

SUBJECT 1 - GOD AND REVELATION

Outline of
Subject 1- God and Revelation

of
Dr. Alva J. McClain's
Series on

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

Subject 1 - God and Revelation - Doctrine of Scripture

Doctrine of scripture

INTRODUCTION

1. Purpose of this study:
2. The Biblical Claim:
3. The Five Main stages in The Divine Work:

I. A WORK OF PREPARATION: GOD PREPARED THE WRITERS

1. Why the writers were important:
2. How God prepared the writers in general:
3. Their preparation in particular: cf. Examples

II. A WORK OF REVELATION: GOD REVEALED THE MATERIAL

- Also a varied and complex work – of. Heb. 1:1
- There are at least nine – “ways” of Revelation

1. Exodus 33:11
2. Exodus 31:18
3. Genesis 40:41
4. Ezekiel 1:1
5. Psalm 51
6. Hebrews (Book)
7. Romans 1:20-21
8. I Corinthians 10:6, 11
9. II Peter 1:21

III. A WORK OF INSPIRATION: GOD INSPIRED THE WRITING

1. Revelation is not enough – why?
2. The Term “Inspiration” describes this twofold work.
-2 Timothy 3:16
3. Inspiration has to do with the “Record”, rather than act of Revealing
-Discuss later in full

IV. A WORK OF PRESERVATION: GOD PRESERVES THE RECORD

1. Importance of this:
2. Bible speaks of this work:
Deut. 10:5
Jer. 36:27, 32
Rom. 3:1-2

3. Mainly a providential work – cf. Examples
4. But viewed in its Continuance – the work is miraculous

cf. Isa. 40:6-8

V. A WORK OF INTERPRETATION: GOD INTERPRETS THE MEANING

1. First four stages not enough to bring Rev. from God to man.

Luke 24:25-27

Acts 8:30-35

2. Only God can interpret His own Rev.

Luke 24:27 ARV

John 16:7-8, 13

1 Cor. 2:10-12, 14-16

DOCTRINE OF INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

INTRODUCTION:

1. Any discussion of this subjects involves three questions:
 1. Is the Bible inspired?
 2. What is the nature of this “inspiration”?
 3. What is the extent of the Bible’s inspiration?
2. These questions are different in character.

The first is non-technical and most men would agree that the Bible is “inspired” in some sense. But when we ask what the nature of this inspiration is, and how far does it extent, we meet many different and conflicting theories. Several of these may be briefly considered:

1. The Ordinary Theory:
2. The Limited Theory:
3. The Degrees Theory:
4. The Dynamic Theory:
5. The Moral Theory:
6. The Mechanical Theory:
3. Our method will be to set these theories aside and formulate our doctrine on the basis of the testimony of the Book itself. To begin we shall tentatively define Inspiration as simply “true” or “Trustworthy”. Is the Bible inspired?
4. The lines of proof for the Inspiration are both numerous and convincing:
5. The crowning proof of the Bible’s inspiration is found in the testimony of Christ Himself.

I. TESTIMONY OF CHRIST TO THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

A. TO THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. Christ displays perfect familiarity with the Old Testament.

- (1) He constantly refers to the Old Testament: These references seem to cover whole period of Old Testament history:

Matt.	19:4	John	6:49
"	19:5-6	"	3:14
"	23:35	Matt.	12:3
"	24:37	"	6:29
"	24:38	Luke	4:25
"	11:23	Matt.	12:40
John	8:56	"	12:41
Mark	7:9	"	12:42
"	12:26	"	23:35

- (2). He continually quotes from the O.T.

cf. The formulae: "It is written"

"Have ye not read?"

- (3). He makes many indirect allusions to the O.T.

-Many things He taught – not original - derived from O.T.

Matt.	4:17	Dan.	2:44
John	3:5	Ezek	36:25-27
Matt.	8:10-11	Isa.	49:5-6, 12
Luke	13:25-27	Psa.	6:8
Matt.	9:36	Num.	27:15-17
"	10:34-36	Mic.	7:4-6
"	23:37	Ruth	2:12
Luke	10:38-42	Psa.	27:4
"	11:20	Ex.	8:19
"	12:48	Lev.	5:17
"	14:7-11	Prov.	25:6-7
"	14:20	Deut.	24:5
John	12:8	"	15:11

- (4). Mind so saturated with O.T. that He often expressed His own feelings in language of O.T.

cf. Matt. 27:46

2. Christ always assumes that Scripture is of God and hence final in authority.

Mark 7:9-13

Luke 10:25-28

Matt. 22:29

John 10:35 – arg.

3. Christ always assumed that Old Testament prophecy must be fulfilled.

(1) Events which have taken place, He explains as the fulfillment of O.T. prophecy

Mark 14:49

John 13:18

John 17:12

(2) On basis of Old Testament prophecy, He confidently predicts other events still future:

Matt. 26:31

Matt. 21:42

Matt. 26:64-65

(3) Makes it the supreme function of His ministry to fulfill O.T. prophecy:

Matt. 5:17

Matt. 26:24

John 19:28-30

4. Christ always assumes that the miraculous events of the O.T. actually took place.

(cf.. 11 great miracles)

Matt. 19:3-6 John 3:14

Luke 17:26-27 Luke 4:25

Luke 17:28-29 Luke 4:27

Luke 17:31-32 Matt. 12:40

Luke 20:37 Matt. 12:41

John 6:49

5. Christ displays His own personal faith in the O.T. by leaning upon its statements in the great crises of spiritual conflict.

Read Matt. 4:1-10

Argument:

6. Christ makes no distinction between various parts of O.T.

cf. Theories of Inspiration:

Contra – Matt. 5 : 18

Luke 24:25-27

John 10:35

7. The very silence of Christ reveals His estimate of the O.T.

Argument:

Question: Did Christ have the same O.T. that we have in our Bibles today?

(1) External Evidence indicates that the Books were the same, though different in order.

cf. Josephus and other sources ISBE - Canon of O.T.)

(2) Internal Evidence also exists:

cf. Luke 24:44

cf. Matt: 23:35

Luke 11:51

Argument:

B. CHRIST'S TESTIMONY TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

INTRODUCTION:

(1) Was any of the N.T. written while Christ was on earth?

(2) Is Christ a competent witness to the Inspiration of Scripture before it was written?

1. When Christ went to His death, He declared He was leaving Revelation unfinished.

Why?

John 16:12

” 13:7a

2. He promised that this Rev. would be completed at a certain time.

John 16:25 (ARV)

John 16:13a (ARV)

3. He chose certain men through whom He would make this Rev.

John 16:13

” 15:26-27

Acts 1:8

” 9:4-6, 15

4. He outlined in advance the general content of this Rev.

John 14:26
” 16:14-15
” 16:13b
” 16:13a

5. Knowing in advance what would be spoken and written under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, He gave to these future words the same authority as His own.

Matt. 10:2, 14-20
John 15:20
” 17:18
” 17:20

- Argument:

6. What about those N.T. writers not of the 12 Apostles? Who?

(1) In Early Church there were prophets as well as Apostles.

Acts 11:27, 13:1, 15:32

Eph. 4:11

(2) These prophets received new revelation from the Holy Spirit.

Eph. 3:5 - Arg.

(3) These N.T. prophets wrote Scripture.

Rom. 16:25-26 Arg.

(4) As Paul was chosen by the Lord after His ascension, so these prophets evidently were chosen.

I Cor. 12:28

(5) Historical Argument: The writings of these prophets were accepted as Scripture by the early churches in an age presided over by the Twelve.

Since Christ directly chose the Twelve, His authority reaches down

Historically to those whose writings were accepted by the Twelve.

CONCLUSION: Although the testimony of Christ to the N.T. seems less direct than in the case of the O.T., yet it should be clear that He would not have regarded the N.T. as of less value than the O.T. which in certain respects it superseded.

C. VALUE OF CHRIST'S TESTIMONY

INTRODUCTION

(1). No scholar has ever denied successfully that the recorded testimony of Christ supports the most absolute and sweeping doctrine of Biblical Inspiration.

(2). The only alternative, therefore, left to dissenters was to advance certain theories which were intended to invalidate the force of His testimony.

We shall consider three of these:

1. THE AGNOSTIC THEORY:

- How do we know Christ said what is recorded of His words?

- Answer :

(1) How do we know anything in history?

(2) Even merely human testimony is worth something.

2. THE ACCOMODATION THEORY:

- Our Lord knew Scriptures contained many errors, but because the people to whom He spoke believed otherwise, He accommodated His teaching to their mistaken ideas in order not to offend.

- Answer:

(1) Such a theory destroys the moral character of Christ.

(2) He corrected errors of His hearers instead of acquiescing in them.

(3) Consider His attitude toward Scripture in the Temptation!

3. THE KENOSIS THEORY:

- Explanation:

(1) Takes name from Greek verb in Phil. 2:7.

(2) Contends that by this act Christ emptied self of omniscience, thus becoming liable to error during days of flesh.

(3) Alleges support in such texts as Luke 2:52, Mrk. 13:32

- Answer:

(1) We must admit a real Kenosis involving some kind of self-imposed limitation.

(2) Limited knowledge does not necessarily involve the teaching of error.

(3) Christ claimed infallibility for all His own utterances.

John 8:26-29, 45-46

Luke 9:26

(4) The Kenosis, rightly understood, becomes a guarantee of His infallibility while on earth.

John 12:48-49

(5) Christ's testimony remains unchanged after Kenosis is past.

Luke 24:25-27, 44-45

Rev. 2:14, 20, 27, 3:7, 22:16

CONCLUSION TO 1

1. Christ's testimony supports most absolute doctrine of Inspiration.
2. This testimony cannot be invalidated without logically putting a question mark after all recorded history.

II. THE TESTIMONY OF THE BIBLE WRITERS.

Introduction:

Did other men display any consciousness of special divine authority in what they wrote?

A. THE OLD TESTAMENT WRITERS

1. Note the use of certain authoritative formulas:

“Thus saith the Lord” – “The Lord spake” – over 2,000 times
cf. Exodus 5-14, first verses

2. Isaiah 20 times declares his writings are “the word of the Lord”

cf. 1:10

3. Jeremiah almost 100 times says, “The word of the Lord came unto me.”

cf. 1:1

4. Ezekiel makes same claim 60 times.

cf. 3:16

5. Daniel claims his writings are a record of words and visions from God.

cf. 9:21-23; 10:10-11

6. Hosea, Joel, Jonah, Micah, Zephaniah, Haggai, and Zechariah, all begin writings with “the word of the Lord came unto me.”

7. Malachi, small book of only four chapters, uses phrase “saith the Lord” 25 Times, cf. 1:1-2

B. THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS

- | | |
|------------|---|
| 1. Matthew | 1:1 |
| 2. Mark | 1:1 |
| 3. Luke | 1:1-4 |
| 4. John | 20:31; 21:24-25; Rev. 1:10; 2:7, 11, 17,29; 3:6, 13, 22 |
| 5. James | 1:1 |
| 6. Jude | 1:1-4 ARV |
| 7. Peter | 2 Pet. 3:1-2 |
| 8. Paul | 1 Cor. 2:13; 14:37; I Thess. 2:13; 5:27; 2 Thess. 3:14 |

Question: Did any of the New Testament writers recognize writings of others as Scripture?

2 Pet. 3:15-16

I Tim. 5:18 with Luke 10:7

III. THE NATURE OF INSPIRATION

Introduction:

We have been using “Inspiration” thus far as roughly equivalent to “trustworthy.”
Let us now ask more precisely, “What is this that we call Inspiration?”

1. THE ENGLISH WORD “INSPIRATION.”

In the A.V. it occurs only in Job 32:8 and 2 Tim. 3:16.

The A.R.V. changes Job 32:8 to “breath” (properly), and 2 Tim. 3:16 to “inspired of God.” Thus the noun disappears from the English Bible.

The A.V. “given by inspiration” is from Wycliff, “Inspired of God” from Tyndale. Both are misleading.

2. THE GREEK WORD IN 2 Tim. 3:16 - Theopneustos from Theos plus pneo.

Therefore, “God-breathed” would be a literal rendering.

Probably no Greek term could have more strongly asserted Scripture to be the direct product of God. For the “Breath” of God in the Bible is a symbol of His almighty creative word. cf. Psa. 33:6; Gen. 2:7.

Hence when Paul asserts that Scriptures is “God-breathed,” he is placing Scripture in the same category as the “heavens” and the “spirit” of man. All three are in a real sense “God-breathed,” that is, the direct product of Almighty God.

Viewed etymologically, “inspired” is a poor English term for the Pauline idea. “Out-spired” would be more accurate if there were such a word. For the idea is not that Scripture was something written by men into which God breathed some divine property, but rather Scripture is something that God “breathed-out” as the very word of God.

However, the term “Inspiration” is so firmly entrenched in our theological language that it cannot be set aside. The better course is to adopt the term and then define it in accordance with the Greek word in its Biblical context.

3. THE PROBLEM OF TRANSLATING 2 TIM. 3:16

A.V. renders “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable.”

A.R.V. renders “Every Scripture of God is also profitable.”

The A.V. makes the direct assertion that all Scripture is inspired of God, while A.R.V. seems to suggest that if a Scripture is inspired of God, it is also profitable, thus intimating that some Scripture may not be inspired.

The Greek grammatical construction seems fairly simple – “pasa graphe theopneusto;

kai ophelimas.” What we have here are two adjectives joined by the conjunctions- “inspired and profitable.” And these adjectives both either belong to the subject or to the predicate. But the revisers violently sunder them and turn the conjunction into an “also.”

Dr. S. P. Tregelles (1813-1875) has declared that there is not a solitary instance in any classic author, or in the New Testament, where two adjectives, as “inspired and profitable,” connected by a conjunction as these are, and either both belonging to the subject or both belonging to the predicate, are violently sundered, and the conjunction manipulated into a senseless “also.”

The same great scholar said of the attempts in his day to set aside the common rendering of this verse, “In the year 1839 I called it much misspent labor and false criticism, and so advisedly I call it still.”

Bishops Hoberly and Wordsworth and Trench, as members of the revision committee, expressly disclaimed any responsibility for the revised rendering.

Dean Burgon called it “the most astonishing, as well as calamitous literary blunder of the age.”

Dr. Scrivener, the great critic, said: “It is a blunder such as makes itself hopelessly condemned.”

It is claimed that the A.R.V New Testament contains at least eight instances of similar Greek construction, yet this is the only next where the revisers adopted such a rendering. Cf. Heb. 4: 12 for an instance.

But even if we should adopt the A.R.V., the text does not mean what the critics would like. Warfield explains it as follows: “Every Scripture, seeing it is God-breathed, is also profitable.”

4. A DEFINITION OF INSPIRATION AS USED IN 2 TIM. 3:16.

To say that all Scripture is inspired of God is to say that all Scripture is the direct product of the creative breath of God. This is exactly what we might expect if the Bible can be said to be God’s word. God’s word is that which He has spoken, that is, breathed out. Yet we must not forget that what is God-breathed is *graphe*, i.e., the sacred writing, not the spoken word.

5. ON THE BASIS OF 2 TIM. 3:16, CERTAIN CONCLUSIONS CAN BE DRAWN:

A. Inspiration is not merely a heightened form of spiritual illumination. The latter is (1) Common to all Christians; (2) Subject to degrees; (3) Always continuous to some extent. But inspiration is not common to all Christians, not subject to degrees, and certainly not continuous. If it were, the writing of Scripture ought not to be too rare or difficult!

B. Inspiration is more than revelation in the strict sense of the term.

Revelation is God’s activity in communicating truth to the human mind. Inspiration is God’s activity in producing a record of the Revelation. Dr. Chalmers put the distinction thus: Revelation is the inflow to the agent. Inspiration is the outflow to others in a record.

Failure to distinguish properly between these two has been a fertile source of wrong theories of inspiration. They argue, for instance, that the Ten Commandments are more inspired than the story of the Exodus, because God gave the former directly, while the latter was a visible event in history requiring no special revelation. But the method of revelation is never the measure of its inspiration. God has various ways revelation (See above). Here is a great mass of revelation. The problem was to select the right material, and record it accurately and in permanent form. This necessitated a divine activity in so influencing and controlling certain selected men that they would select the right material and record it with infallible accuracy. This activity on the part of God has given us an inspired Bible.