enthusiasts".

Another influence tending to crystallize Luther's opinions of Scripture was the controversy with Carlstadt and the men of Zwickau, the "heavenly prophets". For only a moment did Luther waver, but then with a "God rebuke thee, Satan!" he dismissed them from his presence. From that time on he went more and more in the direction of a rigid and arbitrary Biblicism, not even trying to find a rational justification for it.<sup>2</sup> Hence the outer Word received greater prominence; Luther went so far, in opposition to the "inner light" and "illusionisms" of the sectaries, as to assert that the Spirit worked only by means of the outer, audible Word

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1. Cf. Ritschl., O., Geschichte des Protestantismus, Leipzig, 1908, Vol. I, p. 76; Köstlin, J., Luthers Theologie, Vol. II, p. 519; Dorner, Hist. Prot. Theol., Vol. I, 318.
  2. Harnack, History of Dogma, VII, 246; Loofs, Dogmengeschichte, IV, 747; and Scheel, O., Luthers Stellung zur Heiligen Schrift, 55f., all contend that Luther, as a result of his conflict with the Enthusiasts, fastened upon the evangelical church this unproved and unprovable assumption which glaringly contradicts his other freer judgments. Cf. Seeberg, R., Die Lehre Luthers, pp. 379-380: "Im Unterschied zu den Schwarmgeistern mit ihrem 'inneren Wort' hatte Luther ein besonderes Interesse daran, gerade das hörbare äussere Wort zum Träger der Geistwirkungen zu machen. Nur so konnte der geschichtliche und kirchliche Charakter der neuen Gemeinden aufrecht erhalten werden gegenüber dem phantastischen sektiererischen Individualismus der 'himmlischen Propheten' mit ihren unkontrollierbaren Inspirationen."

of God.<sup>1</sup> We shall deal more fully later with this objectification of the external Word, but have noted it here in order that we might see that the opposition to the sectaries was one of the contributing influences toward Luther's stricter views.

## 2. The absolute authority of Scripture.

Upon the ground of the complete and sufficient authority of the Word of God--often identified with the Scriptures--Luther took his stand. God has "bound up His wisdom and secrets in the Word, and revealed them to us in the Scripture."<sup>2</sup> The true God speaks in the Scriptures, therefore one must readily accept what is therein presented.<sup>3</sup> Whatever Paul says, so says the Holy Spirit, and whatever is contradictory to Paul also is opposed to the Spirit.<sup>4</sup> The Spirit so completely possessed the Apostles, that their words were the Word of God.<sup>5</sup> Hence, God is to be construed as the actual Author of the Gospel,<sup>6</sup> and the Holy Spirit Himself the composer of Genesis.<sup>7</sup> The Scripture, then, is a unique writing of the Spirit.<sup>8</sup>

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1. Werke, Weimar, 18:135ff. Cf. 25:336: "Porro Christus non cognoscitur nisi per doctrinam et externum verbum. Euangelion igitur est ceu vehiculum quoddam, per quod ad nos defertur Christus cum iusticia sua et omnibus donis suis...Necesse igitur est prius audiri verbum, quam credere illud possimus et iustificemur." 29:580: "Spiritus sanctus mus uns ansprechen verbo Dei..."

2. Werke, Weimar, 36:501.

3. Werke, Weimar, 40:2, 593.

4. Ibid., 10:2, 139f.

5. Ibid., 40:1, 173f.

6. Ibid., 8:584.

7. Ibid., 44:532; 43:475, 628; 44:18, 91, 327.

8. Ibid., 7:638; 46:545; 47:133; Erl., 52:321, 333.

It is fundamental to Luther's view that the Scripture alone, uncorrupted by human speech or additions, is the only source of truth, and should be esteemed as such in the Church.<sup>1</sup> Nothing but Scripture is to be accorded this authority,<sup>2</sup> "for only then will my faith be certain and have a sure ground in the Scripture."<sup>3</sup> In the Church, only the "divine rule" of Scripture may have place, for only in that way is revelation to be tested.<sup>4</sup> "To this wine no water is to be added; to this sunlight, no lantern is to be raised up."<sup>5</sup>

1. Ibid., Weimar, 8:103: "...quod scripturas in suis viribus puras, ab omni hominum etiam sanctorum contactu mundas, ab omni terreno condimento synceras habere volo."  
Weimar, 8:484: "...die heyligen sacrament und artickel des glawbens sollen und wollen alleyn durch gotlich schrift gegründet unnd bewerdet werden..." 8:491: "Es ist nitt gottis wortt, darumb, das es die kirche sagt, ssondern das gottis wortt gesagt wirtt, darumb wirt die kirche. Die kirch macht nicht das wortt, ssondern sie wirtt von dem wortt."
2. Ibid., Weimar, 15:118: "Wenn soll man denn glauben, so man nicht alleyn Gottis wort sol glauben? ..." 119: "So wird die kirche durch die bucher und nicht die bucher durch die kirche bezeuget, angenommen und bewerd."  
Cf. 19:219; 43:145: "Ideo uni et soli verbo Dei credendum est, non canonibus, non sanctorum patrum dictis, nisi quatenus cum verbo consentiunt."
3. Werke, Weimar, 15:195.
4. Werke, Weimar, 6:508: "quod sine scripturis asseritur aut revelatione probata, opinari licet, credi non est necesse." Cf. Ibid., 10:2, 191; 2:297, 279, 309, 315.
5. Ibid., 8:141f.: "Tzum ersten spricht Moses, Deut. 4, 'yhr solt nichts zuthun tzu dem wort, das ich rede, und auch nichts davon thun'. Was ist aber 'tzuthun' anders denn mehr lehren, und 'abthun' weniger lehren, wen die Schrift leret?....Ist das nu nit ein klarer spruch widder alle menschen gesetzt?...Darumb alle, die da menschen gesetz tzu gottis gesetzen thun, die seynd gewiss gottis feynd."  
Cf. Ibid., 143f.

God's teaching, not that of men, Christ, and not philosophy, is to govern the people of God;<sup>1</sup> the servants of Christ are to teach only His Word.<sup>2</sup> This conception came to increasing clearness in Luther's mind and writings at the time of the indulgence controversy and the Leipzig disputation.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the Scripture is even the "level", the "touchstone", the "whetstone", by which all Church doctrine is to be tested.<sup>4</sup> From the very beginning, Scripture was for Luther the real source of the religious life and theo-

1. Werke, Weimar, 8:144, 146, 149, 345; Erl., 8:232; Weimar, 12:144; 10:2, 22f.
2. Ibid., Erl. 7:82.
3. Ibid., Weimar, 10:2, 232: "Nu für ich mit dem verfluchten Grewel (Ablass) am ersten fast senft und leisse und schon, hette gar gerne das bapsttum lassen und helfen etwas seyn; alleyn die schrift wolt ich lautter, reyn unnd gewiss haben; wuste noch nicht, dass es widder die Schrift were, ssondern hielt es nur, dass es on schrift were, wie andere weltliche uberkeyt durch Menschen erhaben."
4. Werke, Erl., 9:207, 372; 12:289; 13:208; 15:144; 18:22. Ibid., Weimar, 33:276: "Sol ich den Geist prüfen, so mus ich das Wort Gottes haben, das sol die Regel sein, der Prüfestein, der Lidius lapis, das Leicht, dabey ich erkenne, was schwartz oder weiss, gut oder böse sey." Ibid., Weimar, 33:304: "Was sol ich denn dem Bapst und seinen Predigern trawen? da mus ich sagen: Rhüme, wie du wilt, so wil ich hören, ob deine Predigt sich reime mit dem Wort Gottes,....so will ich dich gerne hören, du seiest Petrus oder Judas, du stehest fest und steiff oder seiest gefallen. Wo es sich aber nicht reimet, so höre ich dich nicht, ob du gleich drey mal S. Petrus werest." Cf. Ibid., Weimar, 46:771f., 780. Werke, Weimar, 6:322: "...allis was der bapst setzt, macht und thut wil ich also auffnemen, das ichs zuvor nach der heyligen schrift urteyle. Er sol mir unter Christo bleyben unnd sich lassen richtenn durch die heyligen schrift."

logical knowledge; it was for him the Authority.<sup>1</sup> As he charged the Church with the failure to preach the Word,<sup>2</sup> so the first task of the theologian was to understand the Scriptures.<sup>3</sup>

He regarded the Scriptures as being necessary to secure the objective content of the materials upon which the Church was dependent for the record of revelation. So that there could be no vagaries nor caprice in exposition, the grammatical usage, coupled with the insight of faith, was declared to be essential. Only through the historical works of Christ, are we able, after such a lapse of time, to reconstruct, from the documentary records left to us, the will of the Lord for our day. So then, whoever despises the record, likewise despises the foundation upon which the Church is built, and the possibility of Christ's being accurately known. The result is the vanishing of Christianity. In the light of this, he calls the Word of Scripture the true star, which truly points to Christ,<sup>4</sup> and the crib in which Jesus was laid.<sup>5</sup> We assume, then, that the authority of the Word

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1. Ibid., Weimar, 4:591: "auctoritate, teutonice: mit gesprachen der Schrift." Cf. Rohnert, W., Die Inspiration der heilige Schrift, p. 135: "Luther war so recht ein Mann der Schrift, der sich in sie vertieft, in sie eingelebt hat, der in ihr geforscht, der ihre göttliche Seligheitskraft an seinem Herzen erfahren hat, wie kein anderer. Gottes Wort war seine tägliche Nahrung; war der Massstab, daran er alles mass; war die Rüstkammer, aus der er seine Waffen gegen die Pöpstlichen, die Schwärmer und Sakramentierer nahm; war der unbewegliche Fels, darauf er fest und unerschütterlich stand. Und hierin ist er sich vollkommen gleich geblieben durch alle Perioden seines vielbewegten Lebens."

2. Ibid., Weimar, 1:14.

3. Ibid., Weimar, 3:404: "Es ist das verbum euangelii vocale vel scriptum, id est scriptura sancta."

4. Werke, Walch, 13:313.

5. Ibid., Walch, 22:87ff.



of God was a prime postulate.<sup>1</sup>

"In a general way, Luther considered the Bible as the sole incontestable and absolute authority. Here is the solid foundation of the edifice, the impregnable citadel in which he shut himself in order to repel all attacks. It is for him, in truth, a religious axiom, a postulate of faith, and not a dogma or a theory; it is revealed to his believing soul independently of all intellectual activity. Thus Luther, trusting in the action of the HSp., operating through the Scrs, does not pause to prove its authority, nor to establish it dialectically: it imposes itself; a systematic treatment is not needed. More and more as circumstances demanded it, he gave reasons for his faith and his submission. Poor arguments to modern thinking, but in his times, and commended by his vibrant eloquence and powerful personality, possessing a power of persuasion very impressive. ....It seemed idle to Luther...to enter into an argument to establish what was evident to him. He did not attempt, therefore, to prove the authority of the Bible,--he asserted it repeatedly in warm words, in passionate declarations, but rarely if ever proceeds by a formal demonstration."<sup>2</sup>

### 3. Verbal inerrancy.

Along with the assertion of the absolute authority of Scripture, Luther held, we are forced to conclude from some of his utterances, to the verbal inerrancy of the Scriptures. For example, he exclaims: "God forbid, God forbid, that there should be one single letter (character) in Paul, which the entire, universal Church should not hold to and follow after."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Tischreden, 1:28: "Wer nachgiebet, dass der Evangelisten Schriften Gottes Wort sein, dem wollen wir mit Disputiren wol begegnen: wer es aber verneinet, mit dem will ich nicht ein Wort handeln. Denn mit dem soll man nicht disputiren, der da prima principia, dass ist die ersten Gründe und das Hauptfundament verneinet und verwirft."
  2. Rabaud, E., Histoire de la doctrine de l'inspiration, Paris, 1883, Eng. tr., pp. 32f.
  3. Werke, Walch, 19:22.

The Holy Spirit was no fool, or drunkard, that He should speak one tittle, still less even one word, in vain;<sup>1</sup> not even a single tittle in any place in Scripture is in vain.<sup>2</sup> "On one letter, yes, one single tittle of the Scripture, more is laid than upon Heaven and earth. Therefore we cannot tolerate it that one would wish to disturb it in the slightest degree."<sup>3</sup> Even though a passage presents difficulties, and seems on the face of it to be contrary to reason, and even though Luther himself could express doubts as to "why Moses makes so many words from such trifling things",-- yet we must believe that the Holy Spirit has written it for our instruction, and that everything which was written was written for our instruction.<sup>4</sup>

It was possible for the Apostles and Prophets, as men, to sin; as, for instance, Peter at Antioch; however, their errors were corrected by the Holy Spirit.<sup>5</sup> Even when they made mistakes of grammar, they were allowed to speak

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1. Ibid., Walch, 3:2804: "Der heil. Geist ist kein Narr noch Trunkenbold, der einen Tüttel, geschweige ein Wort sollte vergeblich reden."
  2. Ibid., Walch, 11:373: "Das sei diesmal genug spaziert, auf dass man sehe, wie gar kein Tüttel in der Schrift sei vergebens geschrieben..." Cf. Ibid., Walch, 10:1229.
  3. Ibid., Walch, 8:2662: "An einem Buchstaben, ja an einem einzigen Tüttel der Schrift ist mehr und gröszer gelegen, denn an Himmel und Erde. Darum können wir es nicht leiden dass man sie auch in dem allergeringsten verrücken wolle."
  4. Werke, Walch, zu I Mos. 24:22.
  5. Ibid., Weimar, 40:1, 195f.

the truth.<sup>1</sup> While in their writings and in their lives, the saints of the church could have erred, the Scripture can never err.<sup>2</sup> When one studies the Scripture, he is to approach it as though God were therein speaking to him, through the literal meaning of the words, delivered verbally; "no plainer discourse has ever come to earth than that which God has delivered in the Scriptures. Therefore, when Moses writes that God has created heaven and earth and that which is therein, so let it remain, that it has been six days; and you must not find any glosses, that six days have been one day. If you cannot understand how it could have been six days, at least give the Holy Spirit the honour of being more learned than you."<sup>3</sup>

From these passages, then, we conclude that Luther

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1. Ibid., Weimar, 40:1, 170: "Das mus man spiritui sancto zu gut halten in Paulo, si non rhetoricam, quia loquitur ardore et qui ardet loquendo, non potest simul tenere regulas grammaticas."
  2. Ibid., Weimar, 8:485: "Die heyligen haben in yhrem schreyben irren und in yhrem leben sundigen können; die schrift kann nicht irren."  
Cf. Werke, Walch, 15:1758: "Ich verwerfe sie (die Lehre der Kirche) nicht, aber dieweil jedermann wohl weiss, dass sie geirrt haben als Menschen, will ich ihnen nicht weiter Glauben geben, denn sofern sie mir Beweisung ihres Verstandes aus der Schrift thun, die noch nicht geirrt hat. Und dass heisset auch St. Paulus I Thess. 5:21, da er sagt: Prüfet und bewährt zuvor alle Lehre; welche gut ist, die behaltet. Desselbengleichen schreibt St. Augustinus zu St. Hieronymo: Ich habe erlernet, allein den Büchern, die die heil. Schrift heissen, die Ehre zu thun, dass ich festiglich glaube, keiner derselben Beschr-eiber habe je geirrt; alle anderen aber lese ich dermassen, dass ich's nicht für wahr halte, was sie sagen, sie beweisen mir's denn mit der heil. Schrift oder öffentlicher Vernunft."
  3. Werke, Walch, 3:23.

not only held a high view of Inspiration, but that at times he was fettered by the narrowest theory of verbal inerrancy. It is difficult to see how this can be reconciled with his freer utterances; and it is our opinion that neither side of his double-view can be explained away in favour of the other. He did hold to both, going from one to the other, as occasion demanded, and becoming more conservative in his judgments with the passing of the years. While we cannot go as far as Rudelbach does,<sup>1</sup> and assert that we can impute no other but the verbal theory to Luther, yet we do grant that both aspects are here; the contradiction does exist, and there we leave it.

#### 4. Emphasis upon the external Word.

Increasingly, in determining the relation between Word and Spirit, Luther tended toward stricter conceptions. The human words are only instruments by means of which the Spirit of God inscribes the living Word upon the heart.<sup>2</sup> However, only through the preaching of the external Word, can there come any faith: solum verbum est vehiculum gratiae Dei.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, men are to hear the Word, and to think

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1. Rudelbach, A. G., Die Lehre von der Inspiration, 4tes Kap., s. 8: "Glücklicherweise liegen uns Stellen aus Luthers Schriften vor, und zwar aus den verschiedensten Perioden seines Lebens (ja gerade aus der Zeit, wo er jenes erste herbe Urtheil z.b. über Jakobs Brief fällte), die es zur Genüge erhärten, dass er nimmer von der Behauptung der wörtlichen Eingebung der heil. Schrift gewichen sei, und dass man folglich seinen Worten Gewalt anthut, wenn man ihm ein anderes Prinzip andichten will."

2. Werke, Weimar, 3:256.

3. Ibid., Weimar, 2:509; 95, 112, 453; 1:698.

solely upon it as preached; only as the Word is externally heard, can Christ be received.<sup>1</sup>

Both the inner and the outer Words are to be bound together; one is ineffective without the other. But Luther sometimes tends to give the outer Word the pre-eminence. He characterized the relationship between Spirit and Word by means of the prepositions "through" and "in"; other usages are "with and through",<sup>2</sup> "thereby and thereunder",<sup>3</sup> "in and by",<sup>4</sup> and "by and with".<sup>5</sup> The Spirit and the Word, in their working, are inseparable: "Where the Word is, there are Christ and the Spirit."<sup>6</sup> The Spirit Himself "speaks in the heart", and "imprints the Word in the heart."<sup>7</sup> However, it is important to remember that, in all this, the external Word is the basis of all the Spirit's working;<sup>8</sup> although they work together, they never become identi-

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1. Ibid., Weimar, 2:113: "Doch soll beides (innerliches und äusserliche Wort) miteinander verbunden sein: Wan aber das eusserliche recht gehet, so bleybt das innerlich nit aussen. Dan goth lest seyn worth nymer meher an frucht aus gehen." Cf. Ibid., Weimar, 2:112.
  2. Werke, Erl., 14:188; 12:300.
  3. Ibid., Erl., 11:131.
  4. Ibid., Weimar, 33:279.
  5. Ibid., Weimar, 46:57.
  6. Ibid., Weimar, 33:237, 274; Erl., 9:275, 229, 236; 11:35, 14:326.
  7. Ibid., Erl., 9:232, 274; 8:184, 286; 8:308; 11:206.
  8. Ibid., Weimar, 10:2, 23: ".....Christus, der meyster, leret ym hertzen, doch durch das eusserliche wortt seyner prediger, die es ynn die oren treyben."  
Ibid., Weimar, 33:145: "Das meint nu der Herr Christus, das wir bey dem eusserlichen und mündlichem wortt bleiben und dabey fest halten sollen."

fied.<sup>1</sup> The Spirit works when and where it will,<sup>2</sup> but it is always attached to and conditional upon the presence of the external word.<sup>3</sup>

This concept of the Word as objectively given, tended toward a mechanical view of Inspiration; a "magic" efficacy was supposed to ensue therefrom, a cause and effect, ex opere operato process was held to take place. Whether it finds faith or not, it is the Word, and as such should be preached; and when faith does occur, it is merely a witness to the Word of God. Everything else comes later, and is dependent upon, this Word.<sup>4</sup> The Word alone thus becomes the bearer of the Divine grace.<sup>5</sup> "Fides non nisi ex auditu."<sup>6</sup>

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1. Ibid., Erl., 18:38: "Neben diesem Predigamt ist Gott dabei und rühret durch das mündliche Wort heute dieses Herz, morgen das Herz. Es sind alle Prediger nicht mehr denn die Hand, die den Weg weiset. Sie thut nicht mehr, sie stehet stille und lässt folgen oder nicht dem rechten Wege... Sie sind die Leute nicht, die da sollen jemand fromm machen. Gott thut das alleine!"
  2. Ibid., Weimar, 18:139: "im selben Wort kompt der geyst und gibt den glauben wo und wilchem er will."
  3. Ibid., Weimar, 18:136; 33:189f.; 45:522: "So nu Gott seyn heyliges Euangelion hat auslassen gehen, handelt er mit uns auff zweyerley weyse. Eyn mal eusserlich, das ander mal ynnerlich....Ynnerlich handelt er mit uns durch den heyligen geyst und glauben sampt andern gaben, aber das alles der massen und der ordenung, das die eusserlichen stuck sollen und müssen vorgehen und die innerlichen hernach und durch die eusserlichen kommen, also das ers beschlossen hat, keinem menschen die ynnerlichen stuck zu geben on durch die eusserlichen stücke."
  4. Werke, Erl. 5:38: "Verbum Dei omnium primum est, quod sequitur fides, fidem caritas, caritas deinde fecit omne bonum opus." Ibid., Erl. 6:456: "Primum est verbum promissionis, deinde fides in idem." Ibid., 5:161: "Sint ergo Christianorum prima principia non nisi verba divina." Ibid., Walch, 2:591: "Proinde totum fidei tribuendum, fides autem verbo, verbum autem divinae misericordiae mittentis verbi apostolos et praedicatores."
  5. Werke, Walch, 2:509: "Si vis gratiam consequi, id age, ut verbum Dei vel audias intente vel recorderis diligenter: verbum, inquam, et solum verbum est vehiculum gratiae Dei."
  6. Ibid., Walch, 2:431; cf. 6:91; 8:594. Cf. Erl. 7:530: "Extra seu supra verbum Dei nulla fides subsistere potest."

### 5. Contradictions left to Luther's followers.

We have seen that Luther alternated between strict and freer conceptions of Inspiration and of the authority of the Word. This contradiction was left to his followers, and both schools of interpretation can, in a way, rightly claim him as spiritual father. Thus, we shall find, after Luther, in the period of Protestant scholasticism, a somewhat similar state of affairs obtaining as did in the halcyon days of mediaeval Roman Catholic scholasticism. In the one, the pure word of Scripture was subordinated in favour of a rigid ecclesiastical tradition; in the other, it took a minor place in favour of a dogmatic superstructure euphemistically called "the analogy of faith", but in reality, a set of a priori assumptions, to which the Scriptures were appended as infallible authority.

APPENDIX A.

Melanchthon's Conception of Inspiration.

Philip Melanchthon (1497-1560) was greatly influenced by his uncle, Reuchlin, in his humanistic studies. After taking the Master's degree at Tübingen in 1516, he began to study theology; under the influence of men like Reuchlin and Erasmus he became convinced that true Christianity was something different from the Scholastic theology as taught at the University. In 1519 he went to Wittenberg, where he attracted great interest and admiration; he often lectured before as many as 1500 students. He was especially esteemed by Luther, who brought him to a study of the Scriptures, particularly the epistles of Paul. Melanchthon, in his Defensio contra Johannem Eckium, Wittenberg, 1519, had already developed the principles of the authority of Scripture and its interpretation.

His Loci communes rerum theologicarum seu hypotyposes theologicae, first published in 1521, was of great importance for the confirmation and expansion of the fundamental ideas of the Reformation. Luther called this book a "liber invictus, non solum immortalitate sed et canone digna!" Up to Melanchthon's death almost eighty German and Latin editions and reprints appeared; 17 of the 1521 edition, 14 of the 1534, and 34 of the 1543 edition.<sup>1</sup> He was most influential in the sphere of historical theology, even until the seventeenth

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1. Cf. Art. "Melanchthon" in Schaff-Herzog Encyc., VII, 279-286.



century. His was the first reasoned Protestant attempt at a history of dogma; the Sententiae veterum aliquot patrum de coena domini (1530), and De ecclesia et auctoritate verbi Dei (1539) are especially noteworthy. His most important commentaries are those on Genesis, Proverbs, Daniel, Psalms, Romans, Colossians, and the Gospel of John.

In the Loci theologici, there is no locus de Scriptura; in fact, Heppe<sup>1</sup> with some justification says that "There is no trace in Melanchthon of a proper theory of Inspiration". It was not necessary for Melanchthon and his contemporaries to define Inspiration with the exactness characteristic of the dogmaticians of the 17th century; it was quite sufficient for them to assume as generally granted that the Church possessed authentic and authoritative Scriptures.<sup>2</sup> It was his view that from the beginning God had spoken to chosen men, and that finally the supreme Revelation was given through his Son. The Scripture is the historical record of this fact of revelation.<sup>3</sup> Thus the Scriptures are to be esteemed only in

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1. Heppe, H., Dogmatik des Deutschen Protestantismus im sechszehnten Jahrhundert, Gotha, 1857, Book I, p. 223: "Von einer eigentlichen Inspirationstheorie findet sich auch bei Melanchthon keine Spur."
  2. Cf. Ibid., p. 217: "Es erklärt sich somit, das sich in den Bekenntnis- und Lehrschriften jener Zeit nirgends ein Versuch einer eigentlichen Inspirationslehre vorfindet. Es wird nur einfach ausgesprochen oder als unbestritten vorausgesetzt, dass die Kirche heilige Schriften besitzt, welche auf Anregung und unter dem Beistande des h. Geistes so geschrieben sind, dass sie als untrügliche Erkenntnisquellen gelten müssen."
  3. Corpus Reformatorum, 25:531.

so far as they contain this revelation, namely, the Word of God.

He speaks often of the authority and dependability of the Scripture, but seldom of its Inspiration.. For instance, he asks:<sup>1</sup>

Locus: Quis igitur erit iudex, quando de  
Scripturae sententia dissensio oritur, cum  
tum opus sit voce dirimentis controversiam?  
Respondeo: ipsum verbum Dei est iudex.

The Word of God is understood to be that which the will of God personally authenticates. The substance of the Word of God is comprehended by the promise of grace and the forgiveness of sins, finding its highest reality in Christ. However, as his thought developed, he distinguished less and less between the Gospel as the announcement of the will of God, and right doctrine as the human knowledge of it. Therefore, he took pains to safeguard unity in doctrine by theological formulae of union, but these were made as broad as possible, and were restricted to the needs of practical religion.

"In accordance with his intellectual notion of Christianity, Melanchthon widened the idea of saving faith to cover the acceptance of all the truths of divine revelation. Not simply the Gospel of God's forgiving love in Christ is the object of the Christian's faith, but the whole Bible as interpreted by the three ecumenical creeds, and by the teaching of Luther. Accordingly, sound doctrine is made one of the notes of the true Church. The Church is composed 'of those who hold pure doctrine and agree in it' (Corp. Ref., 11:273)."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid., 21:131.

2. McGiffert, A. C., Protestant Thought Before Kant, p. 77.

In his letter of dedication to the Loci,<sup>1</sup> he expresses the wish that all Christians might freely acquaint themselves with the Holy Scriptures, for from them shines the completest manifestation of Deity.<sup>2</sup> Nothing is to be valid as an article of faith unless it can be approved by the standard of Scripture; no Spirit can be deemed prophetic which deviates from the Word.

"Scriptura....sancta, quam a patriarchis, prophetis et apostolis accepimus, quam non humana voluntate, sed (ut Petrus ait) spiritu sancto inspirante prodiderunt sancti Dei homines, quae totum hoc doctrinae genus (quod theologicum vocamus) complectitur..."<sup>3</sup>

For a time, Melanchthon held that not only grace and promise, but also the historical narratives, are to be equally considered as the Word of God; thus the conception of the Word of God and of the Scriptures seemed to be synonymous. Regarding the authority of the Bible, he protests against the abuses of the Fathers:

"Una est scriptura coelestis spiritus, pura et per omnia verax, quam canonicam vocant."<sup>4</sup>

There can be no doubt that Melanchthon shared Luther's conception of the full Inspiration of Scripture.

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1. Corp. Ref., 1:510f.; 21:82ff.

2. Cf. Ritschl, O., Dogmengeschichte der Protestantismus, I, 108: "Wenn überhaupt prophetia et afflatus quidam, cognitio sacrarum rerum vorhanden ist, so muss man, um ihrer teilhaft zu werden, das biblische Schrifttum umfassen, durch das der heilige Geist den Menschen zufließt. Denn dieser wird durch den Gebrauch der heiligen Schrift vieles lehren, was sonst auch die grösste Beflissenheit des menschlichen Geistes nicht erreichen kann."

3. Corp. Ref., 11:42.

4. Corp. Ref., 1:319.

As time went on, he spoke less frequently of Inspiration, and while he most certainly assumed it as a prime postulate, his references to it were only incidental. He says that God has revealed His being and will through the prophets, Christ, and the apostles, in the Holy Scriptures.<sup>1</sup> In one place he attributes the eloquence of the prophets directly to the Holy Spirit.<sup>2</sup> He expresses himself in a noteworthy manner with regard to Inspiration in his exposition of the Psalms:

"Audiamus Davidis conciones, tanquam vocem Dei sonantem de coelo, qua se vere et certo patefecit ecclesiae Deus... Sit ergo hoc fundamentum enarrationis, quod Psalmi vere sint doctrinae Dei, ut 2 Petri 1:21 de prophetis dicitur....Sciat lector, quid velit docere vel efficere Spiritus sanctus in singulis psalmis."<sup>3</sup>

Occasionally, he represents the Holy Spirit, or God, as speaking directly:

Corp. Ref., 6:407: "Lex scripta verbo Dei et digito, Dei nomine prohibet falsum testimonium."  
6:87: "Non soli Timotheo, sed...omnibus...mandat spiritus sanctus in concione Pauli, ut....2 Tim. 1:13f." 7:709: "Nunc vero de istis sententiis (sc. Salomonis) non aliud praeconium addam, nisi hoc, quod praecipuum est, haec oracula vocem esse spiritus sancti in ecclesia...." 8:914: "Amplissima sapientia est in hoc divino consilio, quo conjugum et conjugii leges sanxit. Quare diserte scriptum est: dixit dominus."

He avoids taking the position that the Spirit is in mere letters and syllables, but observes how much more that Spirit is present when the Word is read and meditated upon

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1. Corp. Ref., 13:213.  
2. Ibid., 24:735.  
3. Ibid., 13:1017f.

in piety and reverence.<sup>1</sup> The testimony of Prophets and Apostles is valid only in view of their being directly called to their prophetic and apostolic offices; as such, they were inerrant in their official doctrinal utterances. From 1543 on, the Loci contained this formula:

"Prophetæ in veteri Testamento nominati sunt doctores immediate vocati a Deo ad repurgandam doctrinam et præcipue ad illustrandam promissionem de Messia et ad aliqua politica consilia, et sunt ornati testimonio miraculorum, ut certum esset, doctrinam eorum divinam esse, et eos non errare in doctrina, quia Deus de ea testificabatur.... Apostoli sunt doctores in Novo Testamento immediate vocati a Christo ad docendum evangelium et ad publicam administrationem sacramentorum, non ad politica negotia, et sunt ornati testimonio spiritus sancti et miraculis, ut certum esset, doctrinam eorum divinam esse et eos non errare in doctrina, quia deus de ea testificabatur, et habent potestatem ubique docendi."<sup>2</sup>

However, it is to be noted that this inerrancy obtains only with respect to doctrine; the apostles could, and most certainly did err in the application of doctrine:

"Respondeo rotunde et breviter: apostoli non errant, scilc. in doctrina; sed errant aliquando in applicatione doctrinae. In privato usu est aliquid infirmitatis; sic in actionibus externis etiam mirabiles fuerunt apostoli." Paul and Barnabas quarrelled, "sed non fuit error doctrinae, sed fuit infirm-

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1. Corp. Ref. 11:898f: "Non hic quidem sentit (sc. Paulus) inclusum esse Spiritum sanctum in literarum figuras... Sciamus igitur, non infructuosam esse lectionem sermonis divini, sed spiritum sanctum hac ipsa voce accendere pectora, sicut et alibi inquit Paulus, ut per consolationem scripturarum spem habeamus. An literae et syllabae dolores leniant et vitam reddant, inquires? Imo vero Deus te ad haec scripta retrahit, in his voluntatem suam vult conspici, et horum cogitatione mentes movet et accendit. ....Simul enim fit mens domicilium Spiritus sancti, in qua sermo divinus habitat."
2. Corp. Ref., 21:1099f.

itas, aut quoquo modo vocandum est Petrus recte docebat et sentiebat, fuit tamen infirmitas in usu. Ita hic quoque in Petro est infirmitas. Apostoli non errant in doctrina, neque gignunt novum genus doctrinae."<sup>1</sup>

Men are to give close attention to the will of God which has been laid down in the written Scriptures; it is His desire that His Word be read and learned.<sup>2</sup> Especially should young divinity students, morning and evening, read at least a chapter of Scripture.<sup>3</sup> God has given the Church pure and certain doctrine in the Word; in fact, it was through the writing down of the Word in the form of Scriptures that the Church was gathered.<sup>4</sup>

It is significant that after the 1535 edition of the Loci, whenever Melancthon treated dogmatically of the Holy Spirit, he completely ignored the question of Inspiration. In his later dogmatic teaching he separated essential from non-essential doctrine; the doctrine given directly by God was retained, and Biblical history, non-doctrinal material, etc., was subordinated. This former is what he considered to be the substance of Scripture, and with it he identified the Word of God. Faith was defined as an assent to the total scheme of doctrine which God had given to us in Scripture.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Postill. P. II, 985, quoted by Heppe, Dogmatik, I, 222f.

2. Corp. Ref., 25:688.

3. Ibid., 24:718.

4. Ibid., 28:437; 28:376; cf. 28:411.

5. Ibid., 15:1312: "Fides est assensus, quo amplectimur totam doctrinam a Deo nobis traditam, et in hac promissionem gratiae quoque, et est fiducia, etc."

The Augsburg Confession of 1530, and the Apology, both largely the work of Melanchthon, contain not a single chapter, nor even a section, on the Scriptures. Throughout, the authority of the Bible is assumed, and an appeal is made to the Gospel as the supreme test of truth and right.<sup>1</sup> In the Preface, Sec. 8, it is stated that pastors and preachers are to preach "ex scripturis sanctis et puro verbo Dei". "This is the sum of the doctrine which is preached in our church; the same is grounded in Holy Scripture, etc."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Corp. Ref., Vol. 26.

2. Augsburg Confession, Part I, paragraph 1: "Haec fere summa est doctrinae apud nos, in qua cerni potest, nihil inesse, quod discrepet a scripturis...."

Chapter Six: ZWINGLI AND INSPIRATION.

A. Relation to Luther

Probably one of the most level-headed and clear-thinking of the great figures among the Reformers, Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) approached the Scriptures, not as Luther did, through his religious experience, but through a carefully and thoroughly prepared background of Humanistic studies. His was not the discipline of monasticism and mysticism that was Luther's, but rather the liberal, comprehensive culture of Erasmus. As did Luther, he reverently acknowledged the authority of the Word of God, always preferring the simplest and plainest sense; Zwingli never dreamed of setting human reason above the will of God, as expressed in the Scriptures. His manifold writings--although sometimes hastily conceived and executed--give abundant evidence of his sincere belief in the Scriptures as the very Word of God.<sup>1</sup>

And yet Luther himself clearly perceived that Zwingli

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1. The first edition of Zwingli's works was arranged by his son-in-law, Gaulther, in Zürich in 1544ff., 4 vols. folio, and incomplete. The definitive edition of the "Werke" was compiled by Schuler, M., and Schultess, J., 8 vols., Zürich, 1828-1842. However, the Critical Edition, and in many respects superior to Schuler and Schultess, is that of Egli, Finsler, Köhler, et al., the first volume of which appeared in 1905 as Vol. LXXXVIII of Corpus Reformatorum; Band XI (Corp. Ref. XCVIII), as yet uncompleted, is still appearing in 1937, and the whole, when finished, will be, without question, the outstanding edition of Zwingli's works. Note: References to the Schuler & Schultess ed. will be indicated as "SS", and to Egli, Finsler, and Köhler as "EFK".



was of "a different spirit"<sup>1</sup> as he told him at Marburg, after the abortive Colloquy of 1529. Although Zwingli, with tears in his eyes, pleadingly put forth the hand of Christian fellowship, the arrogant Luther rudely brushed it aside. Luther could not meet an antagonist fairly, much less estimate him correctly, often refusing to read his writings; he reached truth by intuition, and what he clasped he held to with immovable steadfastness. Undoubtedly Luther was great-hearted; his profound emotional nature conditioned his enthusiasm for those doctrines which he approved, but he was also a hearty despiser of the doctrines and men with whom he disagreed.

Zwingli's thinking, on the other hand, was more clean-cut, calm, and clear. He sought to inform himself with amazing accuracy upon all subjects which he discussed; hence his spirit is one of greater freedom and comprehensiveness. He stood in the line of the best Humanistic tradition.<sup>2</sup>

His theological position was parallel, or complementary to, rather than derivative from, that of Luther. The funda-

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1. "Ihr habt einen anderen Geist als wir". Cf. Köhler, W., Die Geisteswelt Ulrich Zwinglis, Gotha, 1920, p. 148.

2. Cf. Schaff, P., History of the Church: German Reformation, Vol. I, p. 32, Edinburgh, 1888.

mental positions of his 67 Articles<sup>1</sup> are quite similar to those of Luther. For example: the Gospel does not need the corroboration of the Church;<sup>2</sup> it carries its divine proof within itself;<sup>3</sup> and its content is Christ, the sole Way of salvation,<sup>4</sup> etc. In the exposition of his Zürich Articles, Zwingli rightly claimed to be independent of and antecedent to Luther.<sup>5</sup>

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1. 67 Thesen (Schlussreden) zur ersten Züricher Disputation, Jan. 1523, Werke, SS, 1:153-157.

These are the most important of Zwingli's writings:

Von erkiesen und fryheit der spysen, 1522.

Von der Klarheit und Gewüsse des Wortes Gottes, 1522.

Archeteles, 1522.

67 Thesen; vide supra.

Usslegen und Grund der Schlussreden, 1523.

Ein kurze christenliche Ynleitung nach der zweiten Züricher Disputation, 1523.

Von göttlich. und mensch. Gerechtigkeit, Vol. I, 1523.

De vera et falsa religione commentarius, 1525.

Amica exegesis, i.e. expositio eucharistiae negotii ad M. Lutherum, 1527.

Fidei ratio ad Carolum imperatorem, 1530.

Ad....Cattorum principem Philippum sermonis de providentia dei anamnema, 1530.

Christianae fidei expositio, 1531.

2. These I., Werke, SS, 1:153.

3. Ibid., Werke, SS, 1:176.

4. Thesen II-V, etc.

5. Werke, SS, 1:253, Auslegen zu These 18: "Ich habe vor und ee dhein mensch in unserer gegne ützt von des Luterts namen gewüsst hab, angehebt das evangelion Christi ze predgen im jar 1516..." Cf. Corpus Ref. 89:144, 32ff.

Cf. Werke, SS, 3:543, Amica exegesis: "...evangelii rationem si abs te didicissem, cur non fraterer?...fuerunt multi atque excellentes viri, qui antequam Lutheri nomen esset tam celebre, viderunt, unde penderet religio, longe aliis praeceptoribus, quam tu putes, docti. Nam de me ipso coram deo testor, evangelii vim atque summam cum Joannis Augustinique tractatum lectione didici, tum diligenti graecarum Pauli epistolarum, quas hisce manibus ante undecim annos (1516) exscripsi, cum tu annis jam octo regnes."

"Zwingli was no mere echo of Luther from the mountains of Switzerland, but...he evolved a type of reformation, pursuing a parallel path, which was determined largely before ever the news of Luther's heroic stand at Wittenberg gave it the momentum which carried it to victory. What Zwingli contributed to it was the Humanist training and the Humanist outlook. Nor did he ever forget them. One of the things which made Luther doubtful if Zwingli were a fellow-worker, or, indeed a fellow-Christian was his continued regard for the heroes of classical antiquity, whom, in his very last writing, the Fidei Expositio (1531) addressed to Francis I., he placed along with the Old Testament worthies and the saints and fathers of the Church in the heaven he hoped to reach."<sup>1</sup>

#### B. Humanistic Background.

Zwingli was strongly affected by Humanistic influences, the outstanding representatives of which, in his case, were Pico della Mirandola, his Basel teacher Wyttenbach, and above all, Erasmus. From Wyttenbach he learned to abhor the gross superstitions and abuses of the Roman Church; and there was implanted in him the conviction of the supreme authority of Scripture, the recognition of Christ's death upon the Cross as the sole ground of remission of sins, and an acceptance of faith as the key that unlocks the Divine treasury.<sup>2</sup> As early as 1513 he set himself to the mastery of Greek in order that he might read the New Testament in the original.<sup>3</sup> Already in his Einsiedeln period he had interested himself in the problem of Church reform along the lines which Erasmus had

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1. Watt, Hugh, art. "Zwingli", in Encyc. Relig. and Ethics, Vol. 12, p. 876.

2. Lindsay, T. M., History of the Reformation, Vol. 2, p. 27, 2nd ed., Edinburgh, 1907.

3. Werke, SS, 1:254.

suggested; and too, he spoke of the "Gospel" in the Erasmian sense.<sup>1</sup>

When he came to Zürich in 1518 he found a city which, with its democratic constitution, was most congenial to his humanistic moral and religious outlook; here he became the centre of an admiring circle of young men of liberal views. While still a loyal son of the Church, he was keenly critical, fully alive to her grievous departure from what he conceived to be the New Testament faith. As the people's priest in the great Münster at Zürich, in 1518 he began the systematic exposition of Scripture, beginning with the Gospel according to Matthew, which, because of its ethical emphasis and the Sermon on the Mount, was the favourite of the Humanists. As his convictions began to be strengthened, he simplified the liturgy, and in 1522 opposed the law of Lenten fasts, publishing his first tract, "Von Erkiesen und Freiheit der Speisen" ("Concerning Selection and Liberty in Foods"). By 1525 he had preached through the whole of the New Testament.

In Zwingli's experience, there never was a decisive, catastrophic event which determined his future course, as was true with Calvin and Luther, who, from internal tensions, suddenly experienced a glorious sense of release into the consciousness of reconciliation. As a matter of fact, although he was outwardly a member of the Roman Catholic Church, he

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1. Cf. Burckhardt, P., Huldreich Zwingli, eine Darstellung seiner Persönlichkeit und seines Lebenswerkes, Zürich, 1918, p. 20.

really never partook of its inner spirit, and certainly never believed in transubstantiation. His devout studies, which brought him more and more deeply into the Scriptures, served as a morally purifying influence; thus he regarded sin as not a particular offence against an outward commandment, but rather the lack of fear before, and love to, God. His zeal for God's "honour" was a passion that was all-encompassing; he reached it through the gradual approach to the Scriptures which his Humanistic training provided.<sup>1</sup>

He was profoundly influenced by Plato and Aristotle, as he himself acknowledges.<sup>2</sup> In his unobtrusive, pious pre-occupation with the classics, he learned to search for truth with zeal and patience; hence his favourable judgments upon the great men of antiquity whom he felt were so often misunderstood.<sup>3</sup> However, all his interest was directed toward the relating of the fruit of his studies to Christ.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Dorner, History of Protestant Theology, I, 290-291.

2. Werke, SS, 5:483; 2:1, 208.

3. Ibid., SS, 8:179, 184.

4. Cf. Baur, Aug., Zwingli's Theologie, ihr Werden und ihr System, Halle, 1885-89, Bd. I., p. 36: "Neben Platon zeigt Zwingli aber auch deutlich den Einfluss des Aristoteles. In dieser unausgesetzten, pietätvollen Beschäftigung mit den Klassikern lernte Zwingli überhaupt, die Wahrheit und die Tugend, die bei ihnen zu finden ist, .....Aber alle diese Begeisterung für das klassische Altertum.....findet ihr Mass.....alles zu beziehen auf Christus, oder, .....auf Gott."

### C. Free view of Inspiration.

#### 1. The possibility of inspired writings outside the Bible.

Zwingli felt that the Spirit of God, in addition to working within the Biblical sphere, has likewise inspired the writings of certain men outside the Biblical tradition and revelation;<sup>1</sup> Plato, Cato, Seneca, and others, appear as "organs" of God. In his proof of the providence of God in the Anamnema, he depicts Seneca, Plato, and Pythagoras as divina oracula.<sup>2</sup>

His admiration of Pindar, for instance, was unbounded.<sup>3</sup> In a preface which he contributed to an edition of Pindar edited by Ceperinus, Zwingli argues that since God did not alone create Palestine, religion has not been confined within the boundaries of that land. God's Spirit shows its animating and enlightening power everywhere; everything that is true, genuine, and holy, is Divine, for God is the source of all truth, and truth is one. Even that which is borrowed from the ancients can be called Divine, in so far as it is holy and

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1. Werke, SS, 3:158, de vera et falsa relig.: "Quamvis parcius et obscurius." Cf. Ibid., SS, 4:89, Anamnema, 3: "attendentes veritatem, ubicunque et per quemcunque adferatur, a spiritu sancto esse."
  2. Werke, SS, 4:86, Anamnema, 2; cf. Ibid., SS, 3:228; 2:505; 4:90; 6:241; 4:93ff.
  3. Ibid., SS, 4:151: ".....kein griechischer Schriftsteller zum Verständniss der heiligen Schrift so trefflich diene, wie dieser Mann mit dem reinen, unverdorbenen, für das Wahre, Heilige und Gute begeisterten Herzen, besonders wenn man wünscht, in das Verständniss der so geheimnissvollen Gesänge und Hymnen der Hebräer, wie der Psalmen, der Lieder Hiobs tiefer einzudringen."

tends to piety. No matter through what channels this truth comes, it originally issues from God. If we find anything in Plato or Pythagoras which edifies us, and which we recognize to be undeniably true, we ought not to despise it merely because a mortal has written it. Wherever this type of faith, which some of the noblest of the ancients possessed, manifests itself, we can be sure that it is from God, even though a man dwell among the beasts. Zwingli quotes the words of Seneca and of Plato because he is convinced they come from the one source of Divine truth. "For we who regard not who writes, but what is written, willingly accept truth, even from the hands of the heathens, knowing that all truth is of God, by whomsoever it be revealed." "When Cicero asserts in his speech for the poet Archias, that man does all from the desire of glory, he so closely agrees with the statement of Paul, 'I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing' Rom. 7:18, that his assertion appears rather the result of divine inspiration, than the reflection of the ambitious and vain-glorious Cicero."<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Freedom of interpretation; "testimony of the spirit."

Whereas Luther had exalted the outward Word as a vehicle of grace, Zwingli hesitated thus to accord it a place of such high authority; he felt that it was an irreverent deification of the created thing. So, according to him, the external Word is but a sign, not a vehicle, of grace. While

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1. Werke, SS, 4:151ff.

the subject-matter may be the same, the connection between the outward and inward is conceived more loosely.

Zwingli makes the distinction between the "Word of the letter" and the "Word of the Spirit". He recognized the possibility of manifold interpretations of identical passages; when that is the case, then the interpreters are not following the same sense: one does not have the "inner Word". And that inner Word alone is the food of the soul. Those who engage in useless strife over the meaning of passages are not being led by the Spirit; by Him alone must Scripture always be interpreted. This authoritative principle is not written upon the stars in letters of gold, but works in us in<sup>a</sup> reciprocal, objective-subjective fashion. To those who are born of the Spirit, the Word of God is crystal-clear and bears its own authentication. In the believing soul the "subjective" and "objective" aspects are united.<sup>1</sup> Faith cannot be drawn solely from the Scriptures; the Spirit coming down from Heaven must shine through its pages.<sup>2</sup>

The Spirit is God's breath, and in partaking of this Divine energy as it is mediated to us through the Scriptures, we find Life; for that is indeed the true Life by which all

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1. Werke, EFK, 8:317; 3:872, 724; 2:448; 1:487, 564; 3:206, 309, 122; 2:750, 51, 75, 385; 3:843, 870, 280; 1:340, 321; 2:211, 50.
  2. Ibid., EFK, 8:194: "Den Glauben darf man nicht aus der Schrift schöpfen, sondern aus dem vom Himmel her einströmenden Geiste."



things live and are sustained.<sup>1</sup> He that is spiritual interprets all of God's revelation in a "spiritual" sense; else it is not understandable and often appears as mere folly.<sup>2</sup> As Zwingli says, "The Scriptures can be compared together not only by those whose concern you (the Bishop of Constance) say it is, but also by those who trust in God and in His Word and who are pining in longing for Him. For it can happen that if the bishops betake themselves to the study of the Scriptures in their usual manner, without regarding the general and common consent, they may prove to be all or in great part unversed in the sacred writings."<sup>3</sup>

Thus, only through the inflowing of Divine grace into the hearts of the hearers of the Word, can there be any actual receiving of that Word.<sup>4</sup> Understanding comes when we allow the Spirit of God to be our ruler and guide.<sup>5</sup> In his

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1. Werke, EFK, 1:348: "Der heil. Geist wird darum in der Schrift ein Atem und dergleichen genannt, dass, wie wir mit Ansichnehmen der Luft leben, also der Geist Gottes das wahre Leben ist, in dem alle Dinge leben und von ihm das Leben haben."
  2. Ibid., EFK, 1:340; cf. 1:321.
  3. Ibid., EFK, 1:321, Archeteles: "Scripturam non modo ii, quorum interesse dicitis, conferre possunt; sed et ii, qui deo eiusque ori fidunt, qui eius desiderio marcent. Fieri enim potest, ut, si solito more episcopi se ad scripturae cognitionem ingerant non communi generalique omnium consensu omnes sint aut magna parte sacrarum literarum rudes."
  4. Ibid., EFK, 1:487, Handlung der Versammlung in Zürich, 1523: "Sölichs so nun durch die gnad und insprechung gottes heiligen geistes ettlich frumme hertzen understond ze predigen und dem volck fürhalten, thut man..." Cf. 1:564.
  5. Ibid., EFK, 2:51, Auslegung des 5. Artikels, 1523: "Dahin kumpt man, wenn man den geist gottes nit wil lassen einen herren und zeiger sin sines Wortes, und des verstand nit by im sucht..." Cf. 2:750, 75, 385.

treatise on the clarity and certainty of God's Word, Zwingli advises:

"Take some good strong wine; he who is in good health enjoys it, for it makes him cheerful, strengthens him and warms his blood; but he who is suffering from pestilence or from fever may not even taste it, and still less drink it; and he wonders how people in health can drink it. But that is not on account of the wine, but on account of his disease. In the same manner the Word of God is perfect in itself, and revealed for the welfare of man; but he who neither loves it nor understands it, nor will receive it is sick. Thus much in reply to those who daringly assert that God does not mean His Word to be understood, as if He desired to exclude us from its light."<sup>1</sup>

The mere proclamation of the Word does not automatically work faith, for there are obviously many who hear the gracious message of the Gospel, and yet do not believe it. Indeed the greater part of those who heard Christ Himself in the days of His flesh remained without faith; and many of those who can speak glibly of Christ from the Scriptures do not trust Him. So, Zwingli concludes that faith cannot spring from anything but the illuminating and drawing power of the Spirit of God.<sup>2</sup> When necessary, Scripture is to be inter-

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1. Werke, SS, 1:68, Von Klarheit und Gewüsse des Wortes Gottes. Cf. Ibid., 1:81.

2. Ibid., SS, 3:1, 131f., De vera et falsa relig.: "Quod auditur, non est ipsum verbum quod credimus.....Manifestum fit, quod eo verbo, quod coelestis pater in cordibus nostris praedicat, quo simul illuminat, ut intelligamus, et trahit, ut sequamur, fideles reddimur. Qui illo verbo imbuti sunt, verbum, quod in concione personat et aures percellit, judicant; sed interim verbum fidei, quod in mentibus fidelium sedet, a nemine judicatur, sed ab ipso judicatur exterius verbum."

preted figuratively; for only then can we know the thoughts of Inspiration, and not rashly substitute our own for those of Scripture. Zwingli does not hold this view in a boastful spirit, as if in his interpretation he had completely opened up the sense, but he found that his predecessors had been more successful when they had these resources at hand.

"Almost every error comes from the literalists, who wrest the letter in a manner contrary to the true sense. The letter is for the sake of the sense, and is designed to serve it, not the sense the letter; and the letter must be explained according to the spirit and the true sense, else the former were nothing but a deception and a delusion. For there is not a word, the very plainest and simplest word that can be spoken on earth, which if one is bent upon chicanery and deception, may not be wrested from its true sense and falsified.

"Christ commands: 'If thy foot offend thee, cut it off.' If we were to estimate the sense of these words according to the literal standard, it would be requisite to take from man not only one foot but every foot he had, even although he has as many as the centipedes or sea-urchins.... The clear sense must determine the less clear sense, not the words the sense. The words of Christ are spirit, not letter; therefore one ought not in a stubborn and violent spirit to hang on the letter alone, but to take the letter according to the spirit."<sup>1</sup>

Zwingli assures us that he has the highest view of the binding authority of the truth contained in the Scriptures: "The Word of the Lord abideth forever. The whole mass of the world and the infinite throng of all creatures cannot remit or change a single tittle of the words of the Lord." However, he immediately goes on to say that "Each one may invert or remove a tittle; but nothing which is signified by the tittle, nothing which we understand by the words of the Lord, will

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1. Werke, SS, 1:52ff., Von der Klarheit und Gew. d. W. G.

fail to come to pass."<sup>1</sup> In his Zürich Articles he describes the Word of God as that which "our Lord Jesus Christ, the very Son of God, has revealed to us as the will of the Heavenly Father, and which with His innocence, has redeemed us from death."<sup>2</sup>

"He who is in covenant with God understands all things, whether they are a part of the divine testimony or not. Here must the inner man take cognizance of and judge the outer Word, whether it is consistent with divine truth or not. And the outer Word, although preserved by many thousands, must not compel the believer to receive it....In short, the outer Word must be judged by the inner, which God has written on the heart."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Werke, EFK, 3:671ff., De vera et falsa relig.

2. Ibid., SS, 1:169f.

3. Ibid., SS, 2:1, 16f.; Cf. note 2, p. 198.

Cf. Baur, Aug., Zwinglis Theologie, Bd. I, p. 164:

"Denn nicht nur das Wort Gottes als objectiv in der heil. Schrift gegeben, kommt von Gott, sondern auch dieses Verständniss des göttlichen Wortes selber und ist demgemäss, als von Gott gekommen, welcher selber in das Verständniss des göttlichen einführt, selbst Gottes Wort, eine Offenbarung Gottes an den Menschen, welche ihm eben die Erkenntnis dessen erschliesst, dass und wiefern die Offenbarung Gottes in der heil. Schrift das subjective, dem Menschen von der Schöpfung an angeborene Bedürfniss nach Seligkeit befriedigt. Das Wort Gottes erhält darum bei Zwingli einen über die h. Schrift dem Umfang nach hinausgehenden Sinn, sofern auch die innere Gemütsbewegung, in welcher das Verständniss der h. Schrift dem Menschen sich erschliesst, einer Offenbarung Gottes zugeschrieben wird. Doch hat diese innere Offenbarung, wie Zwingli an sich selbst erlebt zu haben bekennt, darin ihre bestimmte, alle subjective Willkür ausschliessende Schränke, dass diese innere von Gott ausgehende Bewegung, welche zum Verständniss der Schrift führt, ihr Ziel im beseligenden Verständniss der selber hat."

As we have seen, Zwingli was indeed a man of the Scriptures: all was to be tested by them; yet he was in no wise bound by the letter. His position is far more consistent than that of Luther; certainly he never went the lengths to which the Wittenberg Reformer did with respect to critical judgments upon the Canon. Zwingli accepted the Roman Catholic canon with the exception of the Apocrypha and the Apocalypse. With regard to the latter, he could not look upon it as an apostolic work, and hence he never used it for doctrinal purposes; he missed in it both the style and genius of John.<sup>1</sup>

Scripture is ever to be tested by the standard of religious truth; wherever that truth manifests itself--that is, where it gives evidence that God has spoken His Word without admixture--there is Holy Scripture to be found.<sup>2</sup> Zwingli did not consider all the writers in the Canon to be infallible concerning historical matters; but this is, in his view, unimportant. We should study not the particular case, but rather the eternal truth embodied in what often are only incidental circumstances.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, there is to be recognized a difference in value between the Old and the New Testaments, as well as between the various books. The New is superior to the Old,<sup>4</sup>

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1. Werke, SS, 2:1, 169: "Us Apocalypsi nehmend wir kein Kund-  
schaft an, denn es nit ein biblisch Buch ist."
  2. Ibid., SS, 2:2, 20: "Die gottesgeistliche" are the only  
writings which can be thought of as Scripture.
  3. Ibid., SS, 7:316; 3:367; cf. Spörri, Zwingli-Studien,  
Zürich, 1886.
  4. Werke, SS, 1:28.

for the Old has only a passing significance, while the New is eternally valid;<sup>1</sup> thus we find Zwingli making few citations from the Old Testament, and when he does so it is only when he can substantiate his line of proof by abundant New Testament texts.<sup>2</sup> In the New Testament he makes a distinction of worth by placing the direct teachings of Christ before the Apostolic message;<sup>3</sup> the Book of Acts was next in worth, and then followed the Pauline Epistles. From the very beginning, on through his entire evangelical career, Zwingli rigidly observed these distinctions. From a consideration of this rather free handling and conception of the Scriptures, we pass on to a treatment of his stricter views regarding the Holy Writ.

D. Assertion of the full authority and  
Inspiration of the Scriptures.

As early as 1516, when he entered Einsiedeln, Zwingli was disposed to give little worth to any ultimate authority except that of the Scriptures; he then made the prediction that the time would come, God willing, when neither the Church Fathers nor any other human authority would have

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1. Werke, SS, 1:6, 11, 26, 28.  
2. Ibid., SS, 1:12.  
3. Ibid., SS, 1:23.

validity, but only the Word of God.<sup>1</sup> Swiss Catholicism, as well as Western Catholicism in general, had become definitely anti-Biblical; the study of the Scriptures, by both people and clergy, had long been neglected. Bullinger, in his Reformationsgeschichte, wrote of the clergy, prior to 1519: "At one time during these years when all the deacons of the Confederation were assembled, there were not found over three who were well read in the Bible....For among the clergy there was almost no studying."<sup>2</sup> He readily admits that he had been too much preoccupied with the study of philosophy and human opinions; their imperfections were too patent, however, in the light of the Scriptures. Hence he came to the conviction that all must rest solely upon the pure Word; and when he prayed to God for guidance the Divine light flooded in, and he was enabled to grasp infinitely more in this fashion than through the comments of many expositors.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Werke, SS, 1:253: "...es komme, ob Gott will, bald dazu, dass weder Hieronymus noch ein anderer viel bei den Christen, sondern die heilige Schrift allein gelten werde."
  2. Bullinger, Heinrich, Reformationsgeschichte, ed. Hottinger and Voegli, Frauenfeld, 1838-40, 40:1, 3.
  3. Werke, SS, 1:79: "Ich hab wohl als viel zugenommen in meinen jungen Tagen in menschlicher Lehre, als etliche meines Alters, und als ich jetzt sieben oder acht Jahre vergangen mich anhub, ganz an die heilige Schrift zu lassen, wollt mir die Philosophie und Theologie der Zänker immerdar einwerfen. Da kam ich zum letzten dahin, dass ich gedacht: du muss das alles lassen liegen und die Meinung Gottes lauter aus seinem eigenen einfältigen Wort lernen. Da hub ich an Gott zu bitten um sein Licht und fieng mir an die Schrift viel leichter werden, wie ich sie bloss las, denn hätte ich viel Comment und Ausleger gelesen.". Cf. SS, 2:1, 18ff.

Myconius, in his Life of Zwingli, tells us that "he felt about the orthodox writers (the Fathers?) as they felt about themselves, that they should be read with discrimination, and tested by the canonical Scriptures as by a touchstone: for they were, generally speaking, too much adulterated by philosophy and human reasoning to make it right to grant them the authority of Scripture, as had been done hitherto, nevertheless."<sup>1</sup> Hence the Scriptures were assigned a unique position; they come from God, and not from man. No word of man can command such faith; God's Word cannot fail, it is bright, it teaches itself, discloses itself, and illumines the soul with salvation and grace.<sup>2</sup> In God the Scripture lives, to Him it looks and despairs of any comfort from any creature, for God alone is its comfort and confidence; without Him it has no rest.<sup>3</sup>

Zwingli asserts with uncompromising clarity that all preaching is to be based upon the Word of God; this is a

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1. Myconius, Life of Zwingli, Neander's ed. Vitae quatuor Reformatorum, Berlin, 1841, revised by Preble.
  2. Werke, SS, 1:81, Von der Klarheit und Gew. d. Wortes Gottes: "...die Schrift und gottliche Wahrheit sollen sie nicht urteilen, sondern Gott damit walten lassen, dann man die allein aus Gott lernt....Die Schrift von der wir reden, ist von Gott eingehaucht und gesprochen. Er gibt auch zu, dass der schlechteste möge zu der Schrift reden, wenn die vorsitzenden Propheten (das ist lehrenden) die Wahrheit nicht getroffen haben...Endlich ist das unsre Meinung, dass das Wort Gottes von uns soll in höchsten Ehren gehalten werden (Wort Gottes verstand allein, das vom Geist Gottes kommt) und keinem Wort solcher Glaub gegeben als dem. Denn das ist gewiss, kann nicht fehlen, es ist heiter, lässt nicht in der Finsterniss irren, es lehrt sich selber, thut sich selber auf und bescheint die menschliche Seel mit allem Heil und Gnaden."
  3. Ibid., SS, 2:2, 20.



fundamental postulate.<sup>1</sup> While the Scripture is to be understood only through faith, yet faith itself must be certified by the Scripture.<sup>2</sup> At the first Zürich Disputation in January 1523, Faber, the representative of the Bishop of Constance, asked that the Disputation should be delayed until a General Council should meet; however Zwingli replied that competent scholars who were good Christians were as able as a Council to decide upon the meaning of Holy Scripture. He asserted that the charges of heresy against himself were unfounded, and that he had unceasingly preached only the true Word of God, the holy Gospel, the joyful good news of Christ, which has been mediated through the Scriptures.<sup>3</sup> He prefaced his 67 Theses by saying that "the articles and opinions below, I, Ulrich Zwingli, confess to have preached in the worthy city of Zürich as based upon the Scriptures which are called inspired of God, and I offer to protect and conquer with the said articles, and where I have not now correctly understood said Scriptures I shall allow myself to be taught better, but only from said Scriptures."<sup>4</sup> The Disputation

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1. Werke, EFK, 1:338: "...die folgenden predge gepredget als ein fundament, daruff alles gbüw sol gebuwen werden, das ist uff das Wort Gottes." Cf. 1:53, 271, 315, 383.
  2. Ibid., SS, 2:3.
  3. Ibid., EFK, 1:487: "Und wiewohl ich weiss mich nüts in diser statt Zürich gepredigt haben nun schirr funff jar, denn das wahrhaftig, luter und heyter gotteswort, das heylig euangelion, die frölich bottschafft Christi, die götlich geschrifft, nit durch menschen, sunder durch den heligen geist gerett und ussgesprochen..." Cf. 1:343, 559, 578.
  4. Ibid., SS, 1:153ff.

issued in a triumph for Zwingli, for the Great Council decided that the charges of heresy had no basis, and decreed that he could continue to proceed as before, and that all pastors were "not to preach anything which they could not establish by the Holy Gospel, and the pure, Divine Scriptures".

His zeal for the Scriptures is indicated by the fact that whereas Luther's New Testament translation finished in 1522 was published in Zürich in 1524, and followed by the historical books of the Old Testament, Zwingli could not wait for Luther's translation of the Prophets, but began an independent translation, and finished it in 1529. So, as a matter of fact, Switzerland had a complete German Bible of 6 volumes in 1529 (one volume in 1530), several years before Germany did, thanks to the diligence of Zwingli.

The Word of God is living, powerful, and all must be obedient to its commands;<sup>1</sup> through the application of its precepts the world will be bettered.<sup>2</sup> Faith can then be defined as a complete surrender to God and to His Word.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, Zwingli seems even to think that it is one of the tests of being a Christian, that of believing in the authority of the Scriptures: "No Christian can deny these above arguments, unless he defends himself by denying the Scriptures:

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1. Werke, EFK, 1:357: "...dass wort gottes so lebendig, so krefftig und starck ist, dass im müssend alle ding gehorsam sin und das so dick und zu welicher zyt er wil."
  2. Ibid, EFK, 1:393: "Gott wil die bösen welt besseren durch sin eigen Wort, als er zu allen zyten ye unnd ye thon hat."
  3. Ibid., SS, 1:7; cf. 3:170: fides, qua homo credat omnem vocem a deo prolatam veram esse.

He is then, however, no Christian, because he does not believe Christian doctrine."<sup>1</sup> In His Archeteles, and reply to the Bishop of Constance's admonition, he asserts: "...if you grant this, it were surely unfair to want everybody to yield to you unless you shall have first learned to yield to the Scriptures, and so the thing comes back to the Scriptures for decision, and if any one handles them properly he does not have to yield..."<sup>2</sup>

It is interesting to note here, somewhat parenthetically, the difference in Zwingli's and Luther's handling of the Scripture. Luther would hold to any existing doctrine or usage which he did not find forbidden in Scripture; Zwingli, on the other hand, demanded specific Biblical warrant for whatever he was willing to accept. However, if Zwingli was more exacting with respect to testing all matters of faith by the touchstone of Holy Writ, yet he was at the same time much wider in what his view of Scripture was. If Luther was Pauline, Zwingli was Biblical.

When we take the Scriptures as our guide and master we have an authoritative criterion by which all truth can be tested. We are not dependent upon the doctors of the Church, nor upon any other human counsel; while it is true that we

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1. Werke, SS, 1:29.

2. Ibid., EFK, 1:314: Quod si admittitis, iniquium profecto fuerit, cupere ut omnes simul vobis cedant, nisi vos scripturae prius cedere didiceritis; sicque iterum res ad scripturae iudicium redit, quam si quis digne tractaverit, credere non debet.

are dependent upon the Spirit for a correct interpretation of the Bible, yet the Bible is the authority and occupies an objective position.<sup>1</sup> The believer will wield wisely this sword of the Spirit,<sup>2</sup> in the conviction that it is the very Word of God.<sup>3</sup> "To this treasure, namely, the certainty of God's Word, must our hearts be guided."<sup>4</sup> Zwingli also refers to the Scriptures as "those two swords, the Old and the New Testaments."<sup>5</sup>

All that has been hitherto devised by man is illusory and feeble unless it be according to the rule of the Divine will and Scriptures.<sup>6</sup> "Those who model their teachings upon

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1. Werke, EFK, 262, 263, Archeteles: "Scripturam sacram ducem ac magistram esse oportet, si quis recte usus sit, impunem esse oportet, etiamsi doctorculis istis maxime displiceat. Alioqui tristia nimis aliquando nobis evenient: sacrarum enim literarum eruditio non solum in labiis hodie sacerdotum habentur, sed in universae tantum non plebis." Cf. Köhler, W., Die Geisteswelt Ulrich Zwinglis, Gotha, 1920, p. 67: "Zwingli musste ein objektives Kriterium bringen; die h. Schrift wurde es. Nicht als wenn sie jetzt erst göttliche Autorität für Zwingli gewonnen hätte, die eignete ihr von Anfang an, schon dank der überkommenen Lehrüberlieferung, und war durch Luthers Reformation mächtig gesteigert worden, aber sie wurde jetzt ausschliessliches Wahrheitsprinzip, die freie Konkurrenz mit dem Geiste, unsorglich, ungebunden, hörte auf, die Schrift rückte vor dem Geist und wurde letztlich die Autorität, neben der der frei wirkende Geist zwar nicht getilgt wurde..."
  2. Werke, EFK, 1:198; cf. 2:63, 102, 134, 449, 603.
  3. Ibid., EFK, 1:222.
  4. Ibid., EFK, 1:261: "Ad hunc thesaurum, puta ad certitudinem verbi dei, dirigendum est cor nostrum..."
  5. Ibid., EFK, 1:275.
  6. Ibid., EFK, 1:299, Archeteles, 1522: "Hoc tamen interim obsecro consideretis, nempe quam fallacia sint et imbecilla, quae ab homine quantumvis sapiente excogitantur non ad normam divinae voluntatis aut scripturae..."

the pattern of the Scriptures cannot be said to teach according to the whims of their own feelings, but those who go to work without resting on the authority of the sacred writings, contrary to Paul's directions to Timothy (quotes II Tim. 3:16)"<sup>1</sup> The Scripture is the true, unconquerable Word of God;<sup>2</sup> it is the source of all truth,<sup>3</sup> and in spite of the calumnies of its enemies, it will be vindicated.<sup>4</sup>

Believers will not allow themselves to be misled by promises of a false security which any purely human authority might offer; indeed, they will cling to the Word of God as a shipwrecked man clings to the floating beam, for what else can give as much comfort to the soul as the Scriptures?<sup>5</sup> The impulses to and maintenance of piety and holiness are provided by the nourishing, quickening, and strengthening effects of the Word.<sup>6</sup> To be sure, God teaches inwardly, giving depth of understanding and penetration of insight; but along with this we must ever have the written and oral Word at hand as a positive basis of faith.<sup>7</sup>

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1. Werke, EFK, 1:311.

2. Ibid., EFK, 8:286, An die Drei Bünde von Rhätien, 1525.

3. Ibid., EFK, 4:78, Antwort an Valentin Compar, 1525: "Wenn sy nun schrybend, und das gottes wort dem unbetrognen glouben, den gott in uns pflantz, gleichförmig ist, so halt ich mich billich gottes wort, und lasz demselben den bryss, das es der wahrheit grundveste sye."

4. Ibid., EFK, 8:167, Letter to Vadian, 1524.

5. Ibid., SS, 3:1ff, De Vera et Falsa Relig. Comm., ad Isa. 40:8 and Luke 16:17: "...die Gläubigen fassen das Wort Gottes um, wie Schiffbrüchige ihre Bretter. Denn was gibt es, wodurch das Gewissen sich trösten könnte, ausser allein das Wort Gottes."

6. Ibid., SS., 3:1ff., ad Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:4.

7. Ibid., SS, 2:2, 509f., Disputation zu Baden, 1524: "Ich darf das eigentlich mit Gott allen Gläubigen verheissen.....Denn Gott ists, der inwendig lehret; wenn nun der Rechtgläubig mit dem rechten Erdreich, das ist Herzen, da ist zu hören, wird ihm Gott auch rechten Verstand geben....Damit soll man Gottes Wort schriftlich und mündlich hand-haben."

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Peace and satisfaction such as this world cannot give, is offered as an actual possibility to him who, in faith, will accept the gracious promises offered in the Bible.<sup>1</sup> The Word, therefore, is complete, and nothing is to be added to it or taken from it.<sup>2</sup> The sacred writings are a "sacred anchor", whereby the believer may find sure mooring in the storms of life.<sup>3</sup>

Thus we see that throughout his career Zwingli never ceased to assert the full authority of the Scriptures as being the Word of God; he did so in 1522 and 1523 in his dispute with the Bishop of Constance;<sup>4</sup> at his insistence the Disputation at Bern was based upon the sole validity of the Scripture as a court from which there was no appeal;<sup>5</sup> and in his Fidei Ratio,

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1. Werke, EFK, 3:35, Der Hirt, 1524: "Wer fryden wölle han, der neme von stund an das wort gottes an, das sich zu diser zyt hält uffthut, oder aber er wirt frydens nimmer niessen."
  2. Ibid., EFK, 3:671, De Vera et Falsa Relig. Comm., 1525.
  3. Ibid., EFK, 1:259, Archeteles, 1522: "...sacram ancoram sacras literas."
  4. Ibid., EFK, 1:259.
  5. Ibid., SS, 2:1, 70f., Disputation zu Bern, 1528: "...auf diesem Gespräch keine andere Schrift gelten, angezogen und gebraucht werden soll, als die biblische des A. und N. Testaments, so Gottes Wort ist; sie soll auch nicht mit der Lehrer Verstand und Auslegung erläutert werden, sondern biblische mit biblischer Schrift erklärt und verglichen und die dunkle mit der heiteren erleuchtet werden. Die Schrift, so die Richtschnur, Grundfeste und einziger Richter des wahren christlichen Glaubens ist, soll sich selbst urteilen, Menschentand und Gutdünken hintangesetzt....Was dann mit biblischer Schrift auf dieser Disputation bewährt, bewiesen und erhalten und hiefür zu halten beschlossen wird, das soll dann ohne Widerspruch Kraft und ewigen Bestand haben, wir und ihr demselben nachkommen, einander dabei handhaben und schützen und niemand unter uns und euch gestatten, darwider zu reden und zu thun, sondern das wollen wir für uns und unsere ewigen Nachkommen unverbrüchlich halten."

the articles presented in 1530 to the conference at Augsburg, he confessed: "The above I firmly believe, teach and maintain, not from my own oracles, but from those of the Divine Word; and, God willing, I promise to do this as long as life controls these members, unless someone from the declarations of Holy Scripture, properly understood, explain and establish the reverse as clearly and plainly as we have established the above. For it is no less grateful and delightful than fair and just for us to submit our judgments to the Holy Scriptures, and the Church deciding according to them by the Spirit."<sup>1</sup>

It was his testimony that the churches which had received the Word of God in sincerity had evidenced a spiritual re-awakening in their midst; falsehood and dishonesty had been diminished, pride and luxury subdued, and reproaches and wrangling had departed. He then says: "If these are not certainly true fruits of Divine Inspiration, what will they be?"

That Zwingli believed in the Inspiration of the Scriptures is beyond question,<sup>2</sup> but it is doubtful whether he held to "verbal" Inspiration. It is our opinion that he did not. The Inspiration and authority of the Word were of paramount importance to him, but he never placed such confidence in the

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1. Werke, SS, 4:17ff., Fidei Ratio, 1530.

2. Ibid., EFK, 1:311: "...sed hi qui ἐπιπροσέδραως καὶ ἀδιασπάρστως, iuxta eiusdem Pauli verba, hoc est iunctissime ac distracte eis adherent, scientes quod omnis sacra scriptura a deo inspirata est et utilis et docendam..."  
Ibid., SS, 1:354: "Die gschrift des alten testaments ist voll der gwüsse des worts gottes..."



letter of Scripture as would preclude a living, organic view of it as the record of God's will for mankind. The label of "verbalist" could more justly be fastened upon Luther than upon Zwingli, and yet we have seen that even the dogmatic Luther oscillates between the more liberal and stricter positions.

We summarize Zwingli's position by pointing out that he has the most profound respect for the letter of Scripture, but will not let himself be bound by it. It is not the letter itself which kills, but the man who rests too much upon it atrophies all spiritual influences which might have come to him as aids to the interpretation of the Word. The external sense, although in some cases valuable, must be superseded and supplemented by the inner sense of the Spirit. If there were no letter in Scripture, each man would be free to interpret according to his own whims; the written Word is therefore the rule by which all must be judged. But the spirit of truth, that is, the devout spirit of the believer, illumined by the Spirit of God, comprehends the letter and rules it. The Spirit does not confuse the sense; it clears it up and makes it plain. If the letter be misunderstood then it is worse than useless, indeed, positively harmful. So, then, the Spirit and the letter each have their functions and proper spheres of activity; a view which, in our opinion, is distinctly wholesome, in that the tested good is preserved, and yet the way is not closed for further revelations of the Holy Spirit breaking through the Word.

APPENDIX B.Heinrich Bullinger (1504-1575).

In close touch with the movements leading up to the Reformation, Bullinger came to Cologne in 1519 after having spent some time among the Brethren of the Common Life. In Cologne, he became a convert to the doctrines of the Reformation, began to read Luther's pamphlets, and through Luther's influence, studied the New Testament. He was also powerfully influenced by Melancthon's Loci communes, and by 1522 his break with the Roman Church was conclusive. In 1523 he went to Kappel, and remained there as a teacher in the Cistercian monastery until 1529. Daily he taught the Bible, and consistently advocated reform of doctrine and morals. Closely associated with Zwingli in the Swiss Reformation, after the battle of Kappel in 1531, in which the leaders of the Zürich Reformation fell, the task fell upon Bullinger to maintain the work which Zwingli had so auspiciously begun. All his life he was active in seeking to promote reconciliation in the eucharistic controversies. He was co-author of the First, and author of the famous Second Helvetic Confession of 1566, the latter symbol being accepted by practically all Reformed groups in Europe.

He was probably the first<sup>1</sup> among Protestant theologians

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1. However, as early as 1536, Martin Bucer (1491-1551) had designated the Holy Spirit as the real author of the Scriptures, the Biblical writers being only organs and "amanuenses". It is certain that Calvin borrowed from him this expression, and gave it fuller development in setting forth his own Inspiration theory. (Cf. Lang, A., Der Evangeliencommentar Martin Butzers und die Grundzüge seiner Theologie, in Studien zur Geschichte der Theologie und Kirche, Vol. II, p. 142, Leipzig, 1900; also cf. Ritschl, O., Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus, I, pp. 62f.)

to develop a consistent, thorough-going doctrine of the Inspiration, authority, certainty and absolute completeness, of the Scriptures. He recognized that God's original revelation was oral, and that it was preached by word of mouth before holy men set it down in writings. However, the fixed, written Word of God has equal authority with the oral Word, and is to be identified with it:

"Est autem scriptura sancta sermo divinus, sanctis Dei inspiratus, deque verbis sive pronuntiatis atque operibus Dei aeditus, atque a sanctis Dei ad institutionem mundi conscriptus .....2 Petr. 1; 2 Tim. 3:16.....Nam quod nobis est scriptura; id priscis erat viva domini vox .....Unde necesse est verbum Dei ecclesia multo esse antiquius et majus.....Scriptum enim et praedicatum evangelium idem, non diversum est. Nam qui scripserunt, aliud evangelium non scripserunt, quam quod praedicarunt, quod ipsi viderunt, et a spiritu Dei veraci constantique receperunt."<sup>1</sup>

He accepted the books of the Old and New Testaments, excluding the Apocrypha, and attributed Inspiration to them. It is doubtful whether he held to a dictation of the words by the Holy Spirit.

"Scriptura canonica Veteris et Novi Testamenti, opera prophetarum et apostolorum, ex spiritus sancti inspiratione edita, ipsissimum est os Dei ac verbum Dei: ut domini Dei verbo credat, qui scripturis credit: domini Dei vocem rejiciat et aspernetur, qui scripturam negat et repellit."<sup>2</sup>

While he places the two Testaments on an equal plane,<sup>3</sup>

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1. Bullinger, De scripturae sanctae autoritate, Zürich, 1538, fol. 2.
  2. Ibid., Ad Jo. Cochlei de canonicae scripturae....orthodoxa responsio, Zürich, 1544, fol. 7, c. 4.
  3. Bullinger, De scripturae sanctae autoritate, fol. 9.

he ingeniously allows that the sacred penmen were liable to errors of memory: "Transcribers easily fall into error in stating numbers; but sometimes the writers also were led by treacherous memories into the commission of mistakes."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ibid., "In numeris facile irrepunt librariorum mendae, sed et scriptores nonnunquam memoriâ falsi hallucinantur."  
(Quoted by Tholuck, F., Doctrine of Inspiration, in Jour. Sac. Lit., vi, p. 346).

Chapter Seven: CALVIN'S DOCTRINE OF INSPIRATION.

A. His Biblicism.

John Calvin (1509-64) was one of the greatest Reformers with whom we have to deal, and indeed, one of the outstanding theologians of all time, easily ranking with Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. The appearance of his epoch-making work, Christianae Religionis Institutio, at Basel in 1536,<sup>1</sup> when he was only 26 years of age, definitely established his reputation as a scholarly and judicious exegete. This work is really the first creditable attempt at a logical and complete definition and vindication of the Protestant faith. Reuss, the chief editor of Calvin's works, and himself an eminent Biblical scholar, says that Calvin was "beyond all question the greatest exegete of the 16th century."<sup>2</sup> Diestel

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1. Subsequent important editions of the Institutes appeared at Strassburg in 1539, a French edition at Geneva in 1545, and the completed edition at Geneva in 1559. The definitive edition of the Opera has been edited by Reuss, Baum, Cunitz, et al., and comprises vols. 29-87 of the Corpus Reformatorum. A good English translation of the Institutes has been prepared by Henry Beveridge for the Edinburgh Calvin Translation Society, 2 vols., 1869. The Tracts, as well as the Letters and Commentaries have been edited and translated under the auspices of this group. Mention must likewise be made here of Emile Doumergue's outstanding work of 7 vols., Jean Calvin, L'Homme et les Choses de son Temps, 1899-1927, which, although not primarily intended as a survey of his dogmatic system, has been indispensable to an understanding of the man and his place in the Reformation. Cf. Vol. IV (1910), "La Pensée Religieuse de Calvin".
  2. Reuss, E., Geschichte der heiligen Schriften des NTs, 6th ed., 1887, p. 618: "Ohne alle Frage der grösste Exeget des sechszehnten Jahrhunderts."

speaks of him as "the creator of genuine exegesis."<sup>1</sup>

He has sometimes been considered as being among the epigoni of the Reformation; this is true, in a sense, if we assume that he was dependent upon Luther's works, the most important of which had already appeared, upon Melancthon's Loci and confessional writings, upon Zwingli's Latin treatises, and upon Oekolampad's and Bucer's Scripture expositions. But, on the other hand, it is but fair to point out that he was not merely an imitator of those who went before; he was an original student of the Scriptures, rejecting all human authority. His distinctive genius lay in his remarkable systematizing ability; if we cannot credit him with the discovery of any of the great truths of the Reformation, we must recognize, nevertheless, that he was the organizer par excellence of his time.<sup>2</sup>

In some respects Calvin was more akin to Luther than

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1. Diestel, Die Geschichte des ATs in der christlichen Kirche, Jena, 1869, p. 267: "Der Schöpfer der ächten Exegese." He adds: "Johannes Calvin ragt ebensowohl durch den Umfang seiner exegetischen Arbeiten wie durch eine seltene Genialität in der Auslegung hervor; unübertroffen in seinem Jahrhundert, bieten seine Exegesen für alle folgenden Zeiten noch bis heute einen reichen Stoff der Schriftkenntnis dar". Cf. Mackinnon, James, Calvin and the Reformation, London, 1936, pp. 217 ff.
  2. Seeberg, R., Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte, IV, 2, p. 559, judges Calvin in a manner with which we cannot find ourselves in entire agreement: "Allerdings neu oder originell ist kaum etwas in dem religiösen Verständnis Calvins. Hier liegt seine Schranke. Er ist ein heller und scharfer, aber kein schöpferischer Geist gewesen, ein Organisator aber kein Entdecker." He quotes Dilthey, Werke, II, 229: "denkmächtigen, aber unschöpferischen Kopf". Certainly, to give classic expression to the thought of the Reformation in the outstanding way in which Calvin did is to merit being called "creative".

to Zwingli; their conversion experiences were similar in this respect: that both experienced the acute distress of conscience, the sense of helplessness and consequent peace of mind through trust in the grace of the Gospel. With regard to the formal and material principles of the Reformation, Calvin stands between Luther and Zwingli. Calvin was pre-eminently a man of the Scriptures; he would go as far as the Bible went, and not a step farther. Luther and Zwingli, on the other hand, gave more prominence to the postulate of inner religious experience; they were not especially troubled by allegiance to Biblical phraseology. Professing a high reverence for the Scriptures, they could "interpret" them when necessary.<sup>1</sup>

Especially does Calvin appear to be distinct from Zwingli in his approach; Zwingli's free and personal insights gave his faith wholesome autonomy and elasticity. The Spirit was never in bondage to the letter. For Calvin there could be only one sense; the authoritative "thus saith the Lord", or "it stands written", settled all points of controversy. Zwingli represents a more modern viewpoint in that he allows a greater place to philosophy than Calvin did; for the Zürich reformer there was not the least incongruity in his cherishing the opinions of Seneca, Cicero, and Aristotle along with more

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1. Wernle, P., Calvin, Bd. III of Der evangelische Glaube nach den Hauptschriften der Reformatoren, Tübingen, 1919, p. 229: "...er geht in seinen Gedanken soweit als die Bibel geht, keinen Schritt weiter, während Luther und auch Zwingli gerade in dieser Frage, unbekümmert um den biblischen Sprachgebrauch, ihre Erfahrung von der Neugeburt des Menschen im Glauben kraftvoll zum Ausdruck bringen. Luther gibt in solchen Fällen einfach das Erlebnis seines Herzens wieder; Calvin bleibt bei der Schriftgelehrsamkeit."

distinctively Christian views. Calvin could not conceive the possibility of a "Christian philosophy" derived from purely rationalistic postulates; the route of march in thinking, for him, lay through the ground of the Scriptures.<sup>1</sup>

If we cannot find in Calvin some of the talents which distinguished Zwingli, on that account we ought not to lose sight of his true greatness. He was by no means as academic as Melancthon; his nature was foreign to anything that savoured of narrowness or pedantry. Calvin's true genius lay in relating the new religious world-view, so brilliantly set forth by Luther, although only approximately apprehended, to the actual problems of life and thought, to human nature, education, and political life. The Scriptures were thought of as a formal whole, a lawbook, a series of fundamental propositions about the Divine efficacy and the "glory of God". Calvin paid more attention to the formal questions of the relationships between God and man than he did to inner religious experience.<sup>2</sup> In saying this, we are not forgetting his later enunciated doctrine of the inner witness of the Holy Spirit. However, in Calvin's mind, that witness assumed more the form of an objective influence coming wholly from without. He was pre-eminently the thinker; he does not seem

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1. Wernle, P., *op. cit.*, pp. 374-375.

2. Weber, H., *Die Theologie Calvins*, Berlin, 1930, p. 47:  
 "Die Bibel stellt also für Calvin ein formelhaftes Ganzes, ein Gesetzbuch dar; aus der Seelenfülle der einzelnen Schriften hebt er in seiner Exegese die logische formale Verkettung der religiösen Grundgedanken von der göttlichen Allwirksamkeit und der *gloria Dei* heraus. Deshalb wird selten oder gar nichts von der strahlenden Freude und der menschlichen Lebendigkeit Luthers zu finden sein. Es handelt sich deshalb in seiner Theologie weniger um Probleme der inneren Erfahrung als vielmehr um Fragen des formalen Zusammenhanges zwischen Gott und Mensch....."



to have conceived of "experience" in the warm manner in which Luther did.

"When Calvin came to use the Bible practically he ceased to regard it as a medium through which the Divine Spirit speaks to the human spirit, and fettered himself and others by a conception that was legal, not evangelical. In his hands the Bible became a manual of dogmatic theology, a directory for public worship, and a scheme of Church government.... It ceased to be a means of grace bringing the heart and conscience into connexion with the Divine Author. It became a dead law-book whose pages had to be consulted for precedents and instructions. Further, Calvin treated the Bible as a manual, all of whose teaching was on the same plane of significance and value."<sup>1</sup>

Calvin was one of the first to identify the "Word of God" and "Scripture"; from beginning to end, he sees in the Bible the authoritative declaration of the will of God. It is not, as conceived by Zwingli, primarily a means of grace; it is actually a trustworthy revelation of the Divine will, equally valid in all its parts. While Luther thought of the Word of God as the gospel of God's forgiving love in

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1. Reyburn, H. Y., John Calvin: His Life, Letters, and Work, London, 1914, p. 353. Cf. Wernle, P., Calvin, p. 392:

"Mehr und mehr drängte sich ihm die Idee einer vollständigen biblischen Theologie auf, gemäss seiner Lehre, dass die Bibel ein dogmatisches Lehrbuch des heiligen Geistes sei, das in jeder seiner tausend Wahrheiten ernste Berücksichtigung von uns verlange. Die biblische Theologie, als einheitliches System aufgefasst und systematisch dargestellt, das wäre nach Calvin die Wahrheit für alle Zeiten. Darum nun sein Eifer, gerade für diese letzte Ausgabe der Institutio zu jedem dogmatischen Locus möglichst zahlreiche Belegstellen beizubringen, den Schriftbeweis, wo er noch nicht reichhaltig genug erschien, zu ergänzen und ja keine passenden Bibelworte ungebraucht, liegen zu lassen. Calvins Buch schwoll dadurch immer dicker an, verlor immer mehr die Uebersichtlichkeit und die Durchsichtigkeit des Gedankenganges, kurz es verlor durch diesen gelehrten Biblizismus an Kraft und Wucht, was es an Vollständigkeit gewann. Aber in Calvins Augen ist es dadurch erst recht seinem Zweck gewachsen erschienen."

Christ, Calvin understood it to be the Bible as a whole, that is, sound doctrine.<sup>1</sup> Lobstein,<sup>2</sup> in commenting upon this identification of the Word of God and Scripture, says that "...elle forme une des idées maîtresses de sa théologie."

It might well be doubted whether Calvin has developed what can be called a precise "theory" of verbal Inspiration, as to its method or extent; and yet, wherever he treats of the subject formally, and even in some of his purely incidental allusions, as we shall presently indicate, he holds the strictest view of Inspiration, and asserts that the Scriptures are the result of Divine dictation, and are wholly inerrant.<sup>3</sup>

It was not Calvin's particular purpose to elaborate a dogma of Inspiration with the logical consistency which his genius employed in studying and systematizing the other points of his doctrinal position. The questions of extent, intensity, and mode of Inspiration had not as yet been raised; the theologians of his day occupied themselves with what was

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1. Instit. IV, 1, 12 (Beveridge's tr.); cf. McGiffert, A. C., Protestant Thought before Kant, London, 1919, pp. 90, 95.
  2. Lobstein, P., La connaissance religieuse d'après Calvin, Paris, Lausanne, 1909, p. 29. Cf. Thurneysen, E., Schrift und Offenbarung, in Zwischen den Zeiten, Heft VI, pp. 9-12.
  3. Cf. Bannerman, J., Inspiration, Edinburgh, 1865, p. 135:  
 "In the writings of Calvin himself there is the fullest recognition of the human element in the sacred volume, along with an unequivocal assertion of that Divine control over the instrumentality employed in composing it which secures it against error. But there is also a wise abstinence from speculative views as to the theory of Inspiration, and no presumptuous attempts in the way of defining the manner in which the supernatural result of an infallible text was brought about."

urgent, preferring to treat in a more cursory fashion that which was not yet under discussion or attacked. They were sure that God had spoken, that the Scripture was the record of His revelation; how he had spoken was to them a useless inquiry. Calvin alone carries us farther in this respect than had any other thinker up to his day.<sup>1</sup>

"How we are to understand the relation of the Divine and human activities through which the Scriptures were produced is not exactly defined by Calvin. A precise theory of Inspiration such as we meet with in the later dogmaticians is not found in him.

"It is true that Calvin gave the impulse (from which the later dogmatic view of Scripture grew up), more than any other of the Reformers. But we must not forget that here we can speak of nothing more than the impulse. We nowhere find in Calvin such a magical conception of the Bible as we find in the later dogmaticians."<sup>2</sup>

## B. Strict Conception of Inspiration.

### 1. Assertion of Verbal Dictation.

The authors of the Scriptures, according to Calvin, were in no sense free to record what they wished, once God had imparted to them His revelation. On the other hand, he thought of them as amanuenses who set down in an authentic deposit of doctrine what was dictated to them.

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1. Rabaud, E., Histoire de la doctrine de l'inspiration dans les pays de langue française depuis la Réforme jusqu'à nos jours, Paris, 1883, p. 58, quoted by Warfield, B. B., Calvin and the Reformation, New York, 1909, art. Calvin's Doctrine of the Knowledge of God, p. 263.
  2. Cramer, J., Nieuwe Bijdragen op het gebied van Godgeleerdheid en Wijsbegeerte, II, p. 103, quoted by Warfield, B. B., Ibid., p. 236.

"Let this then be a sure axiom--that there is no word of God to which place should be given in the Church save that which is contained, first, in the Law and the Prophets; and, secondly, in the writings of the Apostles, and that the only due method of teaching in the Church is according to the prescription and rule of His word. Hence also we infer that nothing else was permitted to the apostles than was formerly permitted to the prophets--namely, to expound the ancient Scriptures, and show that the things there delivered are fulfilled in Christ; this, however, they could not do unless from the Lord; that is, by the Spirit of Christ going before, and in a manner dictating words to them."<sup>1</sup>

The difference between the Apostles and those who followed them is that the former "were sure and authentic amanuenses of the Holy Spirit; and, therefore, their writings are to be regarded as the oracles of God."<sup>2</sup> In order to safeguard men from error, it was necessary for God to make such a repository of doctrine as we have in the Bible; it would also protect the revelation itself from neglect and corruption.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the human authors wrote merely as instru-

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1. Instit. IV, 8, 8: "Esto igitur hoc firmum axioma: non aliud habendum esse Dei Verbum, cui detur in ecclesia locus, quam quod lege primum et prophetis, deinde scriptis apostolicis continetur; nec alium esse rite docendi in ecclesia modum, nisi ex eius verbi praescripto et norma. Hinc etiam colligimus, non aliud permissum fuisse apostolis, quam quod olim habuerant prophetae: nempe, ut veterem Scripturam exponerent ac ostenderent in Christo completa esse, quae illic traduntur; id ipsum tamen non facerent, nisi ex domino, hoc est praeunte et verba quodammodo dictante Christi spiritu."
  2. Ibid., IV, 8, 9: "Fuerunt certi et authentici spiritus sancti amanuenses, et ideo eorum scripta pro Dei oraculis habenda sunt."
  3. Ibid., I, 6, 3. Cf. Wernle, P., Calvin, Tübingen, 1919, p. 175: "Es lag im Interesse der Reinerhaltung dieser Offenbarung, dass das mündliche Gotteswort dem geschriebenen Gotteswort Platz machte; die Schriftoffenbarung war geradezu notwendig, wenn die göttliche Wahrheit von Vergesslichkeitsfehlern, Irrtümern und frecher Entstellung rein bewahrt werden sollte. Im ganzen Verlauf dieser speziellen Offenbarungsgeschichte erblickt Calvin das Walten einer besondern Vor-scheidung."

ments of the Holy Spirit, and did not speak ex suo sensu, nor humano impulsu, nor sponte sua, nor arbitrio suo, but set forth only quae coelitus mandata fuerant.

Commenting on II Tim. 3:16, Calvin says:

"....that the prophets did not speak at their own suggestion, but that, being organs of the Holy Spirit, they only uttered what they had been commissioned from heaven to declare. Whoever, then, wishes to profit in the Scriptures, let him, first of all, lay down this as a settled point, that the Law and the Prophets are not a doctrine delivered according to the will and pleasure of men, but are dictated by the Holy Spirit. If it be objected, 'How can this be known?' I answer, both to disciples and to teachers, God is made known to be the author of it by the revelation of the same Spirit. Moses and the prophets did not utter at random what we have received from their hand, but, speaking at the suggestion of God, they boldly and fearlessly testified, what was actually true, that it was the mouth of the Lord that spake."

"....we owe to the Scripture the same reverence which we owe to God; because it has proceeded from Him alone, and has nothing belonging to man mixed with it."<sup>1</sup>

In the Scriptures it is "God who speaks with us, and not mortal men,"<sup>2</sup> for the writers "dared not announce anything of their own, and obediently followed the Spirit as their guide, who ruled in their mouth as in His own sanctuary."<sup>3</sup> So, most emphatically, Calvin can no longer see the individual authors; they are all merged through the unity of the Spirit. There are not the verba Dei, but only one verbum Dei.<sup>4</sup>

1. Comm., ad II Tim. 3:16: "...eandem scripturae reverentiam deberi quam Deo deferimus, quia ad eo solo manavit, nec quicquam humani habet admixtum."

2. Ibid., ad II Pet. 1:20: "Justa reverentia inde nascitur, quam statuimus, Deum nobiscum loqui, non homines mortales."

3. Ibid., ad II Peter 1:21.

4. Cf. Ritschl., O., Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus, Leipzig, 1908, I, 58 ff.

The entire Scripture, the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospel, was written by the dictation of the Spirit; even though later prophets might add to what the former ones had written, the thought of dictation cannot be avoided: "To these (the prophecies) at the same time were added historical details, which are also the composition of prophets, but dictated by the Holy Spirit."<sup>1</sup> In the Word, "God....opens His sacred mouth."<sup>2</sup>

"Since no daily responses are given from heaven, and the Scriptures are the only records in which God has been pleased to consign His truth to perpetual remembrance, the full authority which they ought to possess with the faithful is not recognized, unless they are believed to have come from heaven, as directly as if God had been heard

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1. Instit. IV, 8, 6: "His simul accesserunt historiae, quae et ipsae prophetarum sunt lucubrationes, sed dictante spiritu sancto compositae."
  2. Ibid., I, 6, 1: "Deus....os quoque sacrosanctum reserat."  
Ibid., I, 7, 5: "Enlightened by Him....we 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."  
Comm. ad I Pet. 1:25: "Aussi faut-il entendre que Dieu a voulu parler à nous par les apôtres et prophètes, et que leurs bouches ne sont autre chose que la bouche d'un seul Dieu."  
Opera, 26:714, Sermons on Deuteronomy: "Qu'est-ce que l'Écriture sainte sinon une déclaration de la volonté de Dieu? Et ainsi tout ce qui est là contenu est comme si Dieu ouvrait sa bouche sacrée pour nous déclarer ce qu'il demande de nous."  
Ibid., 28:647: "Notons que ce mot d'Écriture emporte que Moïse n'a point été auteur de la Loi ne du Cantique; mais qu'il a été seulement écrivain ou greffier sous la bouche de Dieu. Tout ainsi donc qu'un secrétaire écrira ce qui lui sera ordonné, ainsi notamment il est ici déclaré que Moïse a écrit ce qu'il avait reçu de Dieu, et non pas ce qu'il a forgé en son cerveau."

giving utterance to them."<sup>1</sup>

The sole source of truth is the Bible; it "is the school of the Holy Spirit, in which as nothing useful and necessary to be known has been omitted, so nothing is taught but what it is of importance to know."<sup>2</sup> The authority of Scripture is so settled a fact that we need not even attempt to prove to infidels that the Scripture is the Word of God.<sup>3</sup> The truth of the Bible, according to Calvin, is self-evidencing; however, he does not account for those who, approaching Scripture, receive contrary impressions:

"A most pernicious error has very generally prevailed--viz., that Scripture is of importance only in so far as conceded to it by the suffrage of the Church; as if the eternal and inviolable truth of God could depend on the will of men. With great insult to the Holy Spirit, it is asked, Who can assure us that the Scriptures proceeded from God; who guarantees that they have come down safe and unimpaired to our times?..... On the other hand, to what jeers of the wicked is our faith subjected--into how great suspicion is it brought with all, if believed to have only a precarious authority lent to it by the good will of men?"<sup>4</sup>

"As to the question, How shall we be persuaded that it came from God without recurring to a decree of the Church? it is just the same as if it were asked, How shall we learn to distinguish light from darkness, white from black, sweet from bitter? Scripture bears upon the face of it as clear evidence of its truths, as white and black do of their colour, sweet and bitter of their taste."<sup>5</sup>

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1. Instit., I, 7, 1: "Sed quoniam non quotidiana e coelis red-  
duntur oracula et scripturae solae exstant quibus visum  
est Domino suam perpetuae memoriae veritatem consecrare;  
non alio iure plenam apud fideles auctoritatem obtinent,  
quam ubi statuunt e coelo fluxisse, ac si vivae ipsae Dei  
voces illic axaudirentur."
  2. Ibid., III, 21, 3: "Est enim scriptura schola spiritus sancti,  
in qua ut nihil praetermissum est scitu et necessarium et  
utile, sic nihil docetur nisi quod scire conducat."
  3. Ibid., I, 8, 13: "...inepte faciunt qui probari volunt  
infidelibus scripturam esse verbum Dei."
  4. Ibid., I, 7, 1.
  5. Ibid., I, 7, 2.

Everywhere Calvin quotes Scripture as the pure Word of God. His "holy word" is the "sceptre of God"; "the heavenly oracle is infallible."<sup>1</sup> The formulae "Scripture says" and "the Holy Spirit says" may be used interchangeably, for they mean the same thing; for example, "the Holy Spirit protests" against a denial of Christ's full Deity "when He calls Him (Christ) Jehovah," but Calvin actually has been quoting not the Holy Spirit, but Scripture.<sup>2</sup> The terms mean the same to him. "The Holy Spirit pronounces", "Paul declares....the Scriptures condemn.....wherefore it is not surprising if the Holy Spirit reject"--all these Calvin can equate in one running context.<sup>3</sup> In another place he employs interchangeably the "commandments of Christ" and the "authority of Scripture".<sup>4</sup> Calvin's entire theology moves definitely within the limits of the Scriptures; beyond them he does not venture.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Instit., Praef.

2. Ibid., I, 13, 23.

3. Ibid., I, 5, 13.

Opera, 54:298, Sermons on II Timothy: "Il est certain que le S. Esprit a gouverné la langue de S. Paul, qu'il ne luy a point eschappé un mot superflu."

Ibid., 54:5: "Tout ce que saint Paul nous a laissé par escrit, il nous faut considérer que c'est Dieu qui a parlé à nous par la bouche d'un homme mortel, et que toute sa doctrine doit estre reçue en autorité et révérence telle comme si Dieu se monstroit visiblement du ciel."

4. Ibid., Praef.; Cf. Warfield, B. B., Calvin's Doctrine of the Knowledge of God, p. 160 f.

5. Koelling, D. W., Die Lehre von der Theopneustie, Breslau, 1891, p. 207: "Es kann für Niemand, der die Institutiones dieses grossen Theologen eines ernsten Studiums würdigt, zweifelhaft sein, dass Johannes Calvin, dieser durch und durch positive, tiefe und hohe Geist für die eigenartige Würde und Majestät des geschriebenen Wortes Gottes ein besonderes Feingefühl hatte, und dass er sich mit seiner ganzen Theologie streng innerhalb der Grenzen der Schrift hat halten wollen."



Concerning David's imprecations against his enemies, Calvin comments at Psalm 35:26: "As this form of prayer was dictated by the Holy Spirit to David, there can be no doubt that the end of all the proud shall be such as is here predicted, that they shall turn back overwhelmed with shame and disgrace."<sup>1</sup> When Calvin tries to harmonize Paul's rather free quotation and application of Isaiah 64:4, in I Cor. 2:9 ("Eye hath not seen" etc.), he remarks: "Where shall we find a surer or more faithful interpreter than the Spirit of God of this authoritative declaration, which He Himself dictated to Isaiah--in the exposition which He has furnished by the mouth of Paul?"<sup>2</sup>

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1. Renée, Duchess of Ferrara, in a letter to Calvin, made the remark that "David's example in hating his enemies is not applicable to us." Instead of agreeing with her in this sentiment so in harmony with the teaching of Christ, Calvin was shocked by the remark of the Duchess. He curtly and sternly answered her that "Such a gloss would upset all Scripture;" that even in his hatred David is an example to us, and a type of Christ; and "Should we presume to set ourselves up as superior to Christ in sweetness and humanity?" Cited by Farrar, F.W., The Bible, its Meaning and Supremacy, London, 1901, 2nd ed., p. 92.
  2. Warfield, B.B., op.cit., p. 161, seeks to avoid the consequences of ascribing the "dictation" theory of Inspiration to Calvin; he says: "It is not unfair to urge that this language ("dictation" and "notaries" in Instit., IV, 8, 9, and at II Tim. 3:16) is figurative; and that what Calvin has in mind is not to insist that the mode of Inspiration was dictation, but that the result of Inspiration is as if it were by dictation, viz., the production of a pure word of God free from all human admixtures. The term 'dictation' was no doubt in current use at the time to express rather the effects than the mode of inspiration."

However, what Dr. Warfield is contending for is the "effects" of Inspiration, namely, inerrancy, even in the slightest details. Now then, if this is admitted, that the results are the same "as if" there had been dictation, we are not allowing the writers to be free intermediaries; they remain virtual puppets, guided entirely apart from their own volition. Can we say that the process has not been one of dictation if verbal inerrancy is the result? We have no objection to the assertion of the inerrancy of Scripture quâ Word of God (e.g. in the Barthian sense), but we disagree with the dogma of the inerrancy of the ipsissima verba of Scripture.

Ritschl, O., Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus, I, p. 59, thinks that Calvin meant "dictare" in the literal sense, and we are inclined to agree with him.

Scripture thus being what it is, absolute obedience to its every statement is imperative; "human reason must be subdued to the obedience of faith", and even though our reason is offended at the depicting of the improbable, "calm quiescence" should be our response.<sup>1</sup> "Our true wisdom is to embrace with meek docility, and without reservation, whatever the Holy Scriptures have delivered."<sup>2</sup> Such complete submission to the letter of the Bible is possible only on the assumption that the Scriptures owe their origin to God alone. "Our faith in doctrine is not established until we have a perfect conviction that God is its author. Hence the highest proof of Scripture is uniformly taken from the character of Him whose word it is."<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Hunter, in his discerning work on Calvin,<sup>4</sup> judiciously remarks:

"The logical concomitant of such a view was the assertion of the inerrancy of Scripture. If God's revelation was confined to this volume, if its contents were to be the infallible touchstone of truth, if the perfect harmony of its parts was to be depended upon, it must be that Providence, which preserved the constituent books and secured their compilation into a canon, took care that no error should creep into its pages. For the assurance of faith, it was necessary to be able to trust the accuracy of every word of the record. The inerrancy of the letter was the corollary of its exclusive and inclusive inspiration".

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1. *Instit.*, I, 14, 2.

2. *Ibid.*, I, 18, 4: "Nam sapere nostrum nihil aliud esse debet quam mansueta docilitate amplecti, et quidem sine exceptione, quidquid in sacris scripturis traditum est."

3. *Ibid.*, I, 7, 4: "Non ante stabiliri doctrinae fidem quam nobis indubie persuasum sit, auctorem eius esse deum".

4. Hunter, A. Mitchell, The Teaching of Calvin, Glasgow, 1920, p. 68.

This inerrancy, obtaining pre-eminently in matters religious, was also understood to hold with regard to the facts of science; the Scripture was in truth a complete handbook of knowledge, in which nothing was contained that would lead astray. All that was necessary was to be found therein, and nothing superfluous was included. Figures and symbols, of course, were allowed, but all that was affirmed of the world of Nature was to be regarded as the truth. In like manner, what was affirmed of the world of science was also true in the field of history; the Bible was the source of all truth.<sup>1</sup>

Entertaining such a view of Scripture, Calvin could make short shrift of the problem of historical criticism; he truculently observes, in a spirit that is not characteristic of his better thinking: "I am aware of what is muttered in corners by certain miscreants, when they would display their acuteness in assailing Divine truth. They ask, how do we know that Moses and the prophets wrote the books which now bear their names? Nay, they even dare to question whether there ever was a Moses. Were any one to question whether there ever was a Plato, or an Aristotle, or a Cicero, would not the rod or the whip be deemed the fit chastisement of such

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1. Hunter, A. M., op. cit., p. 70.

folly?"<sup>1</sup>

We cannot avoid the conclusion that Calvin seems to assert, in the strongest fashion, the actual dictation of the Scriptures by the Holy Spirit, with a consequent verbal inerrancy.<sup>2</sup>

The ground on which Calvin asserted his high doctrine of verbal Inspiration he claimed to have found in Scripture

1. Instit., I, 8, 9: "Scio quid in angulis obstrepant quidam nebulones ut in oppugnanda dei veritate acumen ingenii sui ostentent. Quaerunt enim, quis nos certiores fecerit a Mose et prophetis haec fuisse scripta, quae sub eorum nominibus leguntur? Quin etiam quaestionem movere audent, fueritne unquam aliquis Moses? At si quis in dubium revocet, fueritne unquam vel Plato aliquis vel Aristoteles vel Cicero, quis non colaphis aut flagellis castigandam talem insaniam dicat?"

Cf. Lilley, A. L., Religion and Revelation, London, 1932, p. 89: "It would be possible, indeed, to reconstruct from those few chapters (of the 1st Book of the Institutes) of his not only the main outlines but also most of the details of Renaissance criticism of the traditional doctrine, the reasoned doubts it alleged against the reputed authorship of many of the books of the Old Testament or their received dates, or, again, against the historical value of its narrative. And though he often dismisses these doubts with the contemptuous impatience of the convinced believer, yet he betrays his sense of their danger not only by the carefully reasoned arguments with which he supports his righteous scorn but also and especially by his determined refusal to admit any kind of sufficiency in historical motives of credibility. His witness of the Spirit is quite obviously not only a confession of his profoundly religious evaluation of Scripture, but is also for him the only trustworthy barrier against a merely historical and therefore a critical examination of its contents."

2. Cf. Weber, H., Die Theologie Calvins, p. 46: "Mit Notwendigkeit muss Calvin den Schluss ziehen, dass die Bibel vom göttlichen Geiste diktiert ist. Es bleibt für den Christen nur die Aufgabe, nichts anderem als der Schriftwarheit zu dienen."

Cf. Koelling, D. W., Die Lehre von der Theopneustie, p. 209: "Es kann.....nicht zweifelhaft sein, dass Calvin den strengen Vertretern der Verbalinspiration zuzuzählen sei, denn nur diese vermögen auch Schreibart und Farbenton dem heiligen Geiste unbedingt beizulegen."

itself. He perceived within the Bible the claim to be the Word of God in this high sense; and his careful examination of the contents indicated nothing which should cause him to change his view. While he recognized the worth of the Scriptures on other grounds, grounds which enabled him to believe in the Divine origin of the Word, his ultimate conviction that these writings are to be received with a unique deference, lay in their own teaching as to their Inspiration. To him, a merely providential direction was not enough; the Scriptures were the writings of God Himself, who by a unique operation, not only revealed Himself through His chosen instruments, but also protected His amanuenses from all error in their every statement; hence, nothing could be added, and nothing could be taken away.

## 2. Spirit and the Word Inseparable.

In opposition to the Anabaptists, who claimed to be in possession of a revelation superior to and independent of that of Scripture, Calvin firmly maintained the inseparability of the Spirit and the Word. He argues<sup>1</sup> that to attribute to God repeated or new revelations to each of the children of God, as the mystics do, is derogatory to the Word, which has been inspired by Him. To lay claim to such a spirit is to lay claim to the possession of a different Spirit from that which dwelt in Christ and the Apostles--for their Spirit honoured the Word--and a different Spirit from that which was promised

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1. Instit., I, 9, 1 & 2.

by Christ to His disciples--for this Spirit was "not to speak of Himself". How can we know that the Spirit that speaks in us is from God except as he honours the Word of God? Thus the Spirit, issuing in faith, manifests itself only in conjunction with God's revelation as given in the Word.<sup>1</sup>

"God...employed the same Spirit by whose agency He had administered the Word, to complete His work by the efficacious confirmation of the Word. In this way Christ explained to the two disciples (Luke 24:27) not that they were to reject the Scriptures and trust to their own wisdom, but that they were to understand the Scriptures. In like manner, when Paul says to the Thessalonians, 'Quench not the Spirit', he does not carry them aloft to empty speculation apart from the Word; he immediately adds, 'Despise not prophesyings' (I Thess. 5:19, 20). By this, doubtless he intimates that the light of the Spirit is quenched the moment prophesyings fall into contempt. How is this answered by those swelling enthusiasts, in whose idea the only true illumination consists in carelessly laying aside, and bidding adieu to the Word of God, while, with no less confidence than folly, they fasten upon any dreaming notion which may have casually sprung up in their minds? Surely, a very different sobriety becomes the children of God. As they feel that without the Spirit of God they are utterly devoid of the light of truth, so they are not ignorant that the Word is the instrument by which the illumination of the Spirit is dispensed."<sup>2</sup>

Calvin adduces an analogy from music; he reminds us, for example, that it is possible to sing reasonably well alone. But several voices, singing in harmony, produce a perfect melody. Thus it is with faith; unless the Word of

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1. Cf. Wernle, P., Calvin, pp. 180, 181.

2. Instit. I, 9, 3.

God be joined to it there will be no melody; the two are inseparable.<sup>1</sup>

We are urged to remember "that there is an inseparable relation between faith and the Word, and that these can no more be disconnected from each other than rays of light from the sun."<sup>2</sup> When faith declines in the slightest degree from the mark at which it ought to aim, namely the Word of God, it does not retain its true nature, but becomes only uncertain credulity and vague wandering of mind. This same Word is the basis on which faith rests and is sustained. Declining from it, it falls; if we take the Word away, therefore, no faith will remain.<sup>3</sup>

"....the Word itself....is a kind of mirror in which faith beholds God. In this, therefore... it is always by the Word that He manifests Himself to those whom He designs to draw to Himself."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Opera, 23:689, ed. Baum, Cunitz, Reuss: "...on pourra bien chanter à une voix: mais nous n'aurons point une melodie parfaite, sinon qu'il y ait plusieurs voix et bonne correspondance. Ainsi est-il de la foy: car si la parole de Dieu ne precede, et que la foy ne s'accorde avec icelle, il n'y aura nulle melodie. Ce sont deux choses inseparables que la Parole de Dieu et la Foy."
  2. Instit. III, 2, 6: "Principio admonendi sumus, perpetuam esse fidei relationem cum verbo, nec magis ab eo posse divelli, quam radios a sole, unde oriuntur."
  3. Ibid.: "Quare si ab hoc scopo in quem collimare debet, vel minimum deflectit fides, naturam suam non retinet, sed incerta est credulitas, et vagus mentis error. Idem verbum basis est, qua fulcitur et sustinetur: unde si declinat, corrui. Tolle igitur verbum, et nulla iam restabit fides."
  4. Ibid.: "...verbum ipsum....instar speculi esse dicimus, in quo Deum intueatur fides."

"So long as your mind entertains any misgivings as to the certainty of the Word, its authority will be weak and dubious, or rather it will have no authority at all. Nor is it sufficient to believe that God is true, and cannot lie or deceive, unless you feel firmly persuaded that every Word which proceeds from Him is sacred, inviolable truth."<sup>1</sup>

Hence we perceive, through these declarations of Calvin, that he tends to modify the looser connection between Word and Spirit which Zwingli held. Here Calvin is more in harmony with Luther's mind; however, he was unable to separate the essential content of Christian truth from the form of Scripture, in the freer way that Luther could. A corollary here is that Calvin could not allow to faith and science the same right of criticism as Luther was able to. In Calvin's thought, the formal principle of Protestantism, i.e., the supremacy of the Scriptures, has the ascendancy over the material principle, namely, justification by faith. The internal and external Words are given more inward connection; so the Scriptures are not merely the sign of an absent thing, but actually have in themselves the Divine content and breath.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Instit. III, 2, 6; cf. Seeberg, R., Lehrbuch d. Dogmen-gesch., IV, 2, p. 568.
  2. Dorner, History of Protestant Theology, I, pp. 387, 390. Cf. Clavier, Henri, Calvin commentateur biblique, Valence-sur-Rhone, 1935, p. 18: "La Parole de Dieu est dans l'Écriture; cette contenance ne doit pas être envisagée statiquement, comme une contenance matérielle; mais dynamiquement, comme une charge spirituelle.... La Parole et l'Écriture sont tellement unies qu'elles constituent un ensemble organique; elles sont entre elles comme l'âme et le corps, inséparables l'une de l'autre; par une métonymie insensible et presque inévitable, elles sont employées l'une pour l'autre."  
Ibid. ., p. 20: "La lettre, organe, enveloppe de la Parole et de l'Esprit, doit être respectée comme le corps, sanctuaire de l'âme; elle exige des ménagements et des égards semblables."



"The old doctrine of the supremacy of control vested in the literal meaning had fresh application here. Calvin therefore was true to the tradition of mediaeval theology when he identified Scripture as the exclusive field of the Spirit's illumination. That was not to confine the Spirit's action. It was, on the contrary, to recognize it as his action. For Revelation was ex hypothesi God's whole purpose for man declared to men.....

"Now it was this virtual identification of God's Spirit and God's Word as the sum of His relations with man that constituted the distinguishing originality of Calvin's teaching and through him has affected profoundly the religious outlook of the Protestant world ever since. It is among the ironies of history that its effect has declared itself in a literalism of interpretation before unknown, a literalism, indeed, which it was its chief purpose to guard against as a betrayal of the genuine religious integrity of Scripture. But if Calvin's doctrine was directed against a mere literalist fundamentalism, it was, on the other hand, the chief bulwark of what I may call a historic fundamentalism, an unquestioning belief in the exact historical truth of Scripture as guaranteed by its Divine authorship."<sup>1</sup>

### 3. Calvin's Inspiration-theory an impulse to later controversies.

His extreme Biblicism was unfortunate in that he bound the Church too closely to what he himself conceived to be the teaching of the Scriptures. In a measure, he enunciated the principle of freedom: release from ecclesiastical authority, Councils, and the infallible judgments of men. But on the other hand, we cannot lose sight of the fact that his adherence to the ipsissima verba of Scripture was so slavish that any appeal to inner religious experience was thereby seriously qualified. He did nothing to shake the principle of authority;

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1. Lilley, A. L., op. cit., p. 88.

he merely substituted one authority for another, intensifying its imperative.

Historically considered, he combines elements of the later mediaeval conception of Inspiration with Luther's view. He recognized, as did Luther, the influence of the Holy Spirit that proceeds from the Scriptures attesting their contents to the heart as truth; this formulation is open to no objection. But when he asserts that all of the material is verbally dictated, then the inner witness of the Spirit must be abandoned, for it is obvious that it does not attest as true every word of Scripture. It is in this respect that Calvin may be said to be the forerunner of the so-called "old-dogmatists" in the later period of the "Protestant scholasticism".<sup>1</sup> It is quite probable that Calvin gave the impulse to the later controversies which raged in both the Lutheran and Reformed Churches, one of which, for example, was the strife between the Buxtorffs against Capellus concerning

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1. Seeberg, R., Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte, IV, 2, p. 569: "Calvin hat also die Autorität der heil. Schrift einerseits durch den Gedanken, dass sie göttliches Diktat ist, andererseits durch das von ihr ausgehende oder auch über sie ergehende Zeugnis des heil. Geistes begründet. Historisch betrachtet, kombiniert er demnach die Inspirationsidee des späteren Mittelalters mit Luthers Gedanken. Calvin ist hierdurch der Schöpfer der sogenannten altdogmatischen Inspirationstheorie geworden."  
Ibid., p. 566: "In seiner Art beschränkte Calvin sich hierbei nicht bloss auf die Behauptung, dass hier der heil. Geist rede, sondern versuchte einen Beweis für diese Behauptung zu erbringen. Dadurch ist Calvin der Urheber der altprotestantischen Inspirationstheorie geworden."  
 Cf. Wernle, P., Calvin, p. 374; 165.

the inspiration of the Hebrew vowel points.<sup>1</sup> We shall deal with this controversy in a succeeding chapter.

### C. The Testimony of the Holy Spirit.

The doctrine of the inner witness of the Spirit was only implicit in the first edition of the "Institutes" of 1536; but in the 1539 edition, the doctrine was created almost at a single stroke.<sup>2</sup> In it Calvin held that the same Spirit which inspired the prophets and the authors of Scripture, must also penetrate to our hearts and convince us that the Word truly is from God. We may hold the Scriptures to be Divine upon other grounds most reasonable and right, but we

1. Beth, Karl, art. Johann Calvin als reformatorischer Systematiker, in Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche, Bd. 19, (1909), p. 338: "Calvin....hat jene Formel über die Inspiration der Bibel gebildet, an der das Zeitalter der Orthodoxie vornehmlich erkrankte, und die den Anlass bot zu dem heftigen Streit, der in der reformierten Theologie von den Buxtorff Vater und Sohn gegen Capellus für die Inspiriertheit selbst der hebräischen Vokal- und Interpunktionszeichen geführt wurde."

2. Warfield, B. B., Calvin's Doctrine of the Knowledge of God, p. 209: "The formulation of this principle of the testimony of the Spirit by Calvin in 1539 had an extraordinary effect both immediate and permanent. Universal Protestantism received in it at sight the pure expression of the Protestant principle and the sheet-anchor of its position. The Lutherans as well as the Reformed adopted it at once and made it the basis not only of their reasoned defence of Protestantism, but also of their structure of Christian doctrine and of their confidence in Christian living."

Cf. Schweizer, A., Glaubenslehre, I, Sec. 32; Klaiber, Die Lehre der altprotestantischen Dogmatiker von dem test. Sp. Sancti, in Die Jahrbücher für deutsche Theologie, 1857, pp. 1-53.

shall never receive the full persuasion of their Divine origin unless the Spirit witnesses to that effect in our hearts. The Spirit is to be judged by the Word, and the Word by the Spirit; Luther held this view, but only implicitly, and it remained to Calvin to give it classic expression.<sup>1</sup>

"Let it therefore be held as fixed, that 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."<sup>2</sup> Thus taught by the Spirit, we no longer accept the authority of others, nor

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1. Weber, H., Die Theologie Calvins, pp. 48-49: "Die Überzeugung, dass die biblische Lehre gewiss ist, gründet sich für Calvin nicht auf menschliche Beweise, Schlussfolgerungen oder Vermutungen, sondern auf das verborgene Zeugnis des Geistes; das gilt nicht nur für Calvin, sondern auch für Luther. Unter Geist wird eine Kraft verstanden, die durch die Berührung mit dem Wort im Menschen wirksam wird; Menschen, die trotz der Berührung mit dem Wort kein Verhältnis zur Bibel gewinnen, wird der Mangel an Geist vorgehalten; solche, die den Besitz des Geistes in Anspruch nehmen, aber nicht nach dem Worte handeln, wird der Vorwurf gemacht, dass sie das Wort übersehen, so dass also einmal der Geist als Bedingung für das Verständnis des Wortes, dann das Wort als Bedingung für den echten Besitz des Geistes genannt wird. Es liegt hier kein Widerspruch vor, sondern gemeint ist eine ständige Wechselbeziehung zwischen Geist und Wort; der rechte Geist wird immer geprüft am Geiste des Wortes; Luther hat denselben Schluss."

Cf. Wernle, P., Calvin, pp. 177 f.

2. Instit. I, 7, 5. The French ed. of 1545 adds: "Car jaçoit qu'en sa propre majesté elle ait assez de quoy estre reuerée, neantmoins elle commence lors à nous vrayement toucher, quand elle est scellée en nos coeurs par le Saint Esprit."

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rely upon our own judgment; we believe that the Scriptures are from God "in a way superior to human judgment, and we 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."<sup>1</sup>

This persuasion requires no reasons, for, supported by the highest reason, the mind rests with greater security and constancy than in any human reasons which might be adduced; such conviction can be produced only by a revelation from heaven.<sup>2</sup>

"If, then, we would consult most effectually for our consciences, and save them from being driven about in a whirl of uncertainty, from wavering, and even stumbling at the smallest obstacle, our conviction of the truth of Scripture must be derived from a higher source than human conjectures, judgments, or reasons; namely, the secret testimony of the Spirit."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Instit. I, 7, 5: "...supra humanum iudicium, certo certius constituimus--non secus ac si ipsius Dei numen illic intueremur--hominum ministerio, ab ipsissimo Dei ore ad nos fluxisse."
  - Cf. Heim, Karl, Das Gewissheitsproblem in der syst. Theol., bis zu Schleiermacher, pp. 268-282.
  2. Ibid., I, 7, 5: "Talis ergo est persuasio quae rationes non requirat; talis notitia, cui optima ratio constet: nempe in qua securius constantiusque mens quiescit quam in ullis rationibus; talis denique sensus, qui nisi ex coelesti revelatione nasci nequeat."
  3. Ibid., I, 7, 4: "Iam si conscientiiis optime consultum volumus, ne instabili dubitatione perpetuo circumferantur aut vacillent, ne etiam haesitent ad minimos quosque scrupulos, altius quam ab humanis vel rationibus, vel iudiciis, vel coniecturis petanda est haec persuasio nempe ab arcano testimonio spiritus."

"....the Scripture exhibits clear evidence of its being spoken by God, and, consequently, of its containing His heavenly doctrine....Profane men think that religion rests only on opinion, and, therefore, that they may not believe foolishly, or on slight grounds desire and insist to have it proved by reason that Moses and the prophets were divinely inspired. But I answer, that the testimony of the Spirit is superior to reason. For as God alone can properly bear witness to His own words, so these words will not obtain full credit in the hearts of men, until they are sealed by the inward testimony of the Spirit."<sup>1</sup>

"The same Spirit, therefore, who spoke by the mouth of the Prophets must penetrate our hearts in order to convince us that they faithfully delivered the message with which they were divinely intrusted.<sup>2</sup> ....We ask not for proofs or probabilities on which to rest our judgment, but we subject our intellect and judgment to it as too transcendent for us to estimate."<sup>3</sup>

Calvin has rendered a distinctive service in his clear enunciation of this important doctrine, for the believing heart cherishes the conviction that God has spoken not only in the recording of the Scriptures, but that He also can

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1. Instit. I, 7, 4.

2. Ibid., I, 7, 4: "Idem ergo spiritus qui per os prophetarum loquutus est, in corda nostra penetret necesse est, ut persuadeat fideliter protulisse quod divinitus erat mandatum."

3. Ibid., I, 7, 5: "Non argumenta, non verisimilitudines quaerimus quibus iudicium nostrum incumbat; sed, ut rei extra aestimandi aleam positae, iudicium ingeniumque nostrum subiicimus."

Cf. Ibid., I, 9, 3: "....we have no great certainty of the word itself, until it be confirmed by the testimony of the Spirit. For the Lord has so knit together the certainty of His word and His Spirit, that our minds are duly imbued with reverence for the Word when the Spirit shining upon it enables us there to behold the face of God."

and does speak today in their pages by His living Word. To everyone who seeks earnestly for truth and blessedness God vouchsafes the witness of His Spirit, whose coming brings with Him an overpowering persuasion that the Word truly is Divine. Once and for all we may dispense with all outward authority; the human heart experiences the living God and renders to Him absolute obedience as to none other. By this sign alone can a genuine Bible-faith conquer; the possession of this inner experience makes faith incontrovertible; even those who disagree must respect it. Herein lies one of the chief grounds for Calvin's greatness as a Reformer; he has placed this decisive point in the clearest light.<sup>1</sup>

#### D. Calvin's Freer Views of Inspiration.

We have seen that Calvin definitely holds to verbal Inspiration, and that in some places he seems to assert as its method the dictation of the very words by the Holy Spirit to the writers. In the face of this stringent theoretic orthodoxy, it is somewhat surprising to find him departing from his premisses and treating certain portions of Scripture with almost the boldness of a Luther. However, it is definitely to his credit that his sound historical sense allowed him occasionally to break through the bonds of his strict doctrine of Inspiration, and to move more freely. In his Harmony of the Gospels he shows that the letters are not

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1. Cf. Wernle, P., Calvin, pp. 178, 179.



sacred to him; although in other places, drawing strict consequences from the doctrine of verbal Inspiration, he ascribes to all four Gospels precisely similar authority.<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Canonical judgments.

It is significant that Calvin really never faced up to the problem of the Canon; he could give no reasonable account of the inclusion of the particular books that we have received as the authoritative list of inspired books. Professedly rejecting the authority of the Church in this matter, he based canonicity upon the testimony of the Spirit; however this testimony presupposes faith, and hence is of little value for the heathen and unbelievers. By the Scriptures Calvin understood all the books of the Old and New Testaments which have been transmitted to us; nevertheless, he excludes the Apocrypha of the Old Testament as they were determined by the Council of Trent; to him they

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1. Commentarii in harmoniam ex Matt. et Luc. compositam, 1555; cf. Leiboldt, Geschichte des NT Kanons, II, 1908, p. 169. Also Cf. Farrar, F. W., History of Interpretation, pp. 349-350: ".....in spite of his logical intellect, Calvin is in some respects more loose and inconsequent in his views of Inspiration than even Luther was.....Yet he leaves his statements as though they were incontrovertible axioms....Yet if he held that Scripture flowed from the very mouth of God...he gives us no explanation of his own admission of inaccuracies in Scripture,.....of his free tone of criticism,..... and of his almost contemptuous rejection of the whole sacrificial and ceremonial law. How, for instance, can a theory of supernatural dictation agree with the remark that the notion of God making a throne of the Mercy Seat was 'a crass figment' from which even a David and a Hezekiah were not free?"

are libri ecclesiastici, which may be good and useful to read, but they are not libri canonici "ad fidem dogmatum faciendam".<sup>1</sup> Thus here we see somewhat of a contradiction in Calvin; he would fain reject all Churchly authority, but he is compelled to accept the mediaeval tradition in regard to the Canon. We receive the impression that it is merely for form's sake that Calvin undertakes to determine whether disputed books are canonical or not. In reality it is a settled matter with him that they are.<sup>2</sup>

He held that Ezra or someone else edited the Psalter and arbitrarily made the First Psalm an introduction to the collection; in this he did not hesitate to oppose the traditional view that David was the author or editor of the entire Psalter. He likewise regarded Ezra as the author of the prophecy of Malachi, the name of the prophet being only his surname. Calvin also constructed a harmony of the pentateuchal legislation about the Ten Commandments as a centre, asserting that all the rest of the commandments were mere "appendages, which add not the smallest completeness to the Law."<sup>3</sup>

We have from his pen no Commentary on the Apocalypse or on II and III John; however, we cannot on this ground conclude that he rejected them, for he frequently quotes the Apocalypse, sometimes even under John's name, as though it

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1. Acta Synodi Tridentinae, cum antidoto, 1547.

2. Leipoldt, Geschichte des NT Kanons, II, 1908, p. 140;  
cf. also Ritschl., O., Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus, I, 1908, p. 70.

3. Preface to Harmony of the last four books of the Pentateuch.

were an Apostolic writing.<sup>1</sup> Calvin is reported to have once said in conversation that he did not understand the Apocalypse.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, he did not comment on the Song of Solomon, nor the Book of Proverbs, but he often quoted them.

With reference to the account of the woman taken in adultery, he argues that since this section has always been received by the Latin Churches, and is found in many old Greek manuscripts, "and contains nothing unworthy of an Apostolic Spirit, there is no reason why we should refuse to apply it to our advantage."<sup>3</sup> He denied the Pauline authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews because of the differences of style and method of teaching (*ratio docendi*), but admitted, nevertheless, its apostolic spirit and value, "I, indeed, without hesitation, class it among apostolic writings; nor do I doubt but that it has been through the craft of Satan that any have been led to dispute its authority....But the manner of teaching, and the style, sufficiently show that Paul was not the author."<sup>4</sup>

He could not accept the 2nd Epistle of Peter as being genuine, but ascribed it to a pupil of the Apostle:

"What Jerome writes influences me somewhat more, that some, induced by a difference in the style, did not think that Peter was the author... there is that manifest difference that distinguishes different writers. There are also other probable

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1. Cf. Reuss, History of the Canon of the Holy Scriptures in the Christian Church, Eng. tr., 1884, p. 318.
  2. Cf. Leiboldt, Geschichte des NT Kanons, II, p. 48.
  3. Comm. ad John 8:1-11.
  4. Praef. ad Heb.

conjectures by which we may conclude that it was written by another rather than by Peter. At the same time....it has nothing unworthy of Peter, as it shows everywhere the power and the grace of an apostolic spirit..... Doubtless, as in every part of the Epistle the majesty of the Spirit of Christ appears, to repudiate it is what I dread, though I do not here recognize the language of Peter."<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Admission of errors and discrepancies in Scripture.

Indisposed as Calvin was to depart from the traditional Canon, we observe that he moves more freely when taking up individual passages in his Commentaries. Having committed himself to the principle that the whole body of Scripture as handed down to us is the product of Divine dictation, and as such would approve itself as inspired to every one to whom the witness of the Spirit was given, he finds himself confronted with some difficulties when he comes to expound the Bible in conscientious detail.<sup>2</sup>

He is not unaware that the writers of Scripture do not always employ the most felicitous language; solecisms and barbarisms, while not common, do occur. Calvin "harmonizes" this phenomenon by "accommodation"; for example, "Moses everywhere spoke in a homely style, to suit the capacity of the people."<sup>3</sup> David could not speak as a man out of human moods or feelings; all that he said, necessarily so by the theory of verbal Inspiration, must be doctrinally correct. If

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1. Praef. ad II Peter.

2. Cf. Hunter, A. M., The Teaching of Calvin, p. 67.

3. Comm. ad Gen. 6:14.

we think that in Psalm 18:21-24 the words contradict the doctrine of total depravity, we misunderstand them.<sup>1</sup>

In I Cor. 2:9 Paul apparently distorts Isaiah 64:4, giving it a decidedly different meaning than its intended one; here Calvin comments most carefully: "Paul appears to explain this passage differently and to torture it to a different purpose, and even quotes it in different words... In this respect the Apostles were not squeamish; for they paid more attention to the matter than to the words, and reckoned it enough to draw the attention of the reader to a passage of Scripture, from which might be obtained what they taught."<sup>2</sup> Apparently Inspiration guaranteed a misquotation from being a misrepresentation of the original.

Calvin is not over careful in contending for a chronological accuracy of the Synoptic record. In his Harmony of the Gospels he points out that the temptation of Christ which Luke places as second, Matthew relates as third. Calvin remarks: "It signifies nothing at all, for it was not the intention of these Evangelists so to weave the thread of History as always to preserve exactly the order of time, but to collect, as they would present in a mirror or on a tablet, a summary of those things which it is most advantageous for us to know concerning Christ."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Cf. Hunter, op. cit., pp. 72-73.

2. Comm. ad Isa. 64:4.

3. "Neque enim propositum illis Evangelistis fuit historiae filum sic contexere ut temporis rationem semper exacte servarent, sed rerum summas colligere, ut in speculo vel tabula proponerent, quae de Christo maxime utilia sunt cognitu."

Minor discrepancies, although they are to be deplored, do not alter the meaning: the "different phrases 'coat and cloak', and 'cloak and coat' do not alter the sense."<sup>1</sup> At Matt. 27:9, Calvin comments: "The passage itself plainly shows that the name of Jeremiah has been put down by mistake, instead of Zechariah (11:13); for in Jeremiah we find nothing of this sort, nor anything that even approaches it.....How the name of Jeremiah crept in, I confess I know not, nor am I seriously troubled about it."<sup>2</sup>

Concerning Christ's statement of the fact that "a prophet has no honour in his own country", a sentiment that is not universally true, Calvin supposes that this is a proverb: "I have no doubt that this saying was common, and had passed into a proverb; and we know that proverbs are intended to be a graceful expression of what commonly and most frequently happens. In such cases, therefore, it is not necessary that we should rigidly demand uniform accuracy, as if what is stated in a proverb were always true."<sup>3</sup>

Calvin quite legitimately criticizes Stephen's statement that the patriarchs were carried into Canaan after they were dead. Moses (Gen. 50:13) speaks only of the bones of Joseph. Joshua 24:32 records the fact that the bones of Joseph were buried without making any mention of the rest.

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1. Comm. ad Matt. 5:40 and Luke 6:29.

2. "Quomodo Jeremiae nomen obrepserit, me nescire fateor, nec anxie laboro."

3. Comm. ad John 4:44.

Calvin comments:

"....this is either a speech wherein is synecdoche, or else Luke rehearseth this not so much out of Moses, as according to the old fable".<sup>1</sup>

And when Stephen states that Abraham had bought the sepulchre from the sons of Hemor, Calvin recalls:

"....it is manifest that there is a mistake in the word Abraham. For Abraham had bought a double cave of Ephron the Hittite (Gen. 23:9) to bury his wife Sarah in; but Joseph was buried in another place, to wit, in the field which his father Jacob had bought of the sons of Hemor for an hundred lambs. Wherefore this passage must be amended."<sup>2</sup>

At Romans 10:6, 7, Paul appropriates Moses' reference to the Law (Deut. 30:12), and applies it to the Gospel as well. What Moses says of the heavens and the sea as being places remote and inaccessible to men, Paul accommodates to the death and resurrection of Christ, as though there were some spiritual mystery concealed in the words. Calvin admits that there is ground for disturbance, since Paul has improperly applied the passage and turned the words to a different meaning. Calvin "explains" that Moses had not been speaking of the Law only, but of the whole of God's truth, which includes the Gospel:

"If any one thinks that this interpretation is too strained and too refined, let him understand that it was not the object of the Apostle strictly to explain this passage, but to apply it to the explanation of his present subject. He does not,

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1. Comm. ad Acts 7:16.

2. Ibid., "...hic locus corrigendus est."

therefore, repeat verbally what Moses has said, but makes alterations, by which he accommodates more suitably to his own purpose the testimony of Moses."<sup>1</sup>

"Here is also an allusion, rather than a proper and a strict quotation."<sup>2</sup>

We note with astonishment Calvin's ability to devise expedients which will force the facts into the mould of his preconceived theories of Inspiration. When there seems to be doubt about the arrangement of the words of Scripture as we have them, Calvin very smoothly reminds us that not the words themselves should be our main concern, but the doctrinal content. By allowing that the New Testament writers quoted the Old Testament with freedom, paying attention only to the sense (and sometimes, as we have seen, even this is disregarded), Calvin rather seriously qualifies his theory of verbal Inspiration.<sup>3</sup>

If Calvin cannot escape Paul's inaccurate quotation of Isaiah 64:4 at I Cor. 2:9, to which passing reference has already been made, he thinks that Paul used the LXX version, following the Greek interpreters "who have translated it in this way through having been misled by the resemblance between one letter and another." However, the word used in the LXX is different from that which Paul employs, and the Hebrew corresponding words could hardly be mistaken for it. Calvin then leaps to the conclusion that Paul's citation and meaning of the quotation must be taken as the best interpretation of the

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1. Comm. ad Rom. 10:6.

2. Ibid., ad Rom. 10:9.

3. Cf. Hunter, A. M., op. cit., p. 73.



original form: "We ought to place more dependence on Paul's meaning than upon any other consideration. For where shall we find a surer or more faithful interpreter of this authoritative declaration, which the Spirit of God dictated to Isaiah than He Himself in the exposition which He has furnished by the mouth of Paul?"<sup>1</sup>

With regard to I Cor. 10:8, where Paul speaks of twenty-three thousand instead of twenty-four thousand, Calvin observes: "It is not a new thing, where it is not intended to present a minute enumeration of individuals, to give a number which substantially approximates the actual truth."<sup>2</sup>

We find that discrepancy in quotation applies not only to form, but also where we should least expect it, with regard to content. Calvin admits that Paul's quotation of Psalm 68:18 in Eph. 4:8 leaves something still to be desired: "To serve the purpose of his argument, Paul has departed not a little from the true meaning of this quotation."<sup>3</sup> Commenting on the next verse, he says, "Paul does not here reason in the manner of a logician...Paul merely alludes to the prophet's words....as on another occasion he accommodates to his own subject a passage taken from the writings of Moses."<sup>4</sup> He compares Heb. 11:21 and Gen. 48:31, remarking that in the matter

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1. Comm. ad I Cor. 2:9.

2. Ibid. ad I Cor. 10:8: "Novum non est, ubi non est positum minutim singula capita recensere, numerum ponere qui circiter accedit."

3. Comm., ad Eph. 4:8.

4. Ibid., 4:9.

of quotation "the apostles have not been so very scrupulous; in substance (in re ipsa) there is little difference."<sup>1</sup> With reference to John's phrases, "I have written unto you, fathers", Calvin observes, "These repetitions I deem superfluous";<sup>2</sup>--a strange statement, indeed, for one who could at the same time hold to the theory of a dictation of the words by the Holy Spirit.

"Calvin's doctrine of Scripture was really a hypothesis necessitated by the exigencies of the situation, a presupposition requisite to the stability of his whole theological system, the Creed, and the Church. He came to Scripture with that doctrine, rather than drew it from Scripture, though he discovered therein assertions which substantiated his view to his own satisfaction. ...The vindication of his theory in detail demanded an amazing amount of strenuous ingenuity, of whose disingenuousness he seems to be as unconscious at times as of its unconvincingness. One may say that never did the idea of the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures receive such emphatic refutation as at the hands of this vehement champion, whose frequent transparent evasions, jugglings, and violences are in themselves a confession of its futility."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Comm. ad Heb. 11:21.

2. Comm. ad I John 2:14.

3. Hunter, A. M., op. cit., p. 72.

Conclusion: Summary of General Reformation View of Inspiration.

One of the fundamental results of the Reformation, as well as a motivating impulse, was the setting up of the Scriptures as authoritative, in contradistinction to the traditions of the Church, scholastic opinions, and ancient authorities. In this respect, the Calvinist and Lutheran theologies are in essential agreement; from Pope, Church, and Tradition, the appeal was made directly to Scripture itself. And yet, it must be remembered that the infallibility which was once attributed to the Church, was not, in the Reformation period, attributed in the same way to the Bible; Catholic and Protestant do not mean the same thing by infallibility. To the Roman Church is due an implicit faith, an unswerving, blind obedience; the Reformers, on the other hand, while holding to the prime authority of Scripture, reserved the right to criticize it in the interests of religious truth. The voice of the Church produced obedience; from its dictates there was no right of appeal. But in the Protestant conception, allowing the right and duty of private, individual and reverent interpretation, there tends to ensue a divergence of opinion, a divergence which, in regard to matters non-fundamental, may at times even be welcomed.

"The Reformers proclaimed the Scriptures to be the supreme standard, yet the authority which they practically acknowledged was not that of the whole Bible, but the authority of the Bible as a whole, interpreted from its centre."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Paterson, W. P., The Rule of Faith, London, 1932, 4th ed., pp. 57, 58.

A wholesome emphasis upon historical interpretation, and a strictly grammatical exegesis, is another characteristic which we must note. Lawless allegorizing was repudiated, especially as a reaction against some of the ridiculous extremes to which the sectaries went. An increasing confidence manifested itself in the ability of Scripture to be its own interpreter; the clear passages were employed to explain the obscure, and through it all, an essential consistency was discerned.

The Reformers quite generally, and Luther in particular, made a distinction between the Scriptures and the "Word of God". The Scriptures were thought of as containing the Word which God sought to reveal to mankind; this implies that there must also be contained in Scripture some material that, strictly speaking, is not the Word of God. We misunderstand the Reformers' thought, however, if we think of this distinction in too mechanical or formal terms. The common illustration of kernel and husk will not do here; the relationship is more organic. As the body is to the soul, so the Scriptures are to the Word of God; it is something essentially organic and vital. The Reformers would probably repudiate the statement that "the Bible contains the Word of God"; they rightly would reply that "the Bible is the Word of God" in a deep and pregnant sense. They held that the substance of all Scripture is definitely the Word of God, and that no artificial sundering of component parts is tolerable.

Unquestionably the most valuable contribution the Reformation thinkers as a whole made to the idea of the Inspir-

ation of the Scriptures, especially as regards our study here, was the insistence upon religious experience as a prerequisite and an accompaniment to all interpretation of the Bible. The doctrinal contents of the Bible did not determine their approach to the experience of salvation; on the other hand, and most emphatically, it was living experience in Christ Jesus that coloured their view of the Bible.

"The Reformers' conception.....rises directly out of religious experience. In its (the Scripture's) pages they found a redeeming God entering into personal touch with men; the Bible is no mere collection of truths, but God's converse with his people."<sup>1</sup>

"Deeper than the professed doctrine of verbal inspiration lay such an assurance of God's saving love in Christ as led them to put aside as trifles whatever minor discrepancies the Biblical narratives might contain."<sup>2</sup>

This world-shaking change of view amounted to a virtual rediscovery of the Scriptures, and this new discovery was due to a vivid conception of faith as trust in a personal Redeemer. Never again could the Bible be to the Reformers what it had been to the mediaeval scholastics. Henceforth revelation was to be something more than the impartation of speculative propositions; the goal of the Church, as the invisible body of Christ, was to be not alone the achievement of correct doctrine. It consisted in a living relationship to Christ, its centre and fountainhead.

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1. Mackintosh, H. R., in Gore, The Doctrine of the Infallible Book, London, 1924, pp. 55, 56.
  2. Ibid., p. 60.

"To the Reformers the chief function of Scripture was to bring Jesus Christ near us; and as Jesus always fills the full sphere of God to them, the chief end of Scripture is to bring God near me. It is the direct message of God's love to me,--not doctrine, but promise....not display of God's thoughts, but of God Himself as my God."<sup>1</sup>

Saving faith and Scripture are always thought of together; as in Scholasticism, they are not primarily intellectual propositions, but present the possibility of glorious spiritual experience.

Hence, there can be no authority which does not carry with it the imperative of faith; faith apprehends the truths of Scripture, and faith sustains the experience into which we have entered. The only infallibility which the great Reformers knew anything about, in spite of occasional utterances to the contrary, was the infallibility of Scripture with reference to its purpose: namely, to lead men to God. The Scriptures are an infallible guide to salvation; and it is essentially this for which the Reformers contended.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Lindsay, T. M., History of the Reformation, 2nd ed., 1907, Vol. I, pp. 460, 461.

2. Paterson, W. P., op. cit., p. 76: "...the only criticism that can be made on the old Protestant theology is that it professed to be objectively reproducing the whole content of Scripture, when it was actually editing Scripture in the light of an assured central content of Scripture....It is beyond dispute that the fundamental conviction of the Reformers was that the Gospel is true which was preached by Christ, and more fully unfolded by the Apostle Paul. It was not so much that they accepted the Gospel because they knew the Bible to be the Word of God, as that they claimed all perfection for the Bible because through it they had come into possession of the vivifying gospel of the grace of God."

And yet, this fresh, revitalizing approach notwithstanding, certain confusions and contradictions are apparent, problems with which the Reformers did not feel called upon to deal, and which were passed on to a later century, with rather unfortunate results. One of the weaknesses was the failure to define exactly what was meant by the "analogy of faith" according to which Scripture was to be interpreted. There could be no certain agreement as to what the substance of faith was, witness the acrimonies of later controversies. The tendency was for the thought of Inspiration to crystallize, and for the rule of faith to be identified with Scripture. Had the precise nature of Inspiration and infallibility been defined, some of these difficulties might have been avoided.

It is regrettable that this inconsistency between the new evangelical spirit of freedom and a tendency to be bound too closely by the written Word, was not actually faced by the Reformers. Their deep religious sentiment caused them to avoid a detailed consideration of the processes by which the Scriptures came into being; and probably it is well enough that they placed the emphasis where they did. They were engaged in a great work of spiritual emancipation, and they reserved for a later time the investigation of the precise extent of Inspiration. Whether scientific, philosophical, and historical problems came within the range of Scriptural authority, or whether its value lay primarily in its ethical and religious truths, they did not thoroughly consider. They categorically assumed the authority of the Bible, always treating it in relation to its central point, Christ.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Cf. Beard, C., Reformation of the 16th Century, p. 123ff.  
Ladd, G. T., Doctrine of Sacred Scripture, Vol. II, pp.164ff.

PART III.      POST-REFORMATION VIEWS OF INSPIRATION.

Introductory:    The New Protestant Scholasticism.

In its mighty conflict with Rome, Protestantism had been driven back to an increasingly detailed examination of its own fundamental premises. Having rejected the authority of the Church, and having set up the Scripture as the infallible source of knowledge and judge of Christian truth, both Lutherans and Calvinists were compelled to carry forward their defence of the Word with the utmost shrewdness and minuteness of detail. They sought to defend the wall where it was being attacked, and oftener than not they sallied forth into the camp of the enemy. It was felt that if Roman Catholicism could cast effective suspicion upon the full Inspiration of the Scriptures, the Protestants would be robbed of their chief weapon, and at the same time Rome herself would not be seriously injured. And it was not only the conflict against ecclesiasticism and hierarchical authority that occupied the Reformers, but also that against the "fanatics" who treated the Word of God with little respect, and against the Arminians and Socinians who



held to a merely partial Inspiration of Scripture.<sup>1</sup>

However, the Reformation doctrine of the Scriptures, because it was not as fully worked out as it might have been, and contained a number of vital inconsistencies, held within itself the elements of a fierce potential conflict. Beginning by proclaiming the Bible as the sole and sufficient authority, both as respecting doctrine and life, the Protestant formulation tended toward a crystallization of the divine Word as the regula fidei, the infallible test of all interpretation. It was therefore necessary to demonstrate with the greatest thoroughness that all parts of Scripture were equally and absolutely inspired and infallible. This tenet became the principium omnium fidei articulorum,<sup>2</sup> the one essential truth,

1. Elert, W., Morphologie des Luthertums; Theologie und Weltanschauung des Luthertums, hauptsächlich im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert, Munich, 1931, Bd. I, p. 172:

"Sie hängt mit dem evangelischen Ansatz auf das engste zusammen, indem ja die Wendung von der Angst vor Gottes Zorn zum Glauben und zur neuen Gerechtigkeit ausschliesslich durch die Verkündigung des Evangeliums und vorbereitend auch durch die Verkündigung des Gesetzes, also durch das 'Wort Gottes' hervorgebracht wird. Ist aber der Glaube auf der andern Seite Erzeugnis des göttlichen Geistes, so ist der Satz von der Verbundenheit der Geistwirkung mit der Wortwirkung unvermeidbar. Notwendig ist diese Verbundenheit, weil nach gemeinlutherischer Ueberzeugung eine nicht durch das äussere Wort vermittelte Geistwirkung Schwärmerei ist."

Cf. Rohnert, W., Die Inspiration der heilige Schrift, p.170.

2. Diestel, Geschichte des AT in der christlichen Kirche, Jena, 1869, p. 319. He adds, Ibid., "Alle Media zwischen der thatsächlichen Offenbarung und der gläubigen Aneignung des Schriftwortes verblassten zu blossen Durchgangsmomenten, welche den reinen Strahl des göttlichen Lichtes weder brechen noch trüben konnten."

without which the other truths of the Gospel had no basis. However, it must never be lost sight of that the equal authority and absolute infallibility of the Scriptures is not only a matter of faith, but also a matter of fact, to be determined by reverent, critical investigation. Protestantism itself had started upon the road to unfettered exegesis and open inquiry; but unfortunately, this freer spirit was soon smothered by a new scholasticism, just as rigid, uncompromising and binding as the old had been.

"When the first act of the Reformation was closed, and the great men had passed away, whose presence seemed to supply the strength which was found in the recognition of the one living body of Christ, their followers invested the Bible as a whole, with all the attributes of mechanical infallibility, which the Romanists had claimed for the Church. Pressed by the necessities of their position, the disciples of Calvin were contented to maintain the direct and supernatural action of a guiding power on the very words of the inspired writer, without any regard to his personal or national position."<sup>1</sup>

The great temptation, and it was a temptation that was not seriously resisted, was to rely too exclusively upon the Bible solely as a textbook of coordinated propositions of systematic theology. From this arose the supposed necessity of endowing the Scripture with the well-known affectiones; perspicuity, sufficiency, authority, and self-interpretation. But, for the free, unbiassed interpretation of Scripture the post-Reformation dogmatists tended to substitute their own ready-made theological views. The technical system of doctrine

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1. Westcott, B. F., Introduction to the Study of the Gospels, 5th ed., London, 1875, p. 5

contained in the homogeneous, verbally-dictated whole of Scripture, came to be regarded as being as sacred as the Book itself. Hence, difference of opinion was not tolerated, and no attempt was made to investigate the presuppositions on a scientific basis.

"In spite of much theological labour and activity, the period....is very cheerless. It was a period in which liberty was exchanged for bondage; universal principles for beggarly elements; truth for dogmatism; independence for tradition; religion for system. A living reverence for Scripture was superseded by a dead theory of Inspiration. Genial orthodoxy gave place to iron uniformity, and living thought to controversial dialectics."<sup>1</sup>

One of the root difficulties lay in equating Scripture and the "Word of God", the mere record of the revelation and the revelation itself. No doubt, the source of most of the errors in the post-Reformation view of Scripture was in just this abrogation of all substantial differentiation between the Bible and its saving contents, namely, the "Word of God".<sup>2</sup>

Another distinction that was ignored was that between the Inspiration of persons and that of sacred writings. In its original sense Inspiration referred to persons; in its secondary, or mediate sense, it pertained to writings. When the Scriptures came to be explained as God's exclusive work, then the human element no longer had any place in the explan-

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1. Farrar, F. W., History of Interpretation, p. 358. He also quotes Romberg, Die Lehre Luthers, Wittenberg, 1868, p.18: "Man war aus der Region der Lebenswarmen und seines Heilbringenden Glaubens, in die Eisregion des Verstandes getreten...des schematisierenden und reflectierenden Verstandes."
  2. Ladd, G. T., Doctrine of Sacred Scripture, II, p. 176: "The equivalence of immediate revelation and Scripture is the foundation of the dogmatic argumentation of this entire era."

ation of the origin of the Bible; the original living power working through men was annihilated as an effective factor. The writings contained in phrases, words, and letters became all-important. Then, as we shall soon see in writers such as Chemnitz, Gerhard, Calov, Quenstedt, and others, it became quite easy to designate the human authors of Scripture as "amanuenses of God", "hands of Christ", "scribes and notaries of the Holy Spirit"; the writers were not even instruments, but "living and writing pens". In these circumstances, all the individuality of the Apostles and writers virtually was effaced. While the state of ecstasy, so prominent a feature of the Inspiration-theory of Montanism, was not accepted, nevertheless passivity was deemed an essential characteristic of him who was inspired. All human activity being in abeyance, all that was required of the writers was to record mechanically the words which were dictated by the Spirit. In no sense were the men themselves inspired; it was a matter of indifference whether or not they understood what they were writing; in fact, it might even be considered dangerous for them to understand, for that would possibly detract from the pure divinity of the contents.<sup>1</sup>

When legitimate theological exegesis had been used to defend the essential principles of Protestantism against

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1. Dorner, I. A., A System of Christian Doctrine, Edinburgh, 1888, Vol. II, p. 188: "...the effect was to degrade to passivity secondary causalities which yet cannot be dispensed with, if Revelation is supposed to be given for the purpose of being assimilated and conserved by living acceptance."

Catholicism, it did noble service; but now, after the Reformation, when this exegesis had to descend to the level of scholastic subtleties, progress and illumination were impossible. The Scriptures were brought forward as a mere collection of dicta probantia in order to substantiate the doctrine fixed in the symbols. The symbols stood firm, in spite of anything else that could be said to the contrary; they remained as a canon of interpretation above the Scriptures. The proof-texts were handled like legal documents, their number, value, and order were weighed, and citations from as many passages as possible were massed in overwhelming support of a desired proposition. The appeal to the "witness of the Holy Spirit" was rendered impotent, if not ironical; practically, it amounted to an inner conviction that one's doctrinal formulations were correct. Even though Luther always discouraged loyalty to himself as a person, his followers virtually canonized him and enshrined what he had said in the most sacrosanct fashion; in spite of the fact that he found room for improvement in his translation of the Bible, and in some of his controversial writings, the epigoni regarded whatever Doctor Martin had written as inviolate and final.

The great Reformers never intended to bind the yoke so heavily; they not only constantly exercised the liberty of criticizing the individual utterances of various writers, but questioned even the very composition of the Canon. They would rather be inconsistent than unreasonably rigid; faith and Christian experience were not bound within the prison-house

of slavish literalism. Their successors, however, regarded faith as being dependent upon the Scriptures, and ensuing from them alone. "They turned the Inspiration dogma into an iron formula, a painful juridicial fetter of conscience to be imposed on Christians to the detriment of fresh religious life and the destruction of a just appreciation of the Bible."<sup>1</sup>

We note, further, that as the doctrine of infallibility and verbal Inspiration was applied to all the details of Scripture, the claims of grammatical and scientific exegesis were rejected. God being the author of all parts of the Bible equally, and the apostles and prophets only His amanuenses, historical and critical research was thereby rendered unnecessary. It was more important to know where to find a good text against an opponent, or how to parry an opponent's thrust (if he happened to use the same text) by exegetical fencing. With such petty, underhand tactics, it is not surprising that the dogma of Inspiration extended even to the vowel-points and accents, and that barbarisms and solecisms were considered to be impossible.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Hagenbach, K. R., History of the Reformation, I, 161; quoted by Farrar, F. W., History of Interpretation, p. 372.

2. Reuss, E., History of Sacred Scriptures of NT, Edinburgh, 1884, p. 574 f. Cf. Diestel, Geschichte des ATs, p. 319:

"Das Merkmal der Infallibilität liess keine Art von Widersprüchen in der Bibel zu, welche sonst auch die Offenbarung Gottes selbst trafen; die neue Scholastik wollte nur einen rein logischen Begriff von Wahrheit kennen. Und dieser wiederum forderte, die durchgängige Einheit der Schrift zu urgieren bis zur völligen Gleichförmigkeit,--ein Schritt, den aber die Ausbildung der Exegese eher hemmte als forderte..."

"Die völlige Sicherheit des Textes, gefordert von der Unfehlbarkeit und der perspicuitas des Erkenntnissprinzips, geräth in Gefahr theils durch die genauere Kenntniss der von der Massora überlieferten verschiedenen Lesarten und durch die Vergleichung des hebräischen Textes mit den Uebersetzungen, theils durch die These, dass die gesammte Vokalisation der alttestamentlichen Urkunden den Rabbinenschulen nachchristlicher Jahrhunderte ihren Ursprung verdanke, mithin nicht inspiriert sein könne."

Chapter Eight: ORTHODOX LUTHERAN CONCEPTIONS OF INSPIRATION.

We distinguish three periods within the Lutheran orthodoxy of the latter half of the sixteenth, and in the seventeenth centuries: (1) The Melanchthonian, in which there was no systematically developed dogmatic, but which by means of a thoroughgoing investigation of Scripture, dealt with the items of faith as outlined by the Formula of Concord; (2) the Synthetic, in which dogmaticians proceeded from a treatment of the doctrine of God, to Christ, salvation, etc.; and (3) the Analytic, in which the reverse movement was adopted, working back to the doctrine of God, and a treatment that resulted in far more attention to detail. It is our purpose, in the following summary, to set forth the views on Inspiration of the outstanding Lutheran dogmatists for approximately 150 years; some of them hold to unmodified verbal Inspiration, and all of them adhere to the strictest views of Inspiration and infallibility of Scripture.

A. Melanchthonian Period.

1. Flacius Illyricus (d. 1575).

The first representative of the view of verbal Inspiration among the Lutheran theologians, Flacius, in his Clavis scripturae sacrae,<sup>1</sup> regarded every letter and word of the Old

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1. Matthias Flacius Illyricus, Clavis scripturae sacrae, ed. Joh. Musaeus, 1674 (first published 1567), Jena.

and New Testaments as the direct result of immediate, Divine Inspiration.<sup>1</sup> The Holy Spirit is at the same time the author and interpreter of Scripture; there is only one proper Author, although there are various writers.<sup>2</sup> There is no essential difference, according to Flacius, between Scripture and the Word of God; what the Bible teaches is God's message to mankind. The Prophets and Apostles, speaking as God's representatives, bring to us the very words which God Himself

1. Flacius, Clavis, I, praef. fol. 2: Sacra scriptura a Deo θεοπνευστος -- divinitus inspirata dicitur, quia spiritus sanctus eam per os sanctorum Dei organorum locutus est, et per eorundum manus conscripsit; sicut de Hieremia legitur c. 36, quod perinde prompte duabus vicibus librum suum scribae dictaverit, ac si de libro omnia illa recitaret, nimirum suggerente ei domini spiritu.
2. Ibid., II, Tractatus, I, p. 8: Spiritus sanctus est autor simul et explicator scripturae.....sicut a spiritu sancto per prophetas proposita est, ita eiusdem lumine necessario explicari debet..... Defendenda est modis omnibus autoritas istius externae et divinitus patefactae aut pronuntiatae doctrinae.
  - p. 62: Unicus est autor omnium sacrorum librorum; non plures diversi; nempe ipsemet Deus.
  - p. 64: Deus sacras literas seu eam doctrinam locutus est ad genus humanum.
  - p. 179, Nr. 115: Cumque Deo autore prodita sit scriptura, et Deus ipse sit incommutabilis veritas, qui fieri potest, ut humana ratione labefactetur? p. 118, Nr. 118: Ceterum omnes scripturae non a servis, sed ab universorum domino Deo venerunt ad nos.
  - p. 673: Solae ipsae (sc. scripturae) sunt a Deo ipso idque immediate traditae.
  - p. 689: Spiritus sanctus eius autor.....



intends.<sup>1</sup> He asks, where else should we expect to hear the Holy Spirit speaking to us, if not in Scripture; only in the Scripture is to be found God's truth, and the doctrine which He would have us accept.<sup>2</sup> If we find individualisms in the style of Paul or John, so much more does that indicate that the Holy Spirit has been the author; indeed, the very choice

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1. Flacius, Von der heil. Schrift und irer wirckung, wider Caspar Schwenckfeld, 1554: A: So wil der liebe Gott mit uns durch solche lere und erkenntnis handeln, so durch unser leibliche Oren und Augen zum hertzen eingehet. Und darzu hat er (er sag ich, nicht wir) verordnet die heilige Schrift, so er selbst geredt unnd gegeben hat, welche darumb auch billich sein wort heisst.  
B: Was Gottis wort sey, oder, das die heilige Schrift Gottis wort sey..... Die heilige Schrift heist sehr oft, ja schier unzelich mal Gottes wort, eben die sprüche meinung, lere, Sententias (oder wie mans immer ausreden kann) die Gott selbst zu den Propheten, und durch sie zu seinem Volck geredt hat, und den Nachkommen zu gute in Bücher hat verzeichnen oder verfassen lassen, welche man jetzt die heilige Schrift oder die Bibel nennet.  
C: Aus dem allen ist nu klar und offenbar, das Gottes wort in der heiligen Schrift sey, und heisse eben die ware lere, so Gott selbst durch die Propheten und Aposteln zum menschlichen geschlecht geredet, und im offenbaret hat.  
D: Als das ist ja gewis, das Gott die Zehen gebot zu Mose und den Jüden geredt hat. Item, das Gott der Propheten Bücher oder Predigt, und Christus die predigte, so von den Evangelisten beschrieben seind, geredt hat. Item, das die andern stück der heiligen Schrift, von dem heiligen Geiste geredt und geschrieben worden sind. Hat nu Gott selbst die Schrift geredt und gesprochen, wie es denn Esaias zum offtermal widerholet, der mund des Herrn hat es geredt. Item, so saget der Herr, etc. So mus notwendig folgen, das sie Gottes rede oder wort sey, und heissen soll.
2. Von der heil. Schrift, D: Und wie solt uns der heilige Geist, nicht eben in die schrift, als sein eigen buch und lere weisen, und dadurch uns lernen, alles was zu wissen von nöten ist, so er sie doch selbst gemacht, und den Patriarchen, Propheten und Aposteln darumb gegeben hat, das sie eine Gottselige lere den menschen damit fürlegten, ja das er selbst durch iren mund die menschen also lerete. Clavis, II, 687: Probemus, solas sacras literas esse verum verbum aut doctrinam Dei ac vocem Christi; sive simul auribus sonum accipiendo sive oculis legendo, sive denique sola animi cogitatione percipiantur. Ibid, p. 757: Christus et apostoli citantes Moysen et prophetas comprobarunt esse Dei scripturam aut librum verbumque. Cf. Clavis, II, 9; p. 64, Nr. 38; p.178, Nr. 111; p. 694; p. 710 f.

of words is to be attributed to the Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

The Spirit accommodated Himself to human understanding, preferring to employ customary usages in vocabulary and idiom; and moreover, each writer while he wrote experienced every insight and emotion of the person whose thoughts and speech

1. Clavis, II, p. 64, Nr. 38: (Christus) edocuit et misit apostolos suos, sicut ipse a patre missus fuit, instructos certissimis ac evidentissimis miraculis; ita ut testarentur de eo verissime, coram toto orbe terrarum; adeo ut non illi loquerentur sed spiritus patris coelestis per os eorum.
- p. 92, Nr. 2: Prodest...nosse propheticorum librorum scriptores non tam ipsos locutos esse illas prophetias aut conciones, quam Deum ipsum. Quare sciendum est, prophetas fuisse personas, divinitus ac immediate vocatas, ad praedicationem doctrinae coelestis, de peccato et benedicto semine; quin potius (ut dictum est) non illos; sed ipsummet Deum, per os eorum locutum esse ad genus humanum, eam doctrinam, quam illi inspiratione spiritus sancti conscripserunt, posteritatique reliquerunt.
- p. 694: Spiritus sanctus inquit per Paulum, suum electum organum, non solum ad Timotheum; sed etiam ad omnem Christianum hominem, atque adeo totam ecclesiam: 2. Tim. 3:14-17.
- p. 733: Paulus apostolus clare pronunciat esse peccatum... An posset aliquid clarius dici, aut tantum excogitari, ad asserendum, manentem concupiscentiam esse verum peccatum: quam quod hic spiritus sanctus tam grandibus et quasi atrocibus verbis, per hoc selectissimum Christi organum, tam constanter ac perseveranter ingeminat?
- p. 765: Necesse est, scriptores bibliorum omnes ab uno Deo rectos esse; qui per os et calamus eorum sua nobis oracula evulgavit.
- p. 732: Quis dubitat, spiritum sanctum multo aptius et certius sua sensa, verbis a se delectis, in sacris literis exprimere potuisse; quam ullus mortalium, sua humana industria, postea in convertendis eius monumentis?

he was recording.<sup>1</sup> This view has the distinct merit of not doing undue violence to human personality, in that it emphasizes the inner experience of the writers; while Divine dictation was the method, the writers were not mechanically manipulated as mere puppets. Not all the orthodox Protestant dogmaticians would allow this view, as we shall see.

Flacius goes on to assert the complete truth and inerrancy of every statement and word of the Scripture, for, according to Matthew 5:18 and 24:35, not a single jot or tittle of the Law shall fall; sooner shall heaven and earth pass away than that the Word shall be invalidated.<sup>2</sup> While

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1. Clavis, II, p. 145, Nr. 1.

Ibid., II, p. 205, Nr. 215: Famulum tuum, domine, scripturae huius dispensatorem, spiritu tuo plenum, ita honoramus: ut hoc eum, te revelante, cum haec scriberet, attendisse credamus, quod in eis maxime et luce veritatis et fruge utilitatis excellit. Ita, cum alius dixerit: hoc sensit, quod ergo, et alius: imo illud, quod ego: religiosus me arbitror dicere: cur non utrumque potius, si utrumque verum est? et si quid tertium, et si quid quartum et si quid omnino aliud verum in his verbis videat: cur non omnia illa vidisse credatur, per quem unus Deus sacras literas, vera et diversa visuris, multorum sensibus temperavit? Sensit enim scriptor libri sacri in his verbis atque cogitavit, cum ea scriberet, quicquid hic veri potuimus invenire; et quicquid nos non potuimus aut nondum possumus; et tamen in eis inveniri potest.

2. Ibid., II, 711: Omnipotens ac misericors ille Deus ob hoc ipsum conscribi suam religionem voluit; illaque sacrosancta monumenta omnibus temporibus.....conservavit; atque adeo etiam munda ab innumeris mendis, quibus omnes etiam recens conscripti libri sunt contaminatissimi, praeservavit: ut genus humanum, praesertimque dilecta ecclesia, certos ac infallibiles libros haberet, unde veram ac sinceram religionem hauriret.

Cf. Ibid., II, 8 (Nr. 6) 709.

he does not expressly make Inspiration dependent upon the original verbal Inspiration of the Hebrew vowel-points, he at least implies that they were inspired. He argues that if God had not previously communicated to the people of Israel a knowledge of the vowel-points, He would not have commanded them to write the Law upon altars of stone, according to Deut. 27:5, 8. Further, the Holy Spirit wrote the Old Testament that it might be understood, and not that it might be unintelligible; this written record, as it passed from generation to generation, would have been vague and inaccurate, if the vowel-points had not been originally present.<sup>1</sup> Hence, Flacius does not stop short of a thoroughgoing verbal Inspiration of the entire Scripture, in all its minutest details.

## 2. Martin Chemnitz (d. 1586).

Chemnitz's chief interest in asserting the full Inspiration and authority of the Scriptures was that he might thus more effectively do battle against the Roman Catholic Church. In his monumental Examen Concilii Tridentini,<sup>2</sup> he opposes the

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1. Flacius, Clavis, II, 646f.; 649.

2. Chemnitz, Examen Concilii Tridentini, the first ed. of which appeared at Frankfort in 1565-1573, in 4 parts. Subsequent editions have appeared at frequent intervals, the last being at Berlin in 1861. Koelling, W., Die Lehre von der Theopneustie, Breslau, 1891, p. 213, says of the Examen, that it "ist ja anerkannt das grösste apologetisch-polemische Werk, welches je gegen Rom, und nach unserer Meinung das grösste Werk dieser Art, welches überhaupt je geschrieben worden ist." Ritschl, O., Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus, I, 158, adds: "Chemnitz ist der erste lutherische Polemiker im grossen Stile, und sein Examen concilii Tridentini gerade auch für die Gestaltung der ferneren lutherischen Dogmatik epochemachend gewesen."

Romanists for their giving equal authority to tradition and Scripture, for canonizing the Apocrypha, for setting up the Vulgate as the authoritative text, and for identifying the Roman interpretation with the Word of God itself. He strongly objects to tradition being considered, equally along with Scripture, the product of verbal Inspiration: a Spiritu Sancto dictante.<sup>1</sup>

The most complete discussion of the Inspiration and full authority of the Scriptures is given in the Examen; in his Loci, he leaves the doctrine almost wholly undiscussed. It is certain that God Himself, through His own will, has given to mankind His sure Word, which has been amply confirmed

1. The 1st Decree of the IV. Tridentine Session of April 5, 1546, had thus defined the source of doctrine: "Hanc veritatem et disciplinam contineri in libris scriptis et sine scripto traditis, quae ex ipsius Christi ore ab apostolis acceptae aut ipsis apostolis Spiritu Sancto dictante quasi per manus traditae usque ad nos pervenerunt." The Decree further expressly asserted that tradition was to be received "pari pietatis affectu ac reverentia", along with the written Word of God.

In opposition to the Roman Catholic apotheosis of the Vulgate version, Chemnitz recognized as inspired only the Scriptures as we have them from their original texts, from the Greek and the Hebrew. Cf. Examen, 556: "Hoc vero non est tolerandum in ecclesia, ut pro iis, quae spiritus sanctus in fontibus Hebraeis et Graecis scripsit, ea quae ab interprete vitiose reddita, vel a librariis mutata, mutilata et addita sunt, tanquam authentica nobis obtrudantur: et quidem ita, ut non liceat inspectis fontibus ea rejicere."

2. Loci theologici, ed. Polycarp Leyser, 3 vols., Frankfort, 1591. Cf. Locus II, de lege Dei, 6, where Chemnitz asserts that the Decalogue was written by the finger of God, and that the rest of the Law was dictated to Moses.

by miracles.<sup>1</sup> From the beginning there has always been a Divine revelation, but this obviously has not been in a written form; now, if men had been angels, or if mankind had not fallen from its original high estate, the written record would not have been necessary.

So then, it was necessary, for three reasons, to preserve the purity of doctrine:

(1) Because of the anti-theistic character of the fallen world: "versamur in hoc mundo, cuius iudicium e diametro pugnat cum iudicio Spiritus Sancti in rebus fidei."

(2) Because of the anti-theistic nature of fallen human reason: "ratio nostra extollit se contra agnitionem Dei."

(3) Finally, because of the lies of Satan: "Diabolus est mendax."

The definitive act in inaugurating the written Word of God took place on Mount Sinai, when God Himself gave the Decalogue, His own Scriptures, the writing of His own finger.<sup>2</sup> Hence, the Bible is invested with a special sacredness and

1. Examen, 8: "Certum enim est, Deum ipsum se et voluntatem suam dato certo verbo, quod ingentibus miraculis confirmavit, generi humano patefecisse."

2. Ibid., 9: "Deum non tantum instituisse, sed ipsum suo facto et exemplo cum primus verba decalogi scripsit, dedicasse et consecrasset viam illam et rationem, ut per scripturas divinitus inspiratas conservetur et retineatur doctrinae caelestis puritas. Ita prima origo sacrae Scripturae Deum ipsum habebit auctorem."

Ibid., 10: "Multum enim ad dignitatem et auctoritatem sacrae scripturae illustrandam facit, quod Deus ipse rationem, comprehendendi literis doctrinam coelestem non tantum instituit, mandavit, sed quod illam primus scriptis verbis Decalogi suis digitis initiavit."

Inspiration, for God is at once its Author and Dictator. The further purity of doctrine was insured by God's consigning the writing of subsequent portions of Scripture to human authors, who wrote only as God wished them to write.<sup>1</sup> Since pure doctrine is the highest good of the Church, it is necessary that there be not only relative, but absolute protection for the heavenly treasure. For this purpose, a mere Divine-human coöperation is not enough; there must be an immediate, creative beginning in the act of revelation. The Lord Himself, through His "paterna sollicitudo", protects this high treasure of the Church;<sup>2</sup> thus is secured a thorough-going harmony between the various parts of the Old Testament, and especially between Moses and the Prophets. The Prophets did not contradict themselves, but through Divine revelation added illuminating interpretations of the Law, and in a real sense anticipated the higher teaching of the New Testament.<sup>3</sup>

Difficult and obscure passages require the special gift of interpretation with which the Lord endows His Church. Only those who are "born again" and are of pious hearts partake

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1. Chemnitz, Examen, 10: "Noluit Deus ipse totam legem conscribere, sed scriptis verbis Decalogi Mosi mandatum dedit." Ibid., "Scripturam illam Mosis non humana voluntate allatam, sed divinitus inspiratam esse."

2. Examen, 12.

3. Ibid., 11: "...ex divina revelatione addebant interpretationes illustriores, prout lucifer novi testamenti magis magisque appropinquabat."

of this illumination of the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup> We note two limitations here: (1) The Christian exegete must stand intra ecclesiam, for this donum, this χάρισμα, exists only in the Church. Obviously, this principle is erected against the claims of the sectaries and "fanatics", who held to a χάρισμα apart from the Church. (2) A second limiting principle is that the only vessel capable of receiving the lumen Spiritus Sancti, is the cor, and not the caput, and above all the cor piorum. Here Chemnitz combines the two activities of the Holy Spirit, illuminatio and regeneratio. By this deepening of the concept of interpretation, Chemnitz felt that he was obtaining the proper benefits of the authority of Scripture; and this authority rested directly upon the assumption of the complete, verbal Inspiration of the whole Bible.

The Scriptures derive their canonical authority, then, principally from the Holy Spirit, by whose impulse and Inspiration they were written; secondarily, from the writers themselves, to whom God gave clear and peculiar proofs of their truth; and finally, from the primitive Church, as a witness, in whose day these writings were published and approved. This testimony of the primitive Church concerning the Inspiration of the Scriptures has been handed down in perpetual succession to posterity, and carefully preserved in ancient historical records; hence the Church in subsequent ages is the guardian

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1. Examen, 65: "Deus voluit in ecclesia donum exstare interpretationis. Illud donum non est extra ecclesiam in non renatis, est enim lumen Spiritus Sancti accensum in cordibus piorum."



of the testimony of the primitive Church concerning the Scriptures.<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note in this connection, that Chemnitz does not mention the testimony of the Holy Spirit; in order to prove the canonicity of the separate books he points only to the testimony of the early Church, which could appeal to the authority of the Apostles.

### 3. Nicolas Selnecker (d. 1592).

We find that Selnecker's thought of Inspiration is relatively undeveloped. Nevertheless, his significance for our study lies in the fact that his Institutio Christianae religionis<sup>2</sup> was the first system of dogmatic theology in the Lutheran church which contained the so-called "Prolegomena" (on the Scriptures, Revelation, etc.).<sup>3</sup> Conceiving of Inspiration as the method of the communication of the Divine λόγος, he subsumes it under the concept of Revelation, and describes it as "occultus flatus, quo sancti olim Patriarchae et Prophetae divinitus multa edocti fuerunt."<sup>4</sup> However, this activity and indwelling of the Holy Spirit is present with

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1. Examen, 85. See further, Leutz, C. H. G., Dr. Martin Chemnitz, Gotha, 1866; Hachfeld, H., Martin Chemnitz, Leipzig, 1867.
  2. Selnecker, Institutio Christianae religionis, Frankfurt, 1573 and 1579, 3 parts.
  3. Hagenbach, History of Doctrines, II, 422. Cf. Heppe, Dogmatik, p. 96 ff.  
Gass, Geschichte der protestantischen Dogmatik, p. 51:  
"....zum ersten Male förmliche Prolegomena von Ansehen und Studium der heiligen Schrift, über Notwendigkeit der Offenbarung sowie über die Methoden der dogmatischen Unterweisung vorangestellt zu haben."
  4. Paedagogiae Christianae, Jena, 1568, II, 6.

believers, a common gift to the members of Christ's Church. God, indeed, is the sole Author of Scripture, but principally reveals Himself through His Son:

"Autor enim de Deo ipse Deus est, h.e., Deus se patefecit et revelat per verbum Filii sui, qui est  $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ , et hoc ipsum verbum virtute Spiritus sui adflat piis mentibus."<sup>1</sup>

".....scripta Prophetarum et Apostolorum vere sint vox Dei, prodeuntis ex arcana sua sede, et revelantis humano generi suam essentiam et voluntatem."<sup>2</sup>

The Word of God is His will which has been revealed to us, prior to the Church, and without which there could not have been any Church; the Scriptures, whether preached, or read, or heard, or written, are designated the "Word of God".<sup>3</sup> We note an increasing tendency to lose sight of the general Reformation distinction between Scripture and the Word of God; more and more the two are coming to be thought of as identical. While God was the immediate cause of the Scripture's coming into being, Selnecker teaches that the Apostles were "servi et electa organa Spiritus sancti". "Non fuerunt

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1. Ibid., I, 5.

2. Ibid., II, 5.

3. Selnecker, Examen Ordinandorum, Leipzig, 1548, p. 119: "Ut Deus ipse creaturis prior et potior est,-- ita verbum Dei, quod est voluntas Dei nobis revelata, prius et potius est quam ecclesia, quae quidem non esset ecclesia Dei, nisi per verbum Dei constitueretur et haberet sacram scripturam ut matrem, lucernam.--Et sive viva voce scriptis tradatur et exponatur voluntas Dei, semper est et manet unum et idem verbum Dei, et sacra scriptura vocatur, sive praedicetur, sive legatur, sive audiatur, sive scribatur".

autores verbi, sed tantum ministri, amanuenses, servi, propagatores et interpretes doctrinae a Deo traditae."<sup>1</sup>

He enumerates six aphorisms, to which, he feels, all Christians can subscribe:<sup>2</sup> (1) God alone is the Author of Scripture, (2) only Scripture is sufficient in matters of faith, (3) the Scripture is without error, and is capable of generating faith in itself, (4) the true Catholic Church derives its authority solely from Scripture, but not the contrary, (5) the Scripture is the sole judge of all religious controversies, and (6) Scripture is to have no other sense than that which the whole of Scripture allows.

Selnecker, being quite dependent upon Melancthon, whose Loci he followed most closely when constructing his own Institutio, even duplicating the exact form of the words in some of the articles, conceived of doctrine as a compact whole, the subscription to which was an essential mark of a Christian.<sup>3</sup> It was not so much the doctrine of Inspiration, as it was Revelation, that constituted the foundation of the Church. The great purpose of Scripture is to evoke and to make articulate

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1. Selnecker, Examen Ordinandorum, pp. 115 f.

2. Ibid., p. 116: (1) Solus Deus est autor sacrae scripturae; (2) sola scriptura sufficit ad fidei et salutis solidam doctrinam; (3) sola scriptura omni errore caret et est ἀπόκρισις; (4) ecclesia vera et catholica habet suam auctoritatem omnem a scr. s. et non e contra; (5) sola s. scr. debet esse determinatrix et iudex componens omnem de religione controversiam; (6) scripturae intellectus non est alius quam quem ipsa scriptura ostendit.

3. Selnecker, Institutio Christianae religionis, p. 31:

"Doctrina de patefactione est omnino fundamentum et basis totius ecclesiae....Sciamus autem, nos debere alligatos esse ad verbum nobis divinitus traditum."

the faith that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and through this faith, to give eternal Life to those coming to Him. Thus the effects of belief upon the Word are fourfold: (1) Doctrine, which teaches what is necessary to salvation; (2) Patience, in all trials and temptations; (3) Hope, which does not bewilder; and (4) Trust, which shall be able to strengthen a man in the last hour.<sup>1</sup>

### B. Synthetic Period.

#### 4. Aegidius Hunnius (d. 1603).

After the death of Chemnitz, Hunnius was unquestionably one of the most influential leaders of the orthodox Lutheran dogmaticians; he may well be classed along with Chemnitz and Gerhard.<sup>2</sup> In his outstanding work, De sacrosancta majestate indubitataque fide ac certitudine sacrae Scripturae propheticae et apostolicae V. et N.T.,<sup>3</sup> he bases all his twenty-one proofs of the certainty of the trustworthiness of Scripture upon its Inspiration. The presence of God is everywhere to be traced in

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1. Selnecker, Institutio Christianae religionis, p. 25f.

2. Kölling, Die Lehre von der Theopneustie, p. 230: "Unter den Heroen lutherischer Orthodoxie ist wohl Keiner so schnell vergessen worden, wie der grosse Hunnius. Seine Zeitgenossen haben ihn voll gewürdigt, den theologus tertius a Luthero haben sie ihn genannt...Man hat dieser Catena (Chemnitz, Hunnius, Gerhard) keinen theologus quartus a Luthero beigezählt; weil man es markiren wollte, dass eben jene Drei die grossen Classiker lutherischer Orthodoxie sind."

3. De sacrosancta majestate, Wittenberg, 1594.

the Scriptures, in non-doctrinal matter, as well as in those passages in which God is quoted as the speaker.<sup>1</sup> The identity of the Apostolic preaching and the Word as recorded in Scripture, is a fundamental principle with Hunnius. Compelling us to recognize the Divine authorship of the Bible, is the overpowering evidence of a peculiar harmony in both Testaments, exhibiting God's Word as a complete whole.<sup>2</sup> With His own hand, as it were, God has let down His Scriptures from heaven.

Hunnus concerns himself not so much with the authorship of the various books of the Canon, as with the dogmatic assertion of the verbal, plenary Inspiration of the whole of Scripture. His formula is: many writers, but only one real Author, namely, the third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit.<sup>3</sup> The concept of dictation is integral to his view of Inspiration; thus the Spirit is responsible not only for the ideas and language, but for the very words, and for the order of those words. The Spirit has constituted the Canon,

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1. Hunnius, De sacr. maj., I, 1, 20: "Adeo promptam et obviam Dei in ea loquentis praesentiam deprehendimus, ut oculis designari et digitis notari posse videatur."

2. Ibid., I, 1, 22: "Suavissimus ille totius corporis scripturae consensus et compages, omniumque partium doctrinae in ea traditae cohaerentia et articulorum fidei nostrae perpetua nullibique interrupta catena....nonne perspicue demonstrant, huic codici bibliorum nullum alium, quam Deum auctorem posse assignari."

3. Ibid., I, 1, 64: "...quare licet distincti illi libri a scriptoribus diversis, disiunctissimis aetatibus atque saeculis sint scripti, unus tamen idemque spiritus auctor et dictator eorum omnium sic deprehenditur, ut et prophetae inter se et hi cum apostolis undiquaquam concordent."

and has verbally dictated the component parts.<sup>1</sup> The nearer we approach mathematical certainty with reference to the authority of the Scripture, the more clearly Scripture stands out as being absolutely unique among all the world's literature.

As a crowning corroboration of the truth of God's Word, in addition to the many internal and external proofs, there has been vouchsafed to us the inner witness of the Holy Spirit.<sup>2</sup> Of course, this witness is present only in the hearts of believers. Appealing to the inescapable fact of Christian experience,<sup>3</sup>--*experientia τεκμήριον*--he is convinced that the hungry soul which feasts upon the Scriptures will be persuaded of their Divine origin and Inspiration. This attitude toward the Bible, among believers, is "*universalis piorum omnium experientia.*" The double office of the Paraclete is to authenticate the Word, and to bring comfort to our hearts.<sup>4</sup>

The Inspiration of the Scripture is abundantly attested by what it does, namely, to inculcate holiness in the hearts and lives of those who read it; the *cordis impuritatem* is convicted of sin, and power is given to achieve the *internam mentis sanctimoniam*. All this is possible only on the assumption: *sola scriptura divinitus inspirata.*<sup>5</sup>

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1. Hunnius, *De sacr. maj.*, I, 1, 68.

2. He expressly describes this witness as "*argumentum ut tutissimum, ita efficacissimum*", *De sacr. majest.*, I, 1, 24.

3. *Ibid.*, I, 1, 25.

4. *Ibid.*, I, 1, 25: "*Sic per idem verbum sese vere paracletum et spiritum consolationis declarat.*" In this connection he quotes Ezek. 18:23; Matt. 11:28; and I John 2:1.

5. *Ibid.*, I, 1, 27.

Another correlative witness of the Spirit is worthy of note here; quoting Heb. 4:12, where the Scripture appears as ὁ κριτικὸς τῆς καρδίας, he argues that the gift of "knowledge of the heart" comes only from God; only the Lord can be a καρδιογνώστης --; hence he infers that the Scripture is from God.<sup>1</sup>

### 5. Johann Gerhard (1582-1637).

In Gerhard we find a dogmatician of extraordinary patience, fairness, and ability, whose careful and comprehensive treatment of the doctrine of Inspiration did much to complete the formulation of the orthodox Lutheran view. His Loci communes theologici,<sup>2</sup> in nine volumes, begun when he was but 27 years old and completed in 1621, are a model especially in thoroughness and Scriptural proof. It is true that Hütter, in his Loci<sup>3</sup>, 1619, had already expressed a similar strict

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1. Hunnius, De sacr. majest., I, 1, 35.

2. Gerhard, Loci communes theologici, Jena, 1610. The best older edition is that of Jo. Fr. Cotta, Tübingen, 1762, 20 vols. The latest ed. is Leipzig, 1885.

3. Cf. Hütter, L., Loci communes theologici, p. 26:

Spiritus sanctus in consignanda scriptura usus est prophetarum et apostolorum ministerio, eorum nimirum hominum, quos Deus divinis testimoniis ornavit, quod in scribendo errare non possint.

p. 30: Deus enim est, et Deus quidem solus, qui prophetis et apostolis inspiravit, non modo quae loquerentur, sed et quae scriberent: atque illorum ore, linguis, manibus, calamo usus est. Ergo vel hoc respectu, scriptura etiam, quatenus talis, a Deo ipso est exarata. Prophetæ enim et apostoli tantum fuerunt organa.

p. 32: Scriptio isthaec suam quoque habet dignitatem, quatenus videlicet et ipsa a spiritu sancto fuit inspirata et quomodo verbotim dictata, ita ut nullum jota a prophetis et apostolis in istis libris sit exaratum, quod non sit θεόπνευστον.

view of Inspiration, but his references to it are only incidental. However, we may say with confidence that Gerhard was the first to develop systematically the doctrine of Inspiration.<sup>1</sup>

He defines the Scriptures as "the Word of God reduced to writing, according to His will, by the prophets, evangelists, and apostles, perfectly and perspicuously setting forth the doctrine of the nature and will of God, that men may thereby be brought unto eternal life."<sup>2</sup> It is fundamental to Gerhard's thought that the Scriptures are to be identified with the Word of God. By the term "Scripture" he means not so much the external form, the particular letters employed, the expressions used, as the matter itself.<sup>3</sup>

Seeking to prove that there is no essential difference between the Scriptures and the Word of God, viewed with reference to their subject-matter, Gerhard adduces four arguments:<sup>4</sup>

(1) From the subject-matter of Scripture. The prophets and apostles wrote only that which was taught them by Divine Inspiration; this was the same as that which they had before preached orally. Proof texts: I Cor. 15:1; II Cor. 1:13; Phil. 3:1; II Thess. 2:15; I John 1:3.

(2) From the identity of the spoken and the written Word. Since the recorded predictions of the Old Testament are frequently quoted in the New, with the introductory formula: "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets",

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1. Cf. Luthardt, E., Dogmatik, p. 36.

2. Gerhard, Loci, ed. Cotta, 1762, II, 427.

3. Ibid., II, 14.

4. Ibid., II, 15.



Matt. 1:22, 2:15, 1:14, etc., therefore, what the prophets said or predicted, is inferred to be the same as that which they wrote.

(3) From the rule of logic: "Accidens non mutat rei essentiam." It is a mere circumstance in regard to the Word of God whether it be proclaimed orally or committed to writing. It is one and the same Word of God, whether it be presented to us in the form of spoken or written language; since neither the original efficient cause, nor the matter, nor the internal form, nor the object, is thereby changed, but only the mode of presentation by the use of different organs.

(4) From the demonstrative particle employed by the apostles. For example, Paul speaks of the Mosaic writings and other like books of the Old and New Testaments: τοῦτ' ἔστιν τὸ ῥῆμα τῆς πίστεως--"this is the word of faith", Rom. 10:8; Peter, in I Pet. 1:25, etc.

No distinction between the written and unwritten Word (such as the Roman Catholics seek to make) may be admitted, unless by this be meant the unwritten Divine revelation which was proclaimed orally by the patriarchs before the Mosaic books were written. However, after the publication of the Scripture Canon, there has been, and can be no unwritten Word of God, as distinct from Scripture.<sup>1</sup>

The causa efficiens of Scripture is God; the causae instrumentales were holy men of God, acc. to II Pet. 1:21, that is, men peculiarly and immediately elected and called by

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1. Gerhard, Loci, II, 16.

God for the express purpose of committing to writing the Divine revelations. Such were the prophets of the Old Testament, and the evangelists and apostles of the New; these we properly call the amanuenses of God, the hands of Christ, and the scribes or notaries of the Holy Spirit,<sup>1</sup> since they neither spoke nor wrote by their own human will, but, borne along by the Holy Spirit, "they were acted upon, led, driven, inspired, and governed by the Holy Spirit. They wrote not as men, but as men of God, that is, as servants of God and as the Holy Spirit's very own instruments. When, therefore, a canonical book is called a book of Moses....that is merely on account of the service done, not on account of the basic cause."<sup>2</sup> As far as importance for subsequent thought is concerned, Gerhard may be designated as the author of the amanuensis theory of Inspiration, within the Lutheran communion.

He is also the first important Lutheran dogmatician to assert the Inspiration of the Hebrew vowel-points. He argues ex absurdo, that it would follow that the Scriptures were not communicated by God through the prophets with reference to the single words, since without the vowel-points the words cannot possibly exist; therefore not all Scripture

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1. Gerhard, Loci, II, 26: "...Dei amanuenses, Christi manus et Spiritus sancti tabelliones sive notarios."
  2. Ibid.: "...φερόμενοι ὑπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος ἁγίου....., acti ducti, impulsu, inspirati et gubernati a Spiritu sancto. Scripserunt non ut homines, sed ut Dei homines, h.e. ut Dei servi et peculiaria spiritus s. organa. Quando igitur liber aliquis canonicus vocatur liber Mosis.... illud fit duntaxat ratione ministerii, non ratione causae principalis."

is inspired.<sup>1</sup> Here this is made a demand of religious faith, and of his theological system. The claim was not put forth that the origin of the vowel-points was contemporaneous with Adam; however, it sufficed that they should have originated with Moses, as the first writer, or possibly with the writing on the tables of the Law by means of God's own finger.

Inasmuch, then, as the Scriptures have God for their Author, by whose immediate inspiration the prophets, evangelists, and apostles wrote, therefore they also possess Divine authority; because they are inspired, they are in like manner self-commendatory, winning faith by virtue of their own inherent excellence-- αὐτόπιστος, τὸ πιστὸν ἀφ' ἑαυτῆς ἔχουσα.<sup>2</sup>

Those who stand within the Church find it unnecessary to inquire about the authority of Scripture, for this is their starting-point. If they pretend to call in question the doctrine of Christ, they cannot be His true disciples. If they are in doubt about the foundations of the Church, they are not true members of that Church. How can they wish to prove that to themselves which they always employ to prove other things? How can they doubt concerning that whose efficacy they have experienced in their own hearts? Indeed, the Holy Spirit testifies in their hearts that the Spirit is truth, that is, that the doctrine derived from the Holy Spirit is absolute truth.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Gerhard, Loc., II, 272: "...scripturam non esse a Deo per prophetas traditam quoad singula verba, cum sine punctis vocalibus verba constare nullo modo possint, proinde non totam scripturam esse θεόπνευστον."

2. Ibid., II, 36.

3. Ibid., I, 9.

Gerhard then goes on to assume that the doctrine of the authority of the Scriptures, properly speaking, is not an article of faith, but rather the source and fountain-head of the articles of faith, "since Moses, the prophets, evangelists and apostles did not fabricate in their writings a new article of faith superadded to the former, which they taught orally."<sup>1</sup>

The internal witness of the Holy Spirit, of which we have spoken immediately above, is the principal witness to the authority and Inspiration of the Scriptures. To this testimony rightly belongs, Gerhard maintains, the believer's experience of God gained through daily prayer, the exercises of penitence and faith, the grace of consoling and strengthening the mind against all kinds of adversities, temptations, persecutions, etc., all of which are gained in reading and meditating upon Scripture.<sup>2</sup>

It follows, then, that the Scriptures are the only rule of faith and life, and also the judge of all theological controversies. All the commonly-associated qualities of a rule are to be attributed to Scripture; namely, it should be certain, fixed, invariable, fundamental, always self-consistent, and suited to meet every need.<sup>3</sup> All things in it are harmonious (συναληθῆ) and perfectly consistent with each other, so that no discrepancy or self-contradiction occurs in it.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Gerhard, Loci, I, 11.

2. Ibid., II, 37.

3. Ibid., I, 28; I, 30.

4. Ibid., II, 424.

Gerhard was content to base his criteria of canonicity upon the testimony of the early Church, accepting for the most part the Canon of Eusebius. He did not, however, assert that the canonicity of each book must be proved in the case of each individual by the testimony of the Holy Spirit.

With Gerhard most of the features of the post-Reformation view of Inspiration have already reached their fullest development; what follows constitutes no essential advance upon the conceptions previously held. Through him the Melancthonian school entered into a more secure position; by separating the non-essential from the essential elements, he was able to gather together the individual articles of faith into a compact system.

### C. Analytic Period.

#### 6. Abraham Calov (1612 - 1686).

Calov was essentially a polemicist rather than a dog-

matician; his Systema Locorum Theologicorum<sup>1</sup> is one of the most compact and comprehensive representations of Lutheran dogmatics extant. The Biblia Illustrata<sup>2</sup> is his chief exegetical work. Calov has sometimes been called the author of the commonly-designated orthodox Protestant theory of Inspiration.<sup>3</sup>

1. Systema, Wittenberg, (1655-1677), 12 vols. Calov was remarkably proficient in the oriental languages, physics, botany and mathematics, especially in the latter. His taste for polemics asserted itself when he was only 21 years old, by a controversial production against a Calvinistic treatise by John Berg. Aggressively built, even in his bodily makeup, the field of polemics was his element, from which nothing could make him swerve, not even the severest domestic grief. Year after year he came to the attack, and treatise followed on treatise with unbroken regularity. He opened his work at Wittenberg with a "praevia oratio de novatoribus Calixtinis," and so he continued to attack position after position. Work was a passion with him; the prolixity and range of his labours were remarkable.

Georg Calixtus (d. 1656) sought to present a more liberal theory of Inspiration. He adopted the hitherto prevailing Roman Catholic distinction between "revelatio" and "assistentia" or "directio divina", and asserted that "God did not reveal in a peculiar manner to the sacred writers those things which naturally struck their senses, or were otherwise known to them; but still that he so directed and aided them as that they should write nothing contrary to the truth." Cf. Responsio ad Moguntinos de Infall. Pontif. Rom., Thes. 72, 74: "Quae in sensus incurrerunt, aut aliunde nota fuerunt, Deus scriptoribus peculiariter non revelavit; gubernavit tamen eos per suam assistentiam ne quidquam scriberent a veritate alienum."

Even much more so, he confines the "revelatio" to those truths only which Aquinas had determined as the peculiar and direct objects of faith. Ibid., Thes. 77: "Neque scriptura divina dicitur, quod singula, quae in ea continentur, divinae peculiari revelationi imputari oporteat, sed quod praecipue, sive quae per se intendit scriptura, nempe quae redemptionem et salutem generis humani concernunt, non nisi divinae revelationi debeantur. In caeteris vero, quae aliunde sive per experientiam sive per lumen naturae nota, consignandis, divina assistentia et spiritu ita scriptores sunt gubernati, ne quidquam scriberent, quod non esset ex re, vero, decoro, congruo."

2. Biblia Illustrata, Frankfurt, 1672, 4 vols.

3. Cremer, A., art. Inspiration, in Haucks Real-Encyclopaedia, 3rd ed., Vol. 9, p. 191: "Calov ist der Begründer der nun entstehenden und gewöhnlich als kirchlich bezeichneten Inspirationslehre. Ihm ist Inspiration die Form der Offenbarung."

Cf. Schaff, D. S., art., Inspiration in Relig. Encyc. Bib., Hist., Doct., & Practical Theology, Vol. 2, p. 1103.

This is not strictly true, for we have already seen that Flacius, Hunnius, and Gerhard have anticipated Calov's theory in a number of respects. However, Calov did give his theory a more precise development, and carried it forward with fiercer zeal than did any of his predecessors.

"Tholuck says of Osiander 'that the Holy Spirit seems to have appeared to him in the form rather of a raven than of a dove;--and of Myslenta, that he was 'a volcano constantly vomiting fire and mud'. Both remarks are applicable to Abraham Calov, in whose person the 17th century produced a man of stupendous diligence and wide learning, but the very type of bitter dogmatist. He is said to have daily uttered the perverse prayer, Imple me, Deus, odio haereticorum. He flew to the attack of everybody who differed from his own confessional standard. Luther was his 'Megalander' and the Lutheran symbols his standard of infallibility. He wrote no less than 28 controversial pamphlets. The very titles of his books, Mataeologia papistica, Socinianismus profligatus, Theses de Labadismo, Anti-Boehmius, Discussio controversiarum, are menacing with antagonism. His Systema is 'a ponderous engine of war against Calixtus'. His Biblia Illustrata.....turned the sacred book into a heap of controversial missiles against Grotius, and its very title was a challenge: 'Biblica Illustrata in quibus Grotianae depravationes et ψευδερμηνεῖαι, justo examine sistuntur et exploduntur.'"1

The Scriptures are the very Word of God; the fanatical sects which emphasize the internal Word of God are to be condemned.<sup>2</sup> If, as Calov stoutly maintains, all Scripture

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1. Farrar, F. W., History of Interpretation, p. 364 f.

2. Calov, Systema, I, 528; cf. Ibid., I, 454: "Scriptura sacra est verbum Dei immediato Spiritus Sancti afflatu per prophetas in veteri, evangelistas et apostolos in novo testamento literarum monumentis consignatum ad aeternam hominum salutem."

be inspired, then there can be nothing in the Holy Scriptures that was not divinely suggested and by Inspiration communicated to those who wrote. For if even a single particle of Scripture were derived from human knowledge and memory, or from human revelation, then it could not be asserted that all Scripture is divinely inspired.<sup>1</sup>

The individual writers of Scripture were merely the pens, the hands, or the amanuenses of the Holy Spirit; the originating cause was God. The Bible is nothing more nor less than a letter from God the Creator to man His creature. Not merely those things which directly refer to the subjects of faith and salvation are the Word of God, but everything that is found in Scripture. He does distinguish, however, between the internal<sup>2</sup> (theopneustic) and external forms of Scripture.<sup>3</sup>

Calov recognizes that he must account for the difference in style, so he concludes that the Holy Spirit did not bind Himself to the style of any one writer, but, as a perfectly free teacher of languages, could use, through any person the character, style, and mode of speech that he chose. He could just as easily propose the divine oracles through Jeremiah in a highly adorned style, as through Isaiah in one of great

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1. Calov, Systema, I, 555.

2. Ibid., I, 454: "...illa sensus θεόπνευστος.."

3. Ibid., I, 455: "...consignatio literis facta ab amanuensibus Spiritus Sancti, ebraeis in veteri, graecis in novo testamento."



simplicity. However, the Spirit regarded not so much the ability of the writers to speak as the nature of the subjects concerning which He wished them to speak. Throughout the whole He used His own authority (ἀυτεξουσία) under the guidance of His unlimited wisdom. Thus, we need not wonder that the same Spirit employed diversities of style. The apparent cause of this diversity of style is the fact that the Holy Spirit allowed each writer to speak as he pleased.<sup>1</sup> According to this explanation, it is difficult to see how Calov could still hold to a strict view of verbal Inspiration, a dictation of even the vowel-points, accent marks, and punctuation.<sup>2</sup>

Inspiration respecting only the Scriptures is made the source of all Revelation; in the sense of an efficient cause, Inspiration is an act of God determining the form which Revelation shall assume.<sup>3</sup>

Assuming the truth of Calov's foregoing assertions, then the fact of verbal inerrancy of the Scriptures is axiomatic. "No error, even in unimportant matters, no defect of memory, not to say untruth, can have any place in all the Sacred Scriptures."<sup>4</sup> In addition to other primary attributes, or affectiones, Calov and Quenstedt mention infallible truth,

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1. Calov, Systema, I, 574.

2. Ibid., I, 484.

3. Ibid., I, 280.

4. Ibid., I, 551: "Nullus error, vel in leviculis, nullus memoriae lapsus, nedum mendacium ullum locum habere potest in universa scriptura sacra."

the power of interpreting itself, and normative and judicial authority. Calov postulated the following five secondary attributes:<sup>1</sup>

(1) Necessity. It was necessary for the Word of God to be committed to writing, in order to preserve the purity of the heavenly doctrine.

(2) Integrity and perpetuity. The Scriptures have been preserved in their entirety, and will thus be perpetually preserved.

(3) Purity and uncorrupted state of its sources. The Hebrew text in the Old Testament, and the Greek in the New, have not suffered, in all copies, any corruption, either through malice or carelessness, but have been preserved by Divine Providence, free from all corruption.

(4) Authentic dignity. The Hebrew text alone of the Old Testament, and the Greek of the New, is to be regarded as authentic, nor is any version to be counted worthy of such supreme authority.

(5) The liberty of all to read for themselves.

The normative and judicial authority of the Scriptures

Thus we are referred to the Scriptures as the only rule (Deut. 4:2; 12:28; Josh. 23:6; Isa. 8:20; Luke 16:29; II Pet. 1:19). Likewise, Christ and the apostles referred to the Scriptures as a rule (Matt. 4:4; 22:29, 31; Mark 9:12; John 5:45; Acts 3:20; 13:33; 18:28; 26:22).

It is to be noted that the assumption of the above-mentioned attributes of the Scriptures is not a matter of fact, nor of scientific, critical investigation, but rather of faith. It is pure hypothesis, based upon the theological presuppositions of dogma, and as proof of their authority the Scriptures themselves are quoted. If this conception of the Word of God as immediately uttered and absolutely infallible is to cover the entire contents of the Scripture, then there can be no distinctions within, or grades of, Inspiration. No revelation in forms that did not conform to the dogmatic conception of truth was allowed. Any appeal to the testimony of the Holy Spirit, in fact, could amount to mainly an inward conviction that the dogmaticians' own private opinions were correct.

#### 7. Johann Quenstedt (1617-1688)

As the nephew of Johann Gerhard, Quenstedt partook of much of his famous uncle's systematizing ability. His Theologica didactico-polemica<sup>1</sup> is one of the most elaborate and thoroughly systematized treatises on Lutheran dogmatics ever written.

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1. Quenstedt, J. A., Theologia didactico-polemica sive systema theologicum, Wittenberg, 1685, 4 parts.

Rightly has he been termed "the book-keeper of Lutheran orthodoxy."

Quenstedt holds to the strictest of Inspiration theories. God alone, if we wish to speak accurately, is to be called the author of the Scriptures; the prophets and apostles cannot be called the authors, except by a kind of "catachresis".<sup>1</sup> To the assertion that prophets and apostles may be called the amanuenses of God,<sup>2</sup> Quenstedt adds that they did not write ignorantly and unwillingly, beyond the reach of and contrary to their own will; on the other hand, they wrote cheerfully, willingly, and intelligently. It was not as though they were in a state of unconsciousness, such as the "Enthusiasts" claimed to experience, or as the heathen soothsayers feigned. Quenstedt rejects the Montanist error which asserted ecstasy as essential to Inspiration; the prophets understood what they wrote, but at the same time they wrote nothing of their own accord. Everything was written at the express dictation of the Holy Spirit.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Theol. did.-pol., I, 55: "Solus deus, si accurate loqui velimus, sacrae scripturae auctor dicendus est, prophetae vero et apostoli auctores dici non possunt, nisi per quandam catachresin, utpote qui potius Dei auctoris calami et sp. sancti verbum dictantis et inspirantis notarii et amanuenses."
  2. Ibid., I, 55: "Unde enim Dei amanuenses, Christi manus et Spiritus Sancti tabelliones sive notarii et actuarii dicuntur."
  3. Ibid., I, 55: "...non acsi citra et contra voluntatem suam, inscii ac inviti scripserint divini amanuenses; sponte enim volentes scientesque scripserunt, sed non pro humano suo arbitrio et naturali sua voluntate, qua ad communia sua opera movetur homo, nec etiam voluntate regenita, qualis est illa, qua fideles moventur ad pietatis opera, sed ea, qua spiritus sanctus extraordinario modo exagitat. Dicuntur acti a spiritu sancto, nequaquam ac si mente fuerint alienati, aut ea, quae scriberent, non intellexerint, sed quia nihil ex suo sensu scripserunt, sed omnia spiritus sancti dictamine."

This coöperation which takes place on the part of God is described by Quenstedt as a most special and extraordinary concurrence peculiar to the sacred writers, and to be carefully distinguished from the general and common concurrence of God, by virtue of which God is present to all believers sincerely meditating upon, and writing about, sacred things.<sup>1</sup>

All and each of the things which are contained in the Scriptures, whether from some other source or by experience and the ministry of the senses, were not only committed to letters by Divine, infallible assistance and direction, but are to be regarded as having been received by the special suggestion, inspiration, and dictation of the Holy Spirit. All the things which were to be written were suggested by the Holy Spirit to the sacred writers in the very act of writing, and were dictated to their intellect as if to a pen; thus they were written in these and no other circumstances.<sup>2</sup> A bare Divine assistance and direction such as would simply prevent the writers from departing from the truth is denied as insufficient by Quenstedt. Inspiration is prior to direction; the inspired men were directed, in

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1. Quenstedt, Theol. did.-pol., I, 65.

2. Ibid., I, 67: "Omnes et singulae res quae in s. scriptura continentur, sive illae fuerint s. scriptoribus....vel aliunde, vel per experientiam, et sensum ministerium, non solum per assistentiam et directionem divinam infallibilem literis consignatae sunt, sed singulari spiritus s. suggestioni, inspirationi, et dictamini acceptae ferendae sunt. Omnia enim, quae scribenda erant, a spiritu sancto sacris scriptoribus in actu illo scribendi suggesta, et intellectui eorum quasi in calamus dictitata sunt, ut his, non aliis circumstantiis, hoc, et non alio modo, aut ordine scriberentur."

that all things were suggested and communicated to them in so far as they are recorded in Scripture.<sup>1</sup>

Even matters which are apparently unimportant are by all means to be regarded as also inspired. Rather than consider the estimation in which the matter is held by men, we ought to seek to discover the design that God has in view. Because many things in Scripture seem to be of small account, that does not necessarily derogate from the dignity of the Holy Spirit; the end in view (Rom. 15:4) is all-important.<sup>2</sup> From II Tim. 3:16, Quenstedt argues for plenary Inspiration; the word  $\pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\alpha$  is to be taken distributively, of the single books or parts of Scripture, or it may be taken collectively for those parts considered as a whole, so that  $\pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\alpha$  is the same as  $\acute{\omicron}\lambda\eta$ ; in either case, all Scripture is inspired.<sup>3</sup> And not only the things, but also the very words themselves

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1. Quenstedt, Theol. did.-pol., I, 68; cf. I, 69f.: "Hinc invicte concludimus, omnem et totam scripturam sacram, nulla ejus vel minima parte excepta, esse θεόπνευστον, h.e. divinitus inspiratam. Si enim aliqua saltem Scripturae S. particula...fuisset deprompta...non omnis scriptura dici posset universaliter et quoad omnia divinitus inspirata." Cf. Rudelbach, A. G., Die Lehre von der Inspiration, IV, 23f.: "Das Organische des Inspirationsbegriffes versucht er so auseinander zu legen, dass er zuerst eine, von dem gratiosus concursus Dei (den allgemeinen Gnadenwirkungen) zu unterscheidende, übernatürliche Erleuchtung ( $\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\lambda\alpha\mu\psi\iota\varsigma$ , irradiato) annimmt, die jedoch nicht als ein habitus permanens, sondern als ein actus transiens zu fassen sei, und dazu die eigenthümlichen Bewegung, den Trieb Gottes (impulsus, instinctus) kommen lässt."
2. Ibid., I, 71.
3. Ibid., I, 71.

were inspired and dictated by the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

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The variety of styles among the sacred writers is accounted for by the fact that the Holy Spirit accommodated Himself to the ordinary mode of speaking, leaving to each one his own manner; yet at the same time Quenstedt does not deny that the Holy Spirit suggested the particular words to these individuals.<sup>2</sup>

To assert that the Spirit merely "accommodated" Himself to the peculiarities of the writers is to verge dangerously close to a Docetism. It assumes an exercise of the Divine agency for which no motive or end can be discovered, and is wholly inconsistent with one of the highest aims of all true religion, namely, the elevation and enlightenment of man's faculties. This theory fails to keep in balance the human and the Divine factors in Inspiration. A natural corollary to

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1. Quenstedt, Theol. did.-pol., I, 73: "Non solum res et sententias in scripture s. contentas, seu sensum verbum, prophetis et apostolis inspiravit spiritus s. quas suo idiomate, suisque verbis, pro arbitrio vel efferrent, vel exornarent, sed etiam ipsamet verba; et voces omnes ac singulas individualiter spiritus s. sacris scriptoribus suppeditavit, inspiravit, et dictavit."

2. Ibid., I, 76: "Ea verba spiritus s. amanuensibus inspiravit, quibus alias usi fuissent, si sibi fuissent relictis."

Cf. Ibid., I, 76: "...uti in loquendo ita et in scribendo pro sua liberrima voluntate suo cuiusque ingenio et generi dicendi consueto se accommodavit et attemperavit, ut ita velut ex sua cuiusque naturali indole cum sermo tum scriptura eorum flueret."

Cf. Rudelbach, A. G., op. cit., IV, 24:

"Der bedeutendste Fortschritt bei Quenstedt ist darin wahrzunehmen, dass er.....die eigentümliche Wirksamkeit des heiligen Geistes zugleich bestimmt als eine Herablassung desselben zu den Fähigkeiten der Werkzeuge, die der Herr sich erwählt hatte--eine Betrachtung, welche die tiefsten Blicke in den ganzen Organismus der Offenbarung verräth, und mit Recht die Theodicee der Inspiration genannt werden mag."

the theory of verbal Inspiration was the assertion that "the style of the New Testament is free from every trace of barbarism and from solecisms."<sup>1</sup> Not by the standards of classical Greek style, but by Christian standards and the experience of the new birth, is the style of the New Testament to be judged. At Pentecost, the gift of tongues gave the apostles the ability to speak and write in the vernacular.<sup>2</sup> Likewise, the complete inerrancy of the Scripture, in its original form, was asserted; all errors of scribes or amanuenses were excluded. Not the least error, whether in things or in words, whether in matters dogmatic or moral, or historical, chronological, or topographical, was allowed. No ignorance, or forgetfulness, or lapse of memory, can or should be attributed to any portion of Scripture.<sup>3</sup> If

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1. Quenstedt, Theol. did.-pol., I, 82: "Stylus N.T. ab omni barbarismorum et soloecismorum labe immunis est."

2. Ibid., I, 83f.

3. Ibid., I, 77: "Scriptura sacra canonica originalis est infallibilis veritatis omnisque erroris expers, sive quod idem est, in s. scr. nullum est mendacium, nulla falsitas, nullus vel minimus error, sive in rebus, sive in verbis, sed omnia et singula sunt verissima quaecunque in illa traduntur sive dogmatica illa sint, sive moralia, sive historica, chronologica, topographica, onomastica, nulla-que ignorantia, incogitantia aut oblivio, nullus memoriae lapsus sp. sancti amanuensibus in consignandis sacris literis tribui potest aut debet."

Cf. Rohnert, W. Die Inspiration der heilige Schrift, p. 207: "Est ist unstatthaft, in der heil. Schrift einen Unterschied zu machen zwischen wichtigeren Dingen (res graviores, d.h. solchen, welche sich direkt auf den Glauben und die Religion beziehen) und unwichtigeren (res leviores, die sich nicht direkt auf das Heil beziehen), denn in der Schrift darf nichts für unwichtig gehalten werden. Und so muss man denn nicht bloss das als durchaus wahr annehmen, was sich auf Glauben und sittliches Leben bezieht, sondern auch alles andere, was die Schrift sonst enthält, weil alles von der unmittelbaren göttlichen Eingebung herrührt und Gott selbst zum Urheber hat, der in keinem Stück irren kann, Hebr. 6:18."



we are to have positive certainty of our faith, and if our minds are ever to have peace, it is necessary that there be no doubts, uncertainties, errors, or falsehoods in the sacred Scriptures; the Holy Spirit is the source of all truth, and He cannot err.<sup>1</sup>

Quenstedt then turns his attention to the relations between Inspiration and Revelation. The latter he defines in a formal, etymological sense as the manifestation of things unknown and hidden, by means of dreams, visions, or outward speech. Inspiration is defined as that act of the Holy Spirit by which an actual knowledge of things is supernaturally conveyed to an intelligent creature; or, it may be also an internal suggestion or infusion of conceptions, whether the things conceived were previously known to the writer or not.<sup>2</sup> At the same time he does not deny that Inspiration itself may be called Revelation, in a certain sense. This is true in so far as it is a manifestation of certain circumstances, as also of the order and manner in which certain things are to be written.

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1. Quenstedt, Theol. did.-pol., I, 80: "Si enim quaedam in scriptura occurrunt dubia, incerta, erronea, falsa, unde de ceterorum autoritate, certitudine aut veritate constabit? Et nisi de fidei principio infallibiliter certi reddamur, quomodo fidei ὑπόστασις, salutis certitudo et conscientiae tranquillitas demum consistet?"

2. Ibid., I, 68.

Cf. Rudelbach, A. G., Die Lehre von der Inspiration, IV, 23f.: "Die Distinction zwischen Offenbarung und Inspiration vollzieht er, indem er jene als die Enthüllung des früher absolut Unbekannten (ἀποκαλύψις im Wortsinne), diese als die höhere Begriffs- und Erkenntnissbildung, sei es des Bekannten oder Unbekannten, durch den heiligen Geist auffasst, wobei das Hinübergreifen der einen in die andere Sphäre ausdrücklich anerkannt wird."

He distinguishes between Revelation when by it the subject-matter itself is made known, and when it refers to the peculiar circumstances and time and manner and order in which the subject-matter is to be reduced to writing.<sup>1</sup> There are times, he adds, when Revelation concurs with Inspiration, when the Divine mysteries are revealed by Inspiration and inspired by Revelation, in the very act of writing.

It is important, says Quenstedt, that we distinguish between the conduct and lives of the Apostles, and their preaching and writing. In doctrine the Apostles never could err, after having once received the gift of the Holy Spirit; however, in their conduct and outward conversation they were not sinless (ἀναμάρτητοι), but, in consequence of original, inherited sin, they were still subject to infirmities and failings.<sup>2</sup>

There are two senses in which we may think of the Word of God: materially, and formally. In the former sense, we mean the written characters, points, letters, and syllables which adhere to the parchment; formally considered, we mean the Divine conception and sense. Materially, it can be the Word of God only in a figurative (σημαντικῶς) sense; but formally regarded, it is the Word of God, the wisdom of God,

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1. Quenstedt, Theol. did.-pol., I, 72.

2. Ibid., I, 80.

Cf. Rohnert, W., op. cit., p. 208: "In der Lehre konnten die Apostel durchaus nicht irren, nachdem sie den heiligen Geist empfangen hatten; ihre Seele und Sprache war gleichsam das Plektrum oder die Schreibfeder des heil. Geistes selbst, welcher ihnen eingab, was sie reden sollten, und der in ihnen redete, Matt. 10:19, und sie in alle Wahrheit führte. Joh. 16:13."

the mind and counsel of God. He ascribes to the latter, but not to the former, the Divine power and efficacy.<sup>1</sup>

When Quenstedt comes to the problem of the ultimate witness for the authenticity and full Inspiration of Scripture, he adopts the explanation of the testimony of the Holy Spirit. He recognizes the intrinsic power and efficacy of God's Word, and the testimony and seal of the Holy Spirit, speaking in and through Scripture. The bestowal of faith, he feels, is a work that emanates from the Spirit, or the Supreme Cause.<sup>2</sup>

Aware of the charge that an appeal to the witness of the Spirit constitutes reasoning in a circle, Quenstedt replies somewhat unconvincingly that if this were so, then it would be also reasoning in a circle when Moses and the prophets testify concerning Christ, and Christ concerning Moses and the prophets; or, when John the Baptist testifies that Christ is the Messiah, and again Christ that John the Baptist is a prophet.

The criteria of Inspiration are both internal and external; they make the Inspiration of Scripture probable, and produce a certainty that is not merely conjectural but moral, so that to call it in question would be the work of a fool. Those who have the least doubt about the matter do not make the divinity of the Scriptures infallible, and place it beyond all doubt, nor do they convince the mind internally (ἀμεταπτῶτως καὶ ἀμετακινήτως). They beget not a divine, but merely a

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1. Quenstedt, Theol. did.-pol., I, 169.

2. Ibid., I, 97.

3. Ibid., I, 98.

human faith, not an unshaken certainty, but a credibility, or a very probable opinion.<sup>1</sup>

#### 8. Johann Baier (1647-1695)

With Calov and Quenstedt, we reached the high water mark of post-Reformation strictness concerning Inspiration. Now, with Baier and Hollaz, who were more or less affected by pietistic influences, we round out the century. They contribute, in our judgment, nothing that is unique, except perhaps that they bring some points to further development. Johann Wilhelm Baier had as his father-in-law Johann Musaeus of Jena, who exerted a great influence upon him as a theologian; this appears very distinctly in his Compendium theologiae positivae,<sup>2</sup> the work by which his name was made known to many students of theology, not only in his day, but also at present, as it was and is used by Lutheran students as a compend of dogmatic theology.

Baier grants that there were immediate utterances of the Divine will in early times, made by dreams and visions, and handed down orally, and that these may be called the Word of God; but he holds that at the present time the only concrete form of Divine revelation is the Scripture.<sup>3</sup> The authority of Scripture, whether it be viewed with reference to itself, or with reference to its contents, depends upon God, its sole

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1. Quenstedt, Theol. did.-pol., I, 98.

2. Baier, Compendium theologiae positivae, 1686.

3. Ibid., ed. Jena, 1704, p. 61.

Author, and results from His veracity and infinite power.<sup>1</sup>

In order that we may be convinced that the Holy Scriptures are worthy to receive our faith and obedience, not only the perfections of God must be known, but also the dependence of Scripture upon God, or, its Inspiration. Our conviction of this rests upon two theses: (1) Whatsoever Scripture is recorded by Divine Inspiration, that is certainly and infallibly true. (2) The Holy Scriptures were recorded by Divine Inspiration, even as to the formulation of the very words.<sup>2</sup>

The authority of Scripture, in so far as regards the assent that is to be yielded to its declarations, may be viewed in a two-fold manner: first, in a strict sense, in order to cause assent to the things that are to be believed; this right the Scriptures hold because they are the source of knowledge and the formal object of faith and revealed theology. Secondly, in order to distinguish by the inspired Scriptures themselves, both the true Scriptures and those other teachings, which relate to matters of faith and practice, or the rule and guide whereby to distinguish truth from falsehood. Baier treats of both these aspects in his discussion of the authority of Scripture.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Baier, Compendium theologiae positivae, p. 80.

2. Ibid., p. 81. Cf. Ibid., "Inspiratio est actio eiusmodi, qua deus non solum conceptus rerum scribendarum omnium obiectus conformes, sed et conceptus verborum ipsorum atque omnium, quibus illi exprimendi essent, supernaturaliter communicavit intellectui scribentium ac voluntatem eorum ad actum scribendi excitavit."

3. Ibid., 82.

He concludes his discussion by asserting that the Scriptures have an active, supernatural force or power which is to be sought neither in the elegance of their style, nor in the sublimity of their thoughts, nor in the power of their arguments, but is far superior to every created and finite agency.<sup>1</sup>

#### 9. David Hollaz (1646-1713).

In Hollaz we find a dogmatician who peculiarly combines some of the scholastic faults of Quenstedt, and yet at the same time is influenced by the pietistic currents of the early eighteenth century. He stands in the orthodox Lutheran succession, in that he conceives of Scripture as the infallible teacher of infallible theology. In his Examen,<sup>2</sup> an admirable setting forth of his dogmatic in question and answer form, he makes it an absolutely first principle that "whatever God hath revealed is infallibly certain", and he equates this with the proposition that "whatever Sacred Scripture teaches is infallibly certain."<sup>3</sup> Emphasis is laid upon the unique impulse of

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1. Baier, Comp. theol. pos., 123.

2. Hollaz, Examen Theologiae Acroamaticiae (1707), ed. Teller, 1750.

3. Ibid., p. 83.: "...theol. christ. nititur principio cognoscendi certissimo, nempe revelatione divina, et quidem, pro hodierno ecclesiae statu revelatione div. mediata, scriptis prophetarum et app. comprehensa. Unde principium theologiae complexum absolute primum est: quidquid deus revelavit, infallibiliter certum est. Principium eiusdem secundum quid et pro tempore praesenti primum est: quidquid s. scr. docet, infallibiliter certum est."

the will to engage in writing, as well as the immediate illumination by which the mind of the writer is enlightened through Divine grace; and the conceptions of the things to be written are themselves suggested immediately by the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

He goes on to distinguish sharply between Inspiration as such and Divine governance. The latter would merely guard against the recording of anything that was untrue or incongruous; the former, through the dictation of the Spirit, actually suggests the conception of the things to be written. As Hollaz expresses it, the Divine governance would warrant the infallibility of the Scriptures, but not their Inspiration.<sup>2</sup> A real and a verbal Inspiration are asserted, and from this it follows that there is absolutely nothing in Scripture that is not inspired.

"The conceptions of all that is contained in the Sacred Scriptures were immediately communicated by the Holy Spirit to the prophets and apostles."<sup>3</sup>

"All the words, without exception, contained in the sacred manuscript, were dictated by the Holy Spirit to the pen of the prophets and apostles."<sup>4</sup>

Hollaz knows nothing of a partial Inspiration; if inspired at all, the Inspiration embraces all that is contained in Scripture, and therefore also those things which could have

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1. Hollaz, Examen theologiae acroamaticiae, p. 83.

2. Ibid., p. 83.

3. Ibid., Quaest. xvi, p. 83: "Conceptus omnium rerum, quae in sacris litteris habentur, prophetis et apostolis a Spiritus S. immediate inspirati sunt."

4. Ibid., Quaest. xviii, p. 85: "Omnia et singula verba, quae in sacro codice leguntur, a Spir. S. prophetis et apostolis inspirata et in calamus dictata sunt."

been otherwise known to the apostles and prophets, because in any individual case it was necessary that these things should be said just at the particular time which suited God's purpose.<sup>1</sup> For that matter, Inspiration includes even those things which are not of a spiritual nature. Historical, chronological, genealogical, astronomical, and political matters, although the knowledge of them is not actually necessary to salvation, are nevertheless divinely revealed, because an acquaintance with them assists in the interpretation of the Scriptures, and in illustrating doctrines and ethical precepts. For, if only the mysteries of the faith depend upon the Divine Inspiration and the rest depends upon mere direction, then all of Scripture is not inspired. However, since Paul (II Tim. 3:16) declares that the whole of Scripture is divinely inspired, then everything which is contained in the Scripture is inspired.<sup>2</sup>

Not content with holding to the suggestion of things, Hollaz sharpens his Inspiration theory by asserting the dictation of even the words, words known by common usage. "The prophets and apostles were not at liberty to clothe the Divine meaning in such words as they might of their own accord select. It was their prime duty to adhere to, and depend upon, the oral dictation of the Holy Spirit, so that they might commit the Scriptures to writing, in the order and connection which has been so excellently given, and in which they would appear in

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1. Hollaz, Examen, p. 84.

2. Ibid., p. 83.



perfect accordance with the mind of the Spirit."<sup>1</sup> This Inspiration likewise preserved the prophets and apostles from error in the preaching as well as in the writing of the Divine Word.<sup>2</sup>

As did the dogmaticians who preceded him, so also Hollaz adduces the internal witness of the Holy Spirit as the crowning proof of the Inspiration and authenticity of the Scriptures. By the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit, he understands the supernatural act of the Spirit through the Word of God, attentively read or heard (His own Divine power being communicated to the Holy Scriptures), moving, opening, illuminating the heart of man; and inciting it to obedience unto the faith, so that man, thus illuminated by internal, spiritual influences, clearly perceives that the Word proposed to him has indeed proceeded from God, and thus gives it unyielding assent.<sup>3</sup>

To the common objection that theology here reasons in a circle, Hollaz gives the following reply: Let us suppose the objector says, "How do you know that the Scriptures are

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1. Hollaz, Examen, p. 87; cf. Ibid., where the human writers of Scripture are characterized as "causa efficiens minus principalis atque ministerialis (s. amanuenses quorum ministerio sp. sanctus usus est in consignandis. s. literis) fuerunt sancti dei homines (prophetae et apostoli) qui sp. sancto inspirante manum calamo admoverunt."

2. Ibid., p. 88.

3. Ibid., p. 116: "...actus supernaturalis sp. sancti, per verbum dei attente lectum vel auditu perceptum, virtute sua div., scripturae s. communicata, cor hominis pulsantis, aperientis, illuminantis et ad obsequium fidei flectentis, ut homo illuminatus ex internis motibus spiritualibus vere sentiat, verbum sibi propositum a deo ipso esse profectum, atque adeo immotum ipsi assensum praebeat."

Divine?" The Lutherans answer: Because the Holy Spirit in each person testifies and confirms this by the Scripture. If the objector further asks, "But, how do you prove that this Holy Spirit is Divine?" The Lutherans will again reply, Because the Scriptures testify that He is Divine, and His testimony is infallible. Hollaz distinguishes between what he calls a sophistical circle, and a demonstrative retrogression. In reasoning in a circle, one unknown thing is employed to prove another equally unknown; but in a demonstrative retrogression, we proceed from confused knowledge to that which is distinct. The Divinity of the Scripture is proved by the supernatural effect of the Holy Spirit operating efficaciously through the Scriptures, illuminating, converting, regenerating, renewing. But if one asks whether that Spirit be Divine or evil, then we reason from the effect, which is Divine and salutary, that the Spirit, who bears witness within, is Divine, most holy, and excellent.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Hollaz, Examen, p. 119: "...si quaeram, unde scis, scripturam esse divinam? respondent Lutherani: quia sp. s in unoquoque per scripturam hoc testatur et obsignat. Si autem quaeram: unde probas, spiritum illum esse divinum? respondent iidem, quia scriptura testatur, illum esse divinum et obsignationem illius esse infallibilem. Disting. inter circulum sophisticum et regressum demonstrativum. In circulo sophist. probatur ignotum per aequè ignotum; in regressu demonstrativo a cognitione confusa ad distinctam procedimus. Nempe scripturae dignitas div. probatur per effectum supernaturalem sp. sancti, per scripturam efficaciter operantis.....Si autem quaeras: estne ille spiritus divinus an malignus? Tunc ab effectu, qui est divinus et salutaris, regredimur ad probandum, spiritum interius testantem de divina scripturae origine esse divinum, sanctissimum et optimum."

The highest canonical authority of the Scriptures is exercised when a controversy arises concerning the truth of a doctrine. However, the Scriptures exert their faith-producing authority whenever the unbelieving are to be converted, or the weak faith of believers to be strengthened.<sup>1</sup> In order that the Scriptures may have canonical authority, it is necessary, that not only the sense, but also the words should have been derived immediately from God. For, to canonical and normative authority in matters of doctrine and life, an absolute certainty and infallibility in the words themselves is necessary, which does not exist except in the original text of Scripture, for this depends immediately upon Divine Inspiration.<sup>2</sup> Hollaz also asserted that no inspired book, which has ever been received into the canon, perishes. Likewise, no error has crept into the authentic text by the negligence or perfidy of the transcribers.<sup>3</sup> Few dogmaticians have cared to go as far as Hollaz does here in claiming the perfection of the received text.

He defines the canonical books as those whose doctrines and single words were committed to writing by the prophets and apostles by the immediate Inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and were communicated to the Church by God, and received by her as the infallible rule of faith and practice, for man who is to be saved.<sup>4</sup> We judge of the canonical authority of Scripture with reference to its doctrines, by the same proofs and arguments by which we decide in regard to its Divine origin. Hence,

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1. Hollaz, Examen, p. 125.

2. Ibid., 125.

3. Ibid., 173.

4. Ibid., 129.

since it has proceeded from God, there is no need of an extended demonstration of its canonical authority.<sup>1</sup> However, the highest proof of canonical authority is provided by the internal witness of the Spirit.

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1. Hollaz, Examen, 126.

Chapter Nine: The Doctrine of Inspiration in the  
Theology of the Reformed Church

A. The Reformed Orthodoxy.

In the years immediately following the death of Calvin, there was not much original theological development within the Reformed groups. And so we find that the doctrine of Inspiration was assumed, but that it was not developed with any degree of exactitude. The writings of Beza, Martyr, Aretius, and Ursinus merely touch upon the problems involved.<sup>1</sup> The interest of the time was mainly polemical against the Tridentine Decrees of the Fourth Session, and their defenders. Calvin had left behind him in Geneva a school which was able to maintain

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1. Theodore Beza, Quaestionum et responsionum christianorum libellus, in quo praecipua christianae religionis capita κατ' ἐπιτομήν proponuntur. Tractationes theologicae, Vol. I, p. 654f., Geneva, 1582. Peter Martyr Vermilius, Loci communes, Zürich, 1587, pp. 24, 487; Cf. Ibid., p. 29: "Scriptura sacra est expressio quaedam sapientiae Dei, afflata sancto Spir. piis hominibus, deinde monumentis literisque consignata." Bened. Aretius, Theologiae problemata h.e. Loci communes christianae religionis, Berne, 1604, pp. 139ff. Cf. Ibid., p. 150: "Scriptura divina est testimonium voluntatis divinae erga mortaliū genus, patefactum primitus spiritu Dei, consignatum vero postea literis per homines auctore Deo ad salutem fidelium." Zach. Ursinus, De scriptura sacra. Tractationes theologicae, Neustadt, 1584, pp. 1ff.; Beza, Loci Theologici, Geneva, 1562.

Ursinus is still free from the later mechanical theory of Inspiration: Loci, p. 446: "Ut intelligatur causa discriminis inter Scripturam s. et alia scripta, considerandi sunt gradus docentium in ecclesia. Nam ideo longe superior est auctoritas prophetarum et apostolorum, quam aliorum ministrorum ecclesiae, quia Deus illos immediate vocavit ad annuntiandam suam voluntatem ceteris hominibus eosque testimoniis miraculorum et aliis ornavit, quibus testatus est, se ita mentes illorum suo spiritu illustrare et gubernare, ut eos nulla in parte doctrinae errare patiatur."

and increase itself, chiefly through the College founded in 1559, of which Beza became the head. The influence of Geneva upon the theology of Germany was at first comparatively slight. Already there was a native Reformed theology of a less strict type, and on friendly terms with Melanchthon. However, its leaders being scattered and exposed to various influences, it did not achieve the strength and unity of a compact movement which the Lutherans did.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, the Genevan Reformation ever bore upon it the characteristic impress of Calvin's teaching and person.

"The influence of Calvin as a theologian upon his church exceeds that exerted by Melanchthon, and even by Luther, in a similar respect upon their followers; for it may be said that his theology has become the accepted doctrine of the Reformed Church. Nearly all the later confessions reproduce his formulas... Calvin did not leave behind him questionable coins, as did Melanchthon; nor, on the other hand, like Luther, uncoined gold."<sup>2</sup>

As a consequence, the Reformed position on Inspiration was substantially that of Calvin. The scholastic method, so dominant in the post-Reformation Lutheran orthodoxy, was likewise most influential within the Calvinistic portion of Protestantism. It was considered necessary to conserve that which had already been acquired; less attention was paid to the investigation of contents than to an elaboration of that which was given, the defence of existing dogmas, as though

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1. Dorner, I. A., History of Protestant Theology, I, 415.  
 2. Seeberg, R., A History of Doctrine, Eng. tr. from 1895 Ger. ed., Vol. II, p. 415.

they were unalterable. Reuss<sup>1</sup> speaks of the "imperious need of defining everything, systematizing everything, subordinating everything, in short, to a work of dialectic reasoning." He goes on to say:

"The dogmatic works of that period contain chapters more and more lengthy on the Scriptures, their origin, composition, authority, and other qualities, whereas formerly, and especially in the Lutheran Church, no need had been felt of investigating a point which in its fundamental conception was an axiom for every one."

In the seventeenth century, after the Synod of Dort in 1618, a great change in the study of theology took place. The history of doctrine was studied chiefly with a view to controversy, and the "testimony to correctness in doctrine" was at all times made a subject of study. In this state of affairs, it was inevitable that historical vision should be obscured. We must not forget, though, that in the realm of exegesis, even the stricter Calvinism allowed dogmatic prejudice to have less influence than did Lutheranism. We find the Calvinistic exegetes adhering more closely to the grammatical and historical sense of the Scriptures than their Lutheran and Roman Catholic contemporaries.<sup>2</sup> On the whole, then, the Reformed attitude toward Scripture was to all intents and purposes the same as that of contemporary Lutheranism, although less magical and materialistic.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Reuss, E., History of the Canon of the Holy Scriptures, Eng. tr., Edinburgh, 1887, p. 343.

2. Schaff, P., The History of the Church (The Swiss Reformation), Edinburgh, 1893, Vol. II, p. 536f.

3. McGiffert, A. C., Protestant Thought Before Kant, p. 149.

The earlier Reformed theology distinguished between the "Word of God" and "Holy Scripture" in the most precise manner. Under the former concept was understood that which God had spoken by various means to the Patriarchs, and, in later times, through His Son. The revelations, or "Words", which God had communicated to men were at first handed down orally, and only subsequently were they set down in writing. However, the later dogmaticians did not think of the Word of God as an event of revelation; rather were they more concerned with the method by which it was committed to writing. Thus, the "Word of God" and "Scripture" came to be identified.<sup>1</sup>

#### B. Views of Representative Reformed Dogmaticians.

##### 1. George Sohnius (1551-1589)

In Sohnius<sup>2</sup> we have the first representative, among

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1. Cf. Heppe, H., Die Dogmatik der evangelisch-reformirten Kirche, Elberfeld, 1861, p. 17: Speaking of the dynamic, spiritual view of the earlier dogmaticians, he says: "... die Zuverlässigkeit der canonischen Bücher beruht nicht auf der besonderen Art und Weise, in der Gott ihre Aufzeichnung bewirkt hat, sondern auf dem Gnadenstand, dessen sich ihre Verfasser bleibend erfreuten, auf dem Leben derselben im heil. Geiste. Nicht die Operation des heil. Geistes beim Niederschreiben der canonischen Schriften, sondern die bleibende Geistesgemeinschaft, in welcher sich Gott die Propheten und Apostel bewahrte, die Erkenntnis der Wahrheit, deren sich die biblischen Autoren durch Erleuchtung des heil. Geistes überhaupt erfreuten, ist der Grund, auf dem die Infallibilität ihrer Berichte beruht....Aber schon gegen das Ende des 16ten Jahrhunderts war die Auffassung der Inspiration eine andere geworden, indem dieselbe jetzt vom Begriffe der Offenbarung vollständig abgelöst wurde. Die Schrift galt jetzt lediglich darum als inspirirt, weil sie den biblischen Autoren von Gott dictirt war."

2. George Sohnius was born in 1551 at Rossbach near Friedberg in the Wetterau, studied at Marburg and Wittenberg, was Professor of Theology in Marburg, and died when Professor of Theology at Heidelberg in 1589.



the German Reformed dogmaticians, of a thoroughgoing and dogmatically precise doctrine of Inspiration. He stands in the transition period between the old-Protestant dogmatic and the later doctrinal formulation. In his work De verbo Dei<sup>1</sup> he begins by making a distinction between the Word of God and Scripture. The Word of God is the original, vocal revelation of God to men; the Scripture is the record of that revelation.<sup>2</sup> The peculiar substance of the Word of God is the Word concerning Christ the Redeemer. The autor et efficiens of the Word is God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. A set of true theological postulates and a norm for everyone, this same Word is the αὐτόπιστος and irrefragabilis iudex of all theological controversies.

A distinction is to be made between the Word of God as written, and the unwritten Word. The verbum ἀγγραφον is that which was handed down viva voce sine scripto until the time of Moses, when it was committed to writing; in the New Testament, the preaching of the Apostles constitutes this unwritten Word. The Scriptures, or the written Word, are the product of the dictation of the Holy Spirit.<sup>3</sup> The Scripture is designated

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1. De verbo Dei et ejus tractatione, 1588. Opera, Vol. I, 3rd ed., 1609, pp. 1-61.
  2. Sohnius, De verbo Dei, Opp. I, 5: "Verbum Dei est, quod Deus per homines immediate vocatos hominibus lingua et sermone pro ratione temporis maxime conveniente patefecit, unde omnis vera theologia, imprimis de Christo servatore generis hum. promanat."
  3. Ibid., Opp. I, 6f.: "Verbum Dei ἐγγραφον est, quod Deus per homines immediate vocatos et Spiritu sancto afflatus, tanquam amanuenses, literis prodit, sive ipsi exarent, sive ab aliis exaratum comprobent."

"Holy" quia divinitus dictata res sacras continet. Thus it follows that the authority of the Scripture tanta est et esse debet, quanta ipsius est dictantis Dei. Therefore, the Holy Scripture, as is every Word of God, is canon et regula omnis verae theologiae et iudex irrefragabilis omnis controversiae de religione.

Regarding the full Inspiration of the Old Testament, Sohnius holds that God did not only write the Decalogue with His own finger, but that He also commanded Moses to write all that he did concerning the creation of the world, the Fall of man, the teaching and lives of the patriarchs, and other related matters. All this is the result of the Divine dictation; likewise the Prophets wrote at the heavenly command and dictate. In similar fashion, the books of the New Testament were dictated either to the Apostles or to their disciples.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Sohnius, De verbo Dei, Opp. I, 10f.: "Deus non solum ipse exarato decalogo scripturam, suis digitis quasi consecravit, sed etiam Mosi librorum scriptionem expresse mandavit (Exod. 24:27); qui de creatione rerum, de lapsu primorum hominum, de patriarcharum doctrina et vita, quantum posteritati necessarium iudicavit, in Genesi breviter comprehendit, ac postea, quae voluit et dictavit Deus, reliquis libris exposuit. Quem secuti prophetae posterius similiter, quae Deus vellet et dictaret literis prodiderunt.....Et videntur prophetae tantum summas suarum concionum et praecipua capita, ex quibus reliqua facile intelligi possent, literis consignasse et publice affixisse, ut quae viva voce ab ipsis tradita erant, percipi ab auditoribus rectius possent, sicut apparet ex Habac. 2; Esai 8:1, c. 28; Ierem. 36:6."

The question is then discussed as to how we may prove that God has dictated the Holy Scriptures of the Prophets and the Apostles. He adduces the usual external and internal arguments, all of which may assist in persuading us of Inspiration; but the decisive witness, not only as to contents, but also as to Canon and form, is that of the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Hieronymus Zanchius (d. 1590)

One of the most comprehensive and influential of all the writings in the Reformed Church came from the pen of Zanchius, who followed Ursinus in the chair of Theology at Heidelberg. His De sacra scriptura<sup>2</sup> signalizes the development of theological method even more basically than Melancthon had attempted. He conceived the task of theology to be twofold: (1) the indoctrination of the young by catechizing, and the teaching of students in the Scriptures; (2) the reverent interpretation of the Scriptures in all their purity by means of analytic methods, according to the rule of faith. For Zanchius,

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1. Sohnius, De Verbo Dei, Opp. I, 15f.: "Internis testimoniis videl. Spiritus sancti intus animum nostrum alloquentis et hos scripturae libros θεόπνευστους, i.e. a se dictatos esse spiritui nostro dictantis et quasi obsignantis. Nam qui sunt Filii Dei et Spiritum eius habent, illi eiusdem spiritus interno numine illustrati et arcano testimonio persuasi certo certius credunt, divinitus dictatum esse, quod in libris continetur, et tales etiam hos libros a nothis et adulterinis--spirituali iudicio discernere, et an Spiritum Dei redoleant, diiudicare possunt."
  2. Zanchius, De sacra scriptura tractatus integer. Opera theologica, 8 vols., Geneva 1619. The tractatus was first composed in 1568.

the locus "De scriptura sacra" was fundamental, for if the Holy Scripture is to be the basis of all theology, upon which the whole corpus christianae doctrinae is built up, then the other loci theologici cannot be fully discussed without that one which is basic. His analysis of the passage II Tim. 3:14-17 provides him with the opportunity of giving expression to what he considers to be some of the most important qualities of Scripture, in the sense of the Protestant orthodoxy, as theoretic propositions and arguments. Then he goes on to discuss these and several other related subjects in the form of eighteen questions.<sup>1</sup>

Canonical problems hold the attention of Zanchius; he considers as the primus canon scripturarum that which has been handed down through Moses as the Torah of God, registered partly upon paper, partly in the hearts of the pious. For, he adds, the external Law was not enough; there must also be provided the inner Canon of the Spirit. By that first Canon of the Mosaic law the Inspiration and worth of all further prophetic writings must be tested. Likewise, by the same standard, according to the command of Christ, John 5:39, we are to make full proof of the canonicity of the New Testament writings. A book is to be considered canonical because it has been recognized by the whole Church as conformable to the body of doctrine; the analogia fidei determines whether or not it is to be received. Once received, Inspiration and dictation are to be predicated of it.

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1. Zanchius, De sacra scriptura, I, 325ff.

On the other hand, we are unable to recognize with certainty what is God's Word and what is not, unless God Himself reveals that to us; human power, or even the judgment of the Church is insufficient here.<sup>1</sup> The Scripture itself cannot effect this recognition, but it requires the Holy Spirit, who, when men read the Scripture observingly, and hear it with feeling, teaches that God and not a man is speaking in the Holy Scriptures. If the Scripture itself compelled this recognition, then everyone who heard and read would know immediately that it was God's Word. Manifestly, this is not the case. As the light of the sun does not reveal itself to a blind man unless his eyes be opened, so the Scripture is not evidenced to the heart of man unless he be supernaturally illuminated by the Holy Spirit. Never can he see the worth of Scripture nor hear God speaking in it, until the Spirit touches him.

There are good external proofs of the Inspiration of Scripture, such as the antiquity and agreement of the writings, the acknowledged miracles, and the fulfilment of prophecy; but without the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit, these other grounds cannot give full persuasion. This detailed development of the doctrine of the inner witness of the Spirit to the Inspiration of Scripture comes, as we have seen from Calvin,<sup>2</sup> and was held by most of the Reformed theologians. Several, such as Polanus, Walaeus, and Maccovius, tended toward the more external formulation of the witness which the Lutherans

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1. Zanchius, De sacra scriptura, I, 332f.

2. Corp. Ref., 30:58f., 71, 989.

enunciated. The Lutherans remained faithful to the simple formulation of the testimonium Spiritus Sancti as expressed in the Fifth Article of the Augsburg Confession; fides ex auditu.

It is important to note here that since this inner witness was apparently not operative in every person who addressed himself to the Scriptures, Zanchius felt it was necessary to assert that the illumination of the Spirit was present only to the elect.

Further, Zanchius laid the foundations for a careful discussion of the distinction between essence and accident in Scripture. He was moved to this by the claim of Roman Catholic polemicists that the authority of the Church was older than the authority of Scripture. Opposing this position, he argues that with reference to its essence the Scripture is doctrina Θεόπνευστος. As accidental, however, the Word might well be ipsa scriptio seu exaratio in tabulis et libris. Thus considered, the essence of Scripture is not later than the Church, but rather the reverse. The first one to receive this essence was not, as has been generally thought, Moses, but even from the beginning Adam and other patriarchs had had vouchsafed to them the Divine Revelation. If we are dealing with only the accidents, then Zanchius is willing to concede the argument to his opponents without any further discussion.

In one place<sup>1</sup> he compares the minds, mouths, and hands of the writers to canals, through which the Word was brought

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1. Zanchius, De sacra scriptura, I, 356.

to us, as though flowing from the very mouth of God Himself. While not going to the extremes of the Lutheran scholasticism, Zanchius does hold to a view of strict, verbal Inspiration.

### 3. Amandus Polanus a Polansdorf (1561-1610)

While standing within the Calvinistic tradition, Polanus nevertheless tended toward the Lutheran formulation of the doctrine of the internal witness of the Spirit; in his two works which concern us here, the Syntagma, and the Sylloge,<sup>1</sup> he gives expression to a strict view of Inspiration. From Matt. 5:18 he argues that the whole of Scripture, even to the last vowel-points, is Divinely inspired;<sup>2</sup> indeed, Polanus was one of the first to hold to the Inspiration of the vowel-points. In this he anticipated Gerhard, who soon incorporated the view into his own doctrine of Scripture. The points are not of recent origin, Polanus contended, but were included

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1. Polanus, Syntagma theologiae christianae, Hanover, 1625; first published at Hanover in 1610, and at Geneva in 1612. The Sylloge thesium theologiarum ad methodi leges conscriptarum first appeared at Basel in 1601.

2. Ibid., Syntagma, I, p. 75, Nr. VIII: "Hoc unius Christi testimonium plus ponderis apud nos habere debet, quam eorum, qui affirmant, priscos Hebraeos scriptores vocalibus omnino destitutos fuisse. Verum his non auscultandum, sed spiritui sancto, qui juxta Christi, magistri ac domini nostri, testimonium scripturas sacras ad extremum usque apicem pure divinas esse in animis electorum obsignat."

when Moses and the Prophets wrote.<sup>1</sup>

The testimony of the Holy Spirit, properly speaking, was not an internal conviction wrought by God, but rather, it was reduced to the external proofs whereby Scripture evidences itself to be Divine; the "inner" proof was subordinate.<sup>2</sup>

In the Biblicist spirit of his day, Polanus, in reply to the question whether Genesis is a dogmatic book, is able to extract all the articles of faith from the first chapter alone.<sup>3</sup>

By way of modifying his stricter position, he does admit of a pre-Biblical revelation which continues to exist independ-

1. Polanus, Syntagma, I, 75: "Evidentibus argumentis constat, puncta vocalia et puncta distinguentia, quae accentus vocantur, in libris Veteris Testamenti non esse demum a Judaeis Tiberiadis excogitata, sed ab ipso Mose et prophetis adscripta. I. Quia scriptura V. T. est a Deo per prophetas tradita, non tantum quoad sensum, sed etiam quoad verba ac proinde etiam quoad vocales, sine quibus verba nulla constare possunt, et quoad accentus distinguentes, sine quibus orationis senses esset perturbatus. II. Quia puncta vocalia sunt anima syllabarum et vocum atque adeo vivae prononciationis..... IV. Quia sic incertum et dubium fieret totum V. T. .... V. Quia si nunc a punctatione et distinctione hominum, qui prophetae non fuerunt, esset pendendum, necesse foret, ut hominibus, non Deo crederemus. VI. Quia si a Massoritis demum vera lectio et prononciatio prophetarum esset ostensa, essemus aedificati super fundamentum Massoritarum, et non super fundamentum prophetarum..... VIII. Quia punctis scripta V. T. jam ante Christi adventum fuerunt distincta et sanctissimo ipsius ore approbata, sicut constat ex Matt. 5:18.....Quibus verbis clare testatur, scripturam divinae legis non solum consonantibus (quae per jod earum minimam intelliguntur), verum etiam apicibus constare, per quos puncta utique denotantur."
2. Ibid., I, 17: "Testimonia divina tanquam praecipua κριτήρια sunt duo, unum externum, alterum internum: illud praecedit, hoc sequitur in nobis ordinarie. Testimonium divinum externum est ipsiusmet scripturae de se ipsa testantis, quod sit divina."
3. Ibid., Sylloge thesium, II, 17. Cf. Gass, W. Geschichte der prot. Dogma in ihrem Zusammenhang mit der Theologie überhaupt, Berlin, 1854, II, 398.



ently of its being recorded in the Scriptures; these "Scriptures of the heart" convince men of their having been fore-ordained to eternal life.<sup>1</sup> Thus, by virtue of its infallible certainty, Scripture has a dignity and excellence possessed by no other writings; it is to be received as authoritative, believed and obeyed by all, on account of God being its Divine Author.<sup>2</sup>

#### 4. Andreas Rivetus (1573-1651)

A contemporary of Gerhard, Rivetus sought to turn the views of Inspiration into broader, less mechanical directions. His Isagoge<sup>3</sup> devotes a special section to a careful consideration of the implications of Inspiration. The impulse to write came to the authors of Holy Scripture only as often as the Spirit wished to make use of their pens.<sup>4</sup> When we are taught, for example, in such a passage as II Pet. 1:21, that prophecy has not come to us by means of the human will, that does not mean that the Prophets and Apostles were unwilling and resisting, or that they wrote, as the Montanists held, without knowledge or understanding. Much more so, they were

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1. Polanus, Syntagma, I, 50f.: "Scriptura cordis est scriptura interna, quam Sp. s. immediate in carneis tabulis cordis filiorum Dei ad vitam aeternam praeordinatorum inscribit, ut θεοδίδοκτοι credant ad salutem..."
  2. Ibid., Syntagma, I, 14: "Auctoritas s. scripturae est dignitas et excellentia soli sacrae scripturae prae omnibus aliis scriptis competens, qua est et habetur authentica i.e. infallibiliter certa, sic ut necessitate absoluta ab omnibus ei sit credendum atque obtemperandum propter auctorem Deum."
  3. Rivetus, Isagoge seu introductio generalis ad scripturam sacram V. et N.T., 1627, in Opera theol., 1652, pp. 853-1040.
  4. Ibid., Isagoge, I, 3ff. (Opera, pp. 856ff.).

free agents, and wrote with complete consciousness, but not according to their own wills, neither according to their "born-again" wills by means of which pious works are accomplished. The will at whose dictate they wrote was made known to them by an extraordinary impulsus ad scribendum which, while not interfering with their own choice of words, yet so controlled their pens that they could not have written at any other time, nor in any other words.

Information was communicated to them of a nature that was partly cognizable by natural means through their own mental processes, or that was communicable to them through other men. For the awareness of this type of knowledge a special and unique revelation of the Holy Spirit was not necessary; but whether known or unknown beforehand, important or unimportant, nothing was recorded apart from the dictation of the Holy Spirit. Regardless of attendant circumstances under which the writing took place, nothing was allowed to interfere with the recording of infallible truth. It was not only an overruling direction which protected them from deception or illusion, but when the occasion demanded, the Spirit chose the very words which were to be written.

Rivetus' theory is rather vague and somewhat difficult to grasp here, but what he apparently means to say is that the authors, while not requiring a special knowledge of the words which they recorded, yet did not lack in carefulness and conscientiousness. They were specially guided in their choice of words, yet in no wise were they subject to error. If the customary style of the amanuensis was inadequate to

express properly the mind of the Spirit, then He overruled to the extent of actually changing and arranging the words. Since Divine power and energy are contained in the very words, it is necessary to hold fast to them; truth is dependent upon the words as they stand written, so it is not permitted to call them into question or to oppose a full faith in them.<sup>1</sup> Thus it is a radically false opinion which holds that the writers of Holy Scripture were not always under the immediate influence of the Spirit, and that occasionally what they wrote was combined with human elements, giving evidence of the exercise of their own judgments. Rivetus feels that if there exists anything in Scripture that is the product of the human mind, by the overruling influence of the Holy Spirit it must be made completely free from error.

From these above opinions we are enabled to reach this judgment: God is the unique author of Scripture, and only per quandam catachresin can the inspired men who recorded Scripture be designated as its authors. Much more, they are only calami Dei vel amanuenses. God is not only the autor primarius of Scripture as the causa prima; for such authorship can be postulated of all devotional writings. Rather has He as proprius et singularis autor dictated the thoughts and words of Scripture; and no human error has vitiated the Divine contents. Thus, the human writers are to be designated non tam autores secundarii, quam calami viventes et scribentes. As a writer is able to employ various kinds of pencils, some sharp,

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1. Cf. Ritschl, O., Dogmengeschichte, I, 186f.

others dull, so the Holy Spirit was able to use men of varying talents, sanctifying their literary styles, in order that, even though words may have differed, the same truth would be expressed. While Rivetus was unwilling to think of the biblical writers as purely passive and unconscious objects of the Divine inbreathing, he does think of them as simply living pens in the hand of the Holy Spirit.

Several other orthodox Reformed theologians of this period, though less prominent, sought to give a more liberal direction to the views of Inspiration. Thysius<sup>1</sup> and Amesius<sup>2</sup> emphasized the active cooperation of the writers with the

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1. Ant. Thysius, Disputationes de libris canonicis et apocryphis. Synopsis purioris theol., 1652, p. 18: "Modus scriptio- nis hic fuit: modo Deus inspirantis et dictantis, scriptores vero amanuensium et ad certam formulam scribentium....., modo assistentis et dirigentis,....., ipsi vero commentantium et autorum rationem habuerunt, Lc. 1: 1, 3. Non enim semper mere παθητικῶς, passive, sed et ἐνεργητικῶς, effective se habuerunt, ut qui et ingenium, mentisque agitationem et discursum, et memoriam, dispositionem et ordinem stylumque suum (unde scriptio- num in iis diversitas) adhibuerunt....., praesidente tamen perpetue spiritu s., qui ita eos egit et rexit, ut ab omni errore mentis, memoriae, linguae et calami ubique praeservarentur."
  2. Guil. Amesius, Medulla theologica, Amsterdam, 1641, p. 158: "Inspiratio vero divina scribentibus illis adfuit cum aliqua varietate. Quaedam enim scribenda incognita prorsus antea fuerunt scriptori....., quaedam autem prius nota erant scriptori....., et horum alia naturali cognitione tenebant, alia supernaturali. In occultis et ignotis in- spiratio divina omnia praestabat per se: in iis, quae nota fuerunt, aut quorum notitia ordinariis mediis acquiri potuit, accedebat etiam religiosum studium scriptorum, Deo ita assistente, ut in scribendo non errarent."

Spirit. They asserted dictation, but throughout the process the authors were conscious of their being used as instruments of the Divine purpose. They remained rational beings, in full possession of their normal faculties, but with deepened insight and heightened feeling. All this took place under the supervision of the Holy Spirit; in no wise were human weakness and error allowed to interfere.

#### 5. Gisbert Voetius (1589-1676)

As in Quenstedt the high point of Lutheran orthodoxy was reached, so in Voetius the Reformed scholasticism attained its full flower.<sup>1</sup> A theologian and preacher of exceptional talents, he was influential in the deliberations of the Synod of Dort (Dordrecht) in 1618; while professor of Theology at the University of Utrecht from 1634 until his death in 1676, he stoutly resisted Cartesianism in all its forms, and contended for the strictest scholastic views of verbal Inspiration and the absolute inerrancy of Scripture.

In his Selectae disputationes<sup>2</sup> he argues that the Word of God and Holy Scripture are to be equated. To the question, an sit articulus fidei seu de fide et necessario credendum,

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1. Gass, W., Geschichte der protestantischen Dogmatik in ihrem Zusammenhange mit der Theologie, II, 454: "Für ein solches, ja für den rechten Koryphäen der niederländischen Schultheologie darf in der That Voetius gelten, und wie die Lutherische Orthodoxie in Quenstedt ihren Höhepunkt erreicht: so hat auch Jener keinen Nachfolger gehabt, der es ihm in dem jetzt üblichen reformirten Scholasticismus an Meisterschaft zuvor gethan hätte."
  2. Voetius, Gisbert, Selectae disputationes theologicae, Utrecht, 1648.

scripturam esse verbum Dei, Voetius replies that we are to distinguish between the content of Scripture and its external form; while all portions of Scripture are not of equal importance, yet none are to be construed as less than the very Word of God.<sup>1</sup>

To the question an scriptores N. T. lingua alia (syriaca scil.) conceperint quam scripserint, Voetius answers strongly in the negative. It was impossible, he says, for the New Testament to have been conceived in any other language than that in which it was actually written, presumably, in the textus receptus as it lies before us. If the writers recorded the Scriptures in Greek, then it was Greek that was dictated to them.<sup>2</sup> However, they did not write in unconscious ecstasy, but understood everything which they wrote.<sup>3</sup> Only the Apostles, and Luke and Mark, were θεόπνευστοι; this cannot be said with certainty of the evangelists Barnabas, Titus,

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1. Voetius, Selectae disp., V, 1: "Distingue inter rem ipsam seu materiam et contentum huius scripturae, et inter externas formas ac modos scriptionis speciales, qualis e. gr. quod haec pars tali lingua, tali phrasi scripta, etc.; rursum inter canonem collective sumptum eiusque partes integrantes indefinite, et inter eundem canonem distributive sumptum s. singulas eius partes maiores, minores, minimas definite ac sigillatim consideratas; adhaec inter fidem seu conclusionem de principio fidei, et conclusionem ex principio fidei de quacunque alia veritate theologica."
  2. Ibid., I, 14: "Nemo enim recte et rationaliter quid profert sive viva voce sive scripto, nisi prius illud recte conceperit. Si ergo graece aut hellenistice scripserunt, graece etiam conceperunt, idque ex inspiratione et dictamine Spiritus Sancti."
  3. Ibid., I, 45, 47.

Timothy, Sylvanus, and Epaphroditus. Likewise, the amanuenses of the Prophets and Apostles were inspired as librarii et typographi.<sup>1</sup>

As to whether accentus textus originalis hebraici et graeci sint authentici, Voetius distinguishes between musical and tonic accents. The former are not necessary, and the latter are not to be dispensed with; the Hebrew vowel-points necessary to the etymology and syntax are to be considered authentic. Similarly, he affirms the original inspiration of the accents of the New Testament Greek.<sup>2</sup>

In order that we might have objective certainty that God alone is the author of the Scriptures, we have been provided with the inward testimony of the Spirit. He alone persuades and illumines us; His witness is supreme, prime, and independent.<sup>3</sup> A careful distinction is then to be made between

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1. Voetius, Select. disp., I, 46.

2. Ibid., V, 4: "De euphonicis seu musicis accentibus Hebraeorum, secundum quos illi legentes cantillant, non video cur affirmari; de tonicis non video cur negari debeat. Hos enim ad etymologiae et syntaxeos integritatem facientes pari fere passu cum punctis vocalibus ire posse, concedere malumus quam oppositum propugnare. De accentibus graecis N.T. malo simpliciter affirmare, quod ad linguae et scripturae non tantum elegantiam sed etiam integritatem tunc temporis eos pertinuisse indubium est."

3. Ibid., Select. disp., V, 14: "Ut certitudo objectiva auctoritatis scripturae nulla est, nisi a solo Deo scripturae auctore ipsi indita atque insita; sic certitudo eiusdem subjectiva s. conceptus formalis auctoritatis scripturae nobis nullus est nisi a Deo interius per Spir. Sanctum illuminante ac persuadente. Ut enim ipsa scriptura tanquam principium externum proprio lumine radians (nullo alieno interveniente tanquam principio aut medio demonstrationis aut convictionis) per se et in se ἀξιόπιστον seu credibile est....sic Spiritus S. est internum, supremum, primum, independens principium actualiter mentis nostrae oculos aperiens atque illuminans, et credibilem scripturae auctoritatem ex ea, cum ea, per eundem efficaciter persuadens, sic ut nos tracti curramus et passive in nobis convicti acquiescamus."

authenticia historica and authenticia praecepti of Scripture.

The historical authenticity is to be taken as infallibly true in so far as the Biblical writers were faithful to the revelation they received, whether it concerned dogma, quotations, words, or acts, or whether the writers themselves were good or evil; as long as they experienced God's revelation they were preserved from error.<sup>1</sup> The normative authority of Scripture is attached to its real content, which we are to receive in faith, and carefully observe and imitate. Thus the entire Scripture is authoritative; through all its parts it is inspired and normative. Nothing was written at the authors' own impulse, but all is the direct result of the inspiring activity of the Holy Spirit; even the individual thoughts, both as to substance and phrasing, were dictated by the Spirit.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Voetius, Select. disp., I, 30: "...quâ scriptura infallibiliter vera esse intelligitur veritate Θεοπνεύστω , quatenus scriptores sacri historice exponentes omnia dogmata, consilia, dicta, facta, sive bona sive mala, quae bibliis continentur, ex ore et per immediatam Dei revelationem illa accepisse et absque ullo errore nobis exhibuisse creduntur."
  2. Ibid., I, 31: ".....quâ ipsa rerum materia scripturis contenta (exempli gr. consilia, dicta, facta) praeter sui notitiam, etiam obligant et constringunt conscientias nostras ad fidem, observationem et imitationem eorum, quae ibi credenda, observanda et imitanda dicuntur....His praemissis dicimus, totam scripturam esse authenticam authenticam historiae, h.e. infallibilem et Θεόπνευστων veritam per omnes et singulas eius partes esse diffusam, ita ut scriptores non privato suo impulsu et libitu, sed dictante Spir. Sancto omnes et singulas sententias quod ad rem et quod ad phrasin protulerunt."



The full authority of Scripture is proved by recourse to the two classic texts, II Tim. 3:16 and II Peter 1:21; other witnesses and grounds are corroborative, but the quotation of the texts seems to be definitive. Those persons in defectu who seek in any way to limit the authority of Holy Scripture, and who ascribe its exornatio, ἑρμηνεία, phrasis et stylus, to human ingenuity and energy, rather than to an immediate revelation of the Holy Spirit. Most emphatically, Voetius asserts that in an immediate and extraordinary manner, all that was written was Divinely dictated,

"tum res, tum verba, tum quae antea ignorabant aut recordari non poterant scriptores, quam quae probe noverant, tum historica seu particularia, tum dogmatica universalia theoretica et practica: sive visu, sive auditu, sive lectione sive meditatione ea didicissent."<sup>1</sup>

He goes on to contend for the majesty of the New Testament style, holding that it is free from barbarisms and solecisms. However, he admits, as we have previously noted, that those in excessu who attach undue authority to unessential Hebrew accentings and marginal glosses.<sup>2</sup>

#### 6. Johannes Cocceius (Koch)(1603-1669)

While the chief importance of Cocceius for the history

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1. Voetius, Select. disp., I, 33.

2. Ibid., I, 33.

of Dogma lies in his federal, or covenant theology,<sup>1</sup> we shall consider briefly his view of Inspiration, and the significance of his theological and exegetical method in relation to the Reformed scholasticism.

Cocceius rather completely represents the tendency to separate revelation and Inspiration, which holds Scripture to be valid not because it is a trustworthy report of an original living revelation from God, but because the Scriptures, in the very act of writing, were dictated by the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures, according to Cocceius, have God as their supreme author and giver.<sup>2</sup> The instruments and amanuenses of God wrote not at their own will, but solely as God gave them utterance.<sup>3</sup> Regardless of the process, whether by ecstasy, visions, or dreams, the writers were extraordinarily impelled to the true and infallibly accurate recording of the revel-

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1. Cocceius, Summa doctrinae de foedere et testamento Dei, Leyden, 1648. Also Summa theologiae ex Scripturis repetita, Leyden. The federal theology was founded upon the idea of a covenant, or contract between God and man. Cocceius distinguished between (1) the covenant before the fall (cov. of works), and (2) after the fall (cov. of grace). The latter covenant includes a threefold economy: (a) prior to the law, (b) under the law, and (c) under the gospel.
  2. Cocceius, Summa theol., IV, 39: "Horum librorum auctor et dator est Deus (non tantum Pater sed et Filius), qui iussit eos scribi et per Spiritum S. inspiravit, egit, rexit ministros suos ad eos scribendum."
  3. Ibid., IV, 40: "Administri et amanuenses Dei fuerunt viri Dei, prophetae generali nomenclatura dicti, qui non propria voluntate, sed acti a Spiritu S., ut locuti sunt, ita et scripserunt."

ation.<sup>1</sup> Attested by the witness of the Spirit, the Scripture is then self-evidencing, depending solely upon its own authority. The recognition of its certitudo is based upon no external grounds, but solely upon its unique Inspiration.<sup>2</sup>

To Cocceius belongs the assured distinction of having rescued the Reformed theology from the domination of scholastic orthodoxy; while not presenting any new view of Scripture, his theology had, on the whole, a salutary liberalizing effect, for it placed the emphasis on the

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1. Cocceius, Summa theol., IV, 41:

"Hi partim visa et audita a Deo in ecstasi vel in apparitione ad oculum, aut in somnio, multa etiam Spiritu in ipsis luce aliqua supernaturali patefaciente, mero amanuensium ministerio descripserunt; alia vero etiam tum historice narrando, tum docendo secundum sapientiam sibi datam (II Pet. 3:15) commentati sunt, nonnulla etiam scribenda dictarunt in quibus datum est ipsis esse fidelibus, non sine testimonio Spiritus sancti; ..... unde consequitur, eos nec a re scribenda memoriae aut λογισμοῦ infirmitate, nec a verbo imperitiâ et imprudentiâ aberxasse, sed omnia verba quatenus in literis scil. sacris tanquam signis continentur, tanquam verba Spiritus sancti ad omnem exigentiam aedificationis sine omni periculo utilia et sapientissime composita accipi et haberi debere; cui sapientiae etiam character orationis (saepe resipiens ingenium et donum speciale ministri, quippe quum Dei spiritus ut θεὸς εἰρήνης sua dona suaviter contemperaverit) et dispositio auctore digna astipulatur."

2. Ibid., III, 2.

historical development and progression within revelation.<sup>1</sup>

### 7. Johannes Buxtorf the Younger (1599-1664)

During the opening years of the 17th century the Swiss orthodox theologians were occupied in the text controversy against the school of Saumur, represented in this particular phase by Ludwig Capellus. The elder Buxtorf had

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1. Cf. Heppe, H., Dogmatik des deutschen Protestantismus im sechzehnten Jahrhundert, I, 202:

"Mit heiligem Ernste dem Studium des Wortes Gottes und der Sorge für das eigne Seelenheil hingegeben vermochte Cocceius den eigentümlichen Geist, aus dem der Heidelberger Katechismus und die gesammte Föderaltheologie der heimatlichen Kirche hervorgegangen war, leicht zu verstehen. Nicht Aristoteles und nicht Ramus, sondern Gottes Wort sollte das Scepter führen; und nicht das Interesse der 'schola' oder der Dialektik, sondern das Interesse des frommen Herzens und Lebens sollte der Zielpunkt alles dogmatischen Denkens sein. In der Weise eines ächten Reformators, der den alten Schatz hervorzieht, und allem Spotte der Welt zum Trotz gegen die trügerischen Güter des Geschlechtes seiner Zeit eifert, stellte darum Cocceius der grade damals in ihrer Herrlichkeit prangenden Schulweisheit den ganzen Ernst der alten deutschreformirten Föderaltheologie entgegen.

"Wie einst die Reformatoren das absolute Recht der Predigt von der Gerechtigkeit aus dem Glauben an die Gnade lediglich und allein in Gottes Wort gefunden hatten, so fand auch Cocceius die Berechtigung der Föderaltheologie lediglich und allein in Gottes Wort.

"Dir Frucht seiner Einwirkung auf die reformirte Dogmatik war daher die Zurückführung der Theologie aus den Fesseln der überlieferten scholastischen und der schulmässigen Bildung dienenden Behandlung in die Freiheit des Wortes Gottes."

argued<sup>1</sup> that the Hebrew vowel-points and accents were of equal age with the consonants and likewise of Divine origin. He maintained that the points were communicated to Adam in the Garden of Eden, transmitted to and by Moses, and that although they were forgotten during the Captivity, they were subsequently restored by Ezra. Again they were forgotten in the upheavals during and after the destruction of the second Temple; but the Massorites, after the close of the Talmud, revised the system of writing and pronunciation, and through Divine Inspiration permanently fixed the vocalization of the present signs.

At the age of 23 the younger Buxtorf published his Lexicon Chaldaicum et Syriacum (Basel, 1622), and eight years later, in 1630, he succeeded his father as professor of Hebrew in the University of Basel. There it was his task to defend the views of his father on the purity of the transmitted Masoretic text of the Old Testament against many attacks, chiefly those of Capellus.<sup>2</sup> Capellus, in his Critica Sacra of 1650,

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1. Johannes Buxtorf the Elder (1564-1629), Tiberias, sive commentarius masorethicus, Basel, 1620, stoutly defended the original text of the Old Testament against the Roman Catholics, who regarded the Vulgate and LXX as more reliable, and also against the doubts cast on it by Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin. However, his services were of tremendous importance in view of the appeal to the purity of the Hebrew text in the orthodox Protestant polemic.
  2. Johannes Buxtorf the Younger, De punctorum, vocalium atque accentum in libris Veteris Testamenti Hebraicis origine, antiquitate et auctoritate, Basel, 1648.  
Cf. Ibid., Anticritica, seu vindiciae veritatis Hebraicae adversus Ludovici Capelli criticam quam sacram vocat, Basel, 1621, 1653.

had justly insisted that the minute variations of the text do not affect the more important concerns of faith and life.<sup>1</sup> He was wrongly regarded as a dangerous man who sought to deny the Inspiration and authority of the Scripture, while Buxtorf was looked upon as the defender of orthodoxy, and won the formal verdict in the controversy.

Buxtorf frequently reverts to Matt, 5:17, 18, quoting Christ's words that "until heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled;" he apparently believes that this conclusively proves the existence of the vowel-points in the time of Christ. Even if they did exist then, it would not follow that they originated at the same time as the consonants.<sup>2</sup> If it be objected that we are placing the Rabbis--apart from considerations of their piety--in the stream of Inspiration Buxtorf simply quotes John 11:51, where it is stated that the wicked Caiaphas, "spake not of himself, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation." Thus, runs the argument, if a Caiaphas could be used by the Holy Spirit προφητεύειν, we ought not to think it strange

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1. Cf. Capellus, Arcanum punctationis, Leyden, 1621, also Diatriba de veris et antiquis Ebraeorum literis, Amsterdam, 1645.

2. Johannes Buxtorf the Younger, De punctorum orig., II, 335: "Si punctatio, et accentuatio biblica non profecta esset a viris prophetis, et extraordinariis spiritus s. instructis donis; sed a sapientibus vulgaribus, quales seu his nostris temporibus, seu superioribus saeculis, post prophetarum tempora, imo post absolutum et obsignatum Talmud, fuerunt; nullo modo ita παμψήφει, et ἀναντιρρήτως a gente Judaica esset acceptata....."

that conscientious and skilful scribes should likewise be used as instruments by that same Spirit, and that they should be safeguarded against all error of transcription.

We note here that this formulation in the spirit of the strictest Reformed orthodoxy was decidedly not the view of the great reformers of the 16th century. Without exception they rejected the doctrine of the Inspiration of the Massoretic text, accepting only the unpointed Old Testament text. Luther recognized in the points nothing but new human inventions to facilitate pronunciation, and about which he did not trouble himself; he says: "I often utter words which strongly oppose these points",<sup>1</sup> and "...they are most assuredly not to be preferred to the simple, correct and grammatical sense".<sup>2</sup> He simply employs the best text available in order to give the Bible to the people. Calvin acknowledged that the points were the result of great diligence and sound tradition, but that they were to be used with care and discrimination.<sup>3</sup> Zwingli gave great importance to the Greek and Latin versions of the Old Testament, and definitely disputed the Massoretic points and accentings.<sup>4</sup> It is with amazement that we see how

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1. Luther, Comm. on Gen. 47:21.

2. Luther, Comm. on Isa. 9:6.

3. Calvin, Comm. on Zech. 11:7.

4. Zwingli, Opera, Schuler and Schultess, V, 566ff. For further study of the Buxtorfs see:  
 Hagenbach, K.R., Die theologische Schule Basels, 1860, pp. 27ff.  
 Wright, C.H.H., Introduction to the Old Testament, London, 1891.  
 Buxtorf-Falkeisen, Johannes Buxtorf Vater, Basel, 1860.  
 Kautzsch, E., Johannes Buxtorf der ältere, 1879.  
 Diestel, L., Geschichte des alten Testaments in der christlichen Kirche, Jena, 1868, pp. 366ff.

far the post-Reformation Swiss and German theologians allowed themselves to depart from this standpoint, and how they once more became entangled in the bonds of rabbinical traditionalism.

While this text controversy brought the doctrine of verbal Inspiration to some of its greatest excesses, it was through the investigation of the text--stimulated by this controversy--that the doctrine was most completely called into question. A knowledge of the multiple variations of the text, even though not affecting matters of doctrine, was an especially difficult stone of stumbling for the dogma of verbal infallibility and for the Inspiration of the vowel-points.

"The necessity for transferring the quality of verbal infallibility from any extant manuscript or manuscripts to an ideal non-existent text, became more and more apparent.....It was still held by many that although no one infallible text could be found in existing manuscripts, such a text might be collated by freeing the single texts from their blemishes (naevi) and uniting them into one whole. With others there seemed rather to be the better hope in resorting to conjectural emendations; it was proposed to restore the text of the Old Testament by free use of the LXX, the Apocrypha, and Josephus.... Thus did that feeling of necessity which dogmatism itself created react in stimulating critical effort to obtain a true text of the Bible."<sup>1</sup>

#### 8. Heinrich Heidegger (1633-1698)

As professor of Theology in Zürich, Heidegger was one of the most influential of those striving for a settlement of the controversies that were splitting Swiss Reformed orthodoxy; a partial basis of peace was found in the Formula consensus

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1. Ladd, G.T., The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture, II, pp. 188f.



Helvetici of 1675, which we shall consider more carefully in the appendix following this section. Here it is in order to determine Heidegger's own views of Inspiration.

The Holy Scripture is the sole source and criterion of all Christian knowledge, and is to be understood as those canonical Books which God has allowed to be set down in writing through prophets, evangelists, and apostles.<sup>1</sup> The Books of the Old and New Testament not only contain the Word of God, but actually are the written Word. In an entirely different fashion than formerly, when a distinction was made between the Word of God written and unwritten (a distinction principally in opposition to the Roman Catholic formulation of the dependence of Scripture upon tradition), now a distinction was made between the verbum internum and externum. The former is the essence: privata apostolorum et prophetarum inspiratio; the latter is the form in which Inspiration is expressed per illorum ora praedicatio, canone publico facta. The prophets and apostles wrote, not in response to a general illumination, but at the behest of a special Divine commission to record whatever the Spirit wished.<sup>2</sup> As the musician plays

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1. Heidegger, Corpus Theologiae, Zürich, 1700, II, 6: "Scriptura s. est verbum Dei, autore Spir. s. in veteri test. per Mosen et prophetas, in novo vero per evangelistas et apostolos descriptum atque in libros canonicos relatam, ut de Deo rebusque divinis ecclesiam plene et perspicue erudiat, sitque fidei et vitae norma unica ad salutem."
  2. Ibid., II, 32: "Scribendi necessitatem iisdem iniunxerunt non immediata ad manus prophet. et apost. vocatio,....non occasiones fortuitae dumtaxat,....non voluntas hominis,..... sed tum mandatum Dei et generale, quo iussi sunt docere gentes omnes, et speciale,....tum inspiratio seu mandatum divinum internum."

the flute, so God uses His human instruments to sound forth His notes.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the individualities of style native to the various authors are not obliterated; rather are they employed by the Spirit to set forth the truth in a variety of forms. God accommodates the expression of His message to the stylistic peculiarities of the instruments.<sup>2</sup>

Heidegger, along with the Buxtorfs, contends for the Inspiration of the vowel-points, arguing from the Divine command to Moses to write the words on stones plainly; since no Hebrew writing can be plain unless the vowel-points be present. However, while he is convinced that the points are of equal age with the consonants, he is thinking of the vowel-points with respect to their meaning, rather than to their external form; concerning the latter, he does not wish to hazard a judgment.<sup>3</sup>

With special care Heidegger speaks of the internal witness of the Holy Spirit; he avoids all subjectivisms, and recognizes that it is God Who is bringing to us a knowledge

1. Heidegger, Corp. theol., II, 34.

2. Ibid., II, 36: "Nec inspirationi divinae rerum et verborum styli scriptorum sanctorum varietas officit, quia Spiritus s. ceu Θεός ειρήνης in inspiratione sua direxit et sanctificavit, ut unam eandemque veritatis doctrinam variantibus licet verbis exponerent."

3. Ibid., I, 36: "Quaecunque etiam scripturae testimonia claritudinem et certitudinem eiusdem confirmant, illa punctorum coevam consonis antiquitatem confirmant pariter. ....Licet ergo puncta vocalia, quin et accentus, saltem principialiores, inprimis....Soph-Pasuk...., quoad externam figuram nova essent; illud tamen ἀνεξαγάγιον esse debet, quoad virtutem, potestatem et analogiam lectionis, pronunciationis et significationis, vetera et consonis ipsis coeva esse."

of Himself in the face of Jesus Christ, attesting the  
divinity of His own Word.<sup>1</sup>

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1..Heidegger, Corp. theol., II, 11: "Testimonium illud Spiritus s. non est nisi persuasio animi, quae fallaciae obnoxia esse potest, vel motus cordis irrationabilis, qualem enthusiasmae pro divino veniunt: sed est fulgor et splendor animi in tenebris cordatus nostris, ministrans nocte illuminationem cognitionis gloriae Dei in facie Iesu Christi (II Cor. 4:6), ut ita remotis naturalibus obstaculis omni excellentiam et divitias verbi divini introspicere valeamus."

The Formula Consensus Helvetici, 1675.

Drawn up by Heidegger of Zürich, as a protest against the mediating French school of Saumur, and expressing the orthodox Calvinism of the day in a most elaborate and official manner, the Formula Consensus<sup>1</sup> was composed at the height of the controversies then rending Swiss theology. While it had been written as early as 1655, offering a tentative basis of conciliation, no decisions were made regarding it; finally, in 1675 it was adopted by Zürich, Bern, Basel, and Schaffhausen, and by Geneva in 1679. Its effect was purely local, and that for only fifty years or more; but it is important for our study in that here, for the first time, the Inspiration of the vowel-points is set forth as an article of faith.

"This confession of faith, the last that was officially promulgated in the Protestant churches, was also the most advanced expression of the despotic traditionalism which had invaded the theology of the Reformed schools; and the violent commotions which it soon provoked, and which led to its revocation, were, in the sphere of dogmatic science, the first symptom of an awakening which had already begun to regenerate the Lutheran churches in the sphere of practical religion. That did not prevent the vowel-points from being canonized, as the result not of any individual caprice but of the general spirit of the studies of the times, nor did it prevent the majority of theologians from accepting that canonization. Nor did it prevent others from growing impassioned on a point no less doubtful, namely, the form of the consonants which was supposed to have remained the same since the deluge."<sup>2</sup>

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1. The full title was: "Formula consensus ecclesiarum Helveticarum reformatorum circa doctrinam de gratia universali et connexa, aliaque nonnulla capita." For the text, cf. Niemeyer, H.A., Collectio confessionum in ecclesiis reformatis publicatarum, 1840, pp. 729-739; Müller, E.F.K., Symbolik, p. 861.
  2. Reuss, E., History of the Canon of the Holy Scriptures, Eng. tr., p. 357.

Never has there been a stricter and less compromising credal expression of Inspiration: "The Hebrew Old Testament codex which we have received from the tradition of the Jewish Church to which the oracles of God were committed, we receive today, equally as regards the consonants, the vowels, and even the vowel-points,--or at least as it regards the force of the vowel-points--both as to matter and as to words, as inspired by God....."<sup>1</sup>

Soon, however, this extreme position was to be abandoned, for already the approach of the Aufklärung was engendering a more sceptical attitude. While this particular confession soon lost its influence, the Calvinistic spirit was not quenched, and in Northern Germany, the Low Countries, and Britain, it waxed stronger than ever.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Formula consensus Helv., II, 1: "...Hebraicus Veteris Testamenti codex, quem ex traditione ecclesiae Judaicae, cui olim (Rom. 3:2) oracula Dei commissa sunt, accepimus hodieque retinemus, tum quoad consonas, tum quoad vocalia, sive puncta ipsa sive punctorum saltem potestatem, et tum quoad res tum quoad verba θεόπνευστος, ut fidei et vitae nostrae, una eum codice Novi Testamenti sit Canon unicus et illibatus, ad cuius normam ceu Lydium lapidem, univ ersae, quae exstant, versiones, sive orientales sive occidentales exigendae et, sicubi deflectunt, revocandae sunt."
  2. Tschackert, P., Die Entstehung der lutherischen und der reformierten Kirchenlehre, Göttingen, 1910, p. 414: "Aber bei dem Herannahen der 'Aufklärung' sank die Autorität dieses 'spät geborenen Werkes einer unerweichten Orthodoxie' (Müller). Im Jahre 1722 wurde es in Bern formell ausser Geltung gesetzt, in den anderen Gebieten der Schweiz liess man es stillschweigend fallen. Die orthodoxe calvinische Schultheorie hatte sich ausgelebt; aber der calvinische Geist war nicht erstorben. Man denke z.B. an die 'église du desert' in Frankreich, an die Réfugiés-Gemeinden in Deutschland, deren Gründer einst aus der Heimat geflohen waren 'pour sauver les âmes'. Sie bewahrten calvinische Bekenntnistreue und Kirchenzucht durch die Zeiten der Aufklärung und des Rationalismus hindurch bis zum Wiederwachen persönlicher Frömmigkeit und kirchlichen Sinnes in der Neuzeit."

CONCLUSION.

In this concluding section, one would hardly be called upon to enter into an extensive summary or restatement of criticisms and conclusions, inasmuch as we have sought to do that, in a measure, in the text. Suffice it, then, to indicate the ruling lines of development along which thinking in regard to the idea of verbal Inspiration proceeded, and to evaluate its significance for our day.

The rise of critical tendencies in the late seventeenth, and early eighteenth centuries--tendencies inaugurated by Spinoza, Le Clerc, Lessing, and Simon, and carried through by Schleiermacher and Rothe--necessitated a readjustment on the part of those who continued to hold strict views of Inspiration. There were two possibilities open: one could either admit that there were inaccuracies in the Scripture records, and devise a theory of degrees of Inspiration on the basis of essential and non-essential truths; or, on the other hand, one could take the position that Inspiration is not supernatural at all, but at most the gracious illumination of God, and thus adopt a more or less subjective theory. In the eighteenth century, within the scope of our study, no dogmatist of importance held to verbal Inspiration; and in the nineteenth, only Gausson (Théopneustie, 2nd ed., Paris, 1842) and Koelling (Die Lehre von der Theopneustie, Breslau, 1891) championed it with any effectiveness. While this strict view has probably been held by a large portion of lay Christians for the last two centuries, and by "fundamentalists" in Great Britain and America in our own day, it can be said with confidence that

Biblical scholars no longer find it tenable.

Unquestionably, there have been values in such a high view. Men have craved objectivity, a resting-place in times of fluctuation; in turn, the ancient inspired oracle, the infallible Church, and the infallible Book, have given this sense of security. Under this theory of Inspiration, the Scriptures have been given a unique authority; they have been differentiated from all other devotional literature, and their supremacy has been definitely established. We, as the heirs of a noble tradition not altogether unmixed with elements of doubtful value, may well be thankful for the generation of a warm, Scriptural atmosphere, conducive to high feeling and careful, systematic, and forceful thinking--an atmosphere in which all doubts and objections, on a priori grounds, were successfully repelled.

We have shown how the idea of verbal Inspiration is rooted in Greek and Roman notions of mantic ecstasy and divination; and from these influences, combined with Rabbinical literalism and Alexandrian allegorism, the Inspiration-theory of the early Church took its rise. Although held by some of the Fathers, the position of ἐκστασις was repudiated, as savouring too much of Montanism; nevertheless, Inspiration continued to be conceived of as an almost wholly Divine process in which the human recipient remained practically passive. The Middle Ages saw no new developments, for controversy turned chiefly about the problems of reason and revelation; and beyond all discussion, the authority of the Church of Rome stood supreme. We have sought to indicate the powerful influence which

Renaissance humanism exerted in preparing the way for a new outlook upon Scripture, and thus setting in motion tendencies which were brought to greater fulness in the Reformation.

In the eyes of the great Reformers, as we have seen, the Scriptures were indeed the inspired Word of God. But rather than submit to being bound by the letter, in spite of occasional utterances to the contrary, they broke through the fetters of literalism and verbal inerrancy, preferring to breathe the freer atmosphere of the Spirit. Luther's handling of Scripture was definitely incompatible with a strict verbalism; Zwingli flatly rejected it; and Calvin,--although he held to dictation, thus giving a powerful impulse to the narrower views of the epigonoi--by his doctrine of the internal witness of the Holy Spirit, as well as by his balanced exegesis, was able to disentangle himself from the crass view of mechanical, verbal infallibility. We have pointed out the inconsistencies between the utterances and usages of the Reformers; and instead of seeking a forced reconciliation of their theory and practice, we have preferred, in some instances, to allow the antimony to stand.

Following the lead given by the Reformers in substituting the authority of the Bible for that of the Church, Protestant scholasticism went on to treat the Scriptures as though they contained a self-consistent, perfectly balanced doctrinal system. The logical statements, inferences, and expansions of this system were held to be of equal value and authority with Scripture itself. More effective than any overt recognition of this tendency, were the inherent assumptions



involved, not always articulated, but present, nevertheless.

Seldom, if ever, have forced harmonizations been employed which so utterly disregarded the notions of historical development and progressive revelation. Used simply as a collection of proof texts to substantiate the credal formulations of Protestant theology, the Bible was treated in a magical, ex opere operato fashion, more vulgar than even the most crass Roman Catholic views of the sacrament. Instead of a means of grace, the Bible was looked upon as a doctrinal code whose primary quality was inerrancy. While the testimonium Spiritus Sancti was held, it really amounted to an internal conviction that one's dogmatic presuppositions were correct.

The severe post-Reformation dogma of verbal Inspiration is found to be defective because it falsely assumes that in the act of recording the Scriptures the human mind was virtually passive--a tabula rasa, as it were--and that impressions were externally produced upon it. The theory further errs in that it lays too great stress upon a previously prepared body of truth, introduced en bloc by miraculous action, exactly expressed in the very words which God intended, and thus bringing with it the claim to authoritative acceptance. To conceive of Inspiration as something attached to a document rather than as organically related to human personality inbreathed with the Spirit of God, is to "freeze up," as Karl Barth has been telling us today,<sup>1</sup> the living relationship between the Scriptures and revelation. Thus, critical questions of the dates of the

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1. Barth, Karl, The Doctrine of the Word of God, Eng. tr., 1936, p. 139.

various books, authorship, and attendant circumstances, become largely irrelevant; for, if the Bible is literally and verbally the very Word of God in all its parts, then any searching investigation of its contents--however reverent and devout--is categorically rendered superfluous. Beyond an exact determination of the text, on this hypothesis, there remain no problems for historical criticism.

In no strict, verbal sense are the Scriptures to be considered wholly inerrant; we may be amazed at their relative freedom from error, but slight inaccuracies, which, as Luther pointed out, do not affect the main concerns of faith, are recognized to exist. The truth to be delivered was transmitted in a trustworthy manner; only in matters essential can we think of an "inerrancy." The strictest doctrine of infallibility has not prevented contradicting interpretations; shall we likewise, as Rome has done, set up an infallible interpreter? Scripture is inerrant only in so far as it witnesses to Christ. Never do the Scriptures themselves claim a verbally inspired inerrancy; they do claim, however, to be the Word of God, sufficient, through the Spirit, to bring man to salvation. We must not, then, allow any a priori theory of Inspiration to obscure the fact of slight imperfections in Scripture. Our faith is not based on an infallible Book, but upon the infallible Christ; His Spirit alone gives normative authority to the Book. Thus, we find ourselves in full agreement with the fine word of W. Robertson Smith:

"If I am asked why I receive the Scriptures as the Word of God and as the only rule of faith and life, I answer with all the Fathers of the Protestant Church: 'Because the Bible is the only record of the redeeming love of God; because in

the Bible alone I find God drawing nigh to men in Jesus Christ, and declaring His will for our salvation. And the record I know to be true by the witness of His Spirit in my heart, whereby I am assured that none other than God Himself is able to speak such words to my soul.'<sup>1</sup>

The view of verbal Inspiration we hold to be deficient in that it assumes that God's communications were always uttered in the form of words, either suggested or dictated to the writers. We pointed out in our chapter on the Biblical view of Inspiration that in many cases God did employ this verbal method, but that we were not justified in inferring that the whole of Scripture is the product of such revelation. A clear case cannot be made for the inseparability of thought and words, for this would imply that the only inspired Scriptures were those of the original Hebrew and Greek (if they are the originals) wording. What of those who cannot read these languages? It is not the very words, but the thoughts which are inspired; then this inspired thought can be expressed adequately in any of the modern languages, as well as in the ancient.

Moreover, it would be unfortunate if Inspiration had been confined only to specific words and grammatical and rhetorical constructions; for it is evident that the Divine truth in the Scriptures has been presented with a varied richness of forms. No one method is adequate to express the idea, but altogether, a sure impression is produced. Externally viewed, words are merely instrumental; the heart and soul of man must appropriate them. Again, the varied accounts given by the four Gospels, the

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1. Smith, W. Robertson, Exp. IV.x.1894, p. 250.

free methods of citation, repetition of material, and oblique interpretations,--all these are inconsistent, not with an inspired Bible, but with the hypothesis of verbal Inspiration. We admit the presence of these difficulties, recognizing them as part of the human factor in Inspiration. No longer is it necessary to have recourse to scholastic subtleties, in order to produce forced harmonizations that will bolster up a theory of verbal inerrancy--subtleties, may we say, that are thoroughly repugnant to our sense of truth.

Likewise, in holding to verbal Inspiration, one is not adequately accounting for the human element in Scripture; to say that the Spirit "accommodated" Himself to the words which the writers would have chosen, if left to themselves, is merely begging the question. God does use instruments, and in so doing, He respects their capacities. The very fact that eye-witnesses were used at all militates against a wholly Divine Inspiration. It is significant that the writers of the New Testament are, for the most part, those who had known Christ in the flesh; a completely supernatural Inspiration could have moved anyone to write. On the basis of suggestion or dictation, it would have been more proper for Peter to testify before the Sanhedrin, "We cannot but speak those things which the Spirit has introduced into our minds," instead of "We cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard" (Acts 4:20). Perhaps it is not beside the point to suggest that on the verbal hypothesis, the highest expression of Inspiration should have been that of Balaam's ass. Unless we grant that the testimonies and intense emotions of the writers were real human experiences, we must assume that Inspir-

ation was all play-acting and artificiality. "God cannot make Antonio Stradivari's violins without Antonio."

Place must be made for the interactions of both the human and the Divine agencies in Inspiration. Rather than merely passive instruments of a Divine revelation, the writers were more completely than ever in full possession of their faculties. To be sure, their natural powers were used, but their natural powers do not sufficiently account for the overwhelming fact. God acted through His chosen instruments, but He did not act upon them in any external sense. Man, even though supernaturally inspired, never ceases to be a man, and his words are still those of a man. An inspired man is not the object of a mechanical manipulation; he is the man of God.

A word may be said concerning those who fear to abandon the view of verbal Inspiration, lest the foundations of their faith be destroyed. They tell us that it is "all or nothing;" that a proved error in no matter how slight a detail would render suspect the whole. But this is precisely what all of us are doing every day; we exercise our healthy critical faculties, carefully and sympathetically discriminating between wheat and chaff. If the Spirit is to lead us "into all truth", it will not be by saving us the trouble of thinking.

The question is not whether the Scriptures contain an infallible Revelation from God. We confess full agreement with a high view of the sacredness and authority of God's Word, but we cannot hold to the position of verbal Inspiration, in the accepted sense of the term; for, in the classic expression given to the theory by post-Reformation Lutheran and Calvinistic

theologians, Inspiration, as distinguished from Revelation, has commonly been understood as the communication by God of the entire written contents of Scripture, whether the matter recorded was previously known to the writers or not.

The Scripture has fulfilled its purpose when it has led us to Christ; may it move us reverently to affirm: "Truly, this man was the Son of God" (Mark 15:39), for "These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name" (John 20:31).

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