



INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

The Word of God



BY PHIL SMITH

Inspiration of the Scriptures

I want to start this essay off by expressing what is needed for something to be inspired of God. There are necessary presuppositions (*A.A. Hodge, 1860*) which must be admitted before the possibility of inspiration. But let me make it clear, these presuppositions are not necessarily totally convincing to everybody. Different presuppositions exist that may enable a person to accept the inspiration of God. I list the first presupposition as being the existence of a personal God, possessing the attributes of power, intelligence, and moral excellence in absolute perfection. Many even struggle with this, yet for a belief in the inspiration of God, they must accept this presuppositions. The 2nd, He exists in all parts of the universe and is beyond limits of experience in His relation to the universe. Above all, and freely acting upon all from without. Within all, and acting through the whole and every part from within in the exercise of all his perfections, and according to the laws and modes of action he has established for his creatures, sustaining and governing them, and all their actions. Well, to a lesser extent, people accept this especially as this has to do with God's creation which is being shunned more and more. 3rd, His moral government over mankind and other intelligent creatures, whereby He governs them by truth and motives addressed to their reason and will, rewards and punishes them according to their moral characters and actions, and benevolently educates them for their high destiny in his communion and service. This is becoming less and less as governments make decision contrary to that of God and what it means to be a Christian. 4th, mankind instead of advancing along a line of natural development from a lower to a higher moral condition, have fallen from their original state and relation, and are now lost in a condition involving corruption and guilt, and incapable of recovery without supernatural intervention. Miracles and supernatural has gone out the window openly taught against in most churches and even evangelical churches. The 5th involves the historical integrity of the Christian Scriptures, their veracity as history, and the genuineness and authenticity of them. And finally, the truth of Christianity in the sense in which it is set forth in the sacred record. The truth in the Scriptures of which is involved in the doctrine that the Scriptures are inspired. Now, those which rest upon their own intuition and the moral spiritual evidences of divine truth, such as the attributes of God. What is involved in this is how people think in terms of their own sinful nature which is part of the nature of the human. For most, there is an innate acceptance of sinfulness and doing wrong. This is how we are made. There has now been challenges as to the reality and proof of the Scriptures as being true. Of course several things has changed this attitude such as Biblical Archaeology and the Dead Sea scrolls providing us with a set of the Old Testament Scriptures a thousand years older than we have had. That set turns out to be the same as we still have today proving authenticity of the

Scriptures. And therefore, as this is true for the Old Testament, It can also be true for the New Testament. So we are collecting more and more critical evidence as to the true origin and contents of the sacred books. This evidence has slightly turned the tide of unbelief and trust. Hodge, in his book, *Inspiration of the Bible* covers: certain presuppositions for inspiration. He discusses statements of the church doctrine of inspiration along with stated proofs of the Doctrine of Inspiration which as he says come from the Bible's own statements of inspiration which were endorsed by God through, signs, wonders and gifts of the Holy Spirit. He further states that every part of the Scriptures bears evidence of a human and divine origin as a whole and in every part. Furthermore, that the Scriptures is an organism, wholly composed of many parts. There are no discrepancies whatsoever in the Scriptures and any so called discrepancies are violent improbability. He finishes by saying that false doctrines of inspiration include Pantheistic, Materialistic, and Naturalistic principles and finally he states there are no partial inspiration of the Scriptures.

Now the authors (J.C. Philip & S. Cherian, 2004) seemed to approach the subject from the viewpoint of what it isn't or why people don't agree with the inspiration of the Bible and how non Christian religions have helped to corrupt the above presuppositions of many so called Christians. Well, this is sort of the point I made above. A large amount of information available about God is now the result of mere human speculation. With Christians, this is the lack of good Biblical teaching in the Church. As much as I like my charismatic brothers and sisters, I found the weakness in their teaching of the Scriptures a major problem for these. This weakness thus extends to their congregation. Godly wisdom has totally been corrupted by sin, the result of human speculation about God is also corrupted by a sinful mind. Thus no definite conclusion about God and His actions can be obtained through mere human knowledge for any knowledge of God must come from the Bible and/or the Holy Spirit. General Revelation comes through the creation which God has brought about but the idea of God's miraculous creation is being torn down in Christian circles seen all around the Christian church. It also comes from man's observation of God's sustaining power. A new science that enhances the creation is the idea of design in the world and the universe. In see the world and the universe and how it works, it has to have been a miraculous design for even many had shell scientists see that it just could not have happened. So, this 'installed' understanding of sin and creation is enough to make man aware of the existence of God, and to create in him a desire to know God. Now, when any person desires to know the real God, the omniscient and righteous God would surely make information available about Himself to this seeker. This happened to me; as a young man I was not happy of my life. I saw the world as being full of chaos. Life just didn't make sense. The way

people lived their lives didn't make sense to me. The Holy Spirit of God was dealing in my life because I began opening my life open to the possible that God was real. Now, this special revelation comes directly from God. This need to understand that this type of revelation cannot be obtained by the use of mere human wisdom. No other religious book in the world is inspired by God except the Bible. The Bible is just not another religious book either. None of them contain inspired information about salvation or Jesus Christ. There might be some accidental similarities between the statements in the Bible and books of other religions. This might be accidental, or even a corrupt form of truth found in the Bible. One book I was recently reading said that the Bible is the only religious book that had prophecy which is all through the Bible. Inspiration is from God if it is righteous and Godly inspiration, otherwise if inspiration goes against the what the Bible say, that inspiration isn't of god. .

Hodge writes about the inspiration of the Scriptures. He starts out with the existence of a personal God in relation to the universe He has created. The next concerns His moral government over humankind where He governs them by truth according to His will and reason. Also, the admission that humankind has fallen from their original state and relation with God is another presupposition. There is an acknowledgement of the historical integrity of the Christian Scriptures and the truth of Christianity as set forth in the Bible.

Concerning the Church's stand on the Inspiration of the Bible; the sacred writers were so influenced by the Holy Spirit that their writing are, as a whole and in every part, God's word to us. They are an authoritative revelation to us from God. The Bible is secured as in the perfect infallibility of the Scriptures, as a record of fact and doctrine. This has been confirmed down through the ages by the collective minds of the ancient church. The inspiration that accompanied the sacred writers extends to their expression of their thoughts in language, as well as to the thoughts themselves. The effect being that in the original written copies the language expresses the thought God intended to convey with infallible accuracy, so that the words as well as the thoughts are God's revelation to us. Infallibility of thought cannot be secured or preserved independently of an infallible verbal rendering. The New Testament writers, while quoting from the Old Testament for purposes of argument, often base their argument upon the very words used, thus ascribing authority to the word as well as the thought. The Church doctrine recognizes the fact that every part of Scripture is at once a product of God's and of man's agency. Now, you must realize we can talk about what people think but there is accepted church doctrine from the Bible. God providentially produced the very man for the precise occasion, with the faculties, qualities, education, and gracious experience needed for the production of the intended writing. The words were supernaturally revealed to the writers by vision or language. This direct

revelation applies to a large element of the sacred scriptures, such as prophecies of future events, the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, the promises and threatening of God's word. Furthermore, the writers were the subjects of a divine influence called inspiration, which acted up and through their natural faculties in all they wrote directing them in the choice of subject and the whole course of thought and verbal express. But, it has been a long time since I have ever heard of a pastor teaching on these points.

So, the proof of the doctrine of inspiration comes from the statements of the Scripture themselves and the phenomena of Scripture when critically examined. As to the matter of the Bible's own statements of inspiration: all claims were endorsed by God by signs and wonders and gifts of the Holy Spirit. Jesus openly accepted all this of being from his Father in heaven. Where the sign is, God commands us to believe. A miracle is a divine sign accrediting the person to whom the power is delegated as a divinely commissioned agent. The gift of inspiration was promised to the apostles along with the filling of the Holy Spirit, the authority of speak as the prophets of God and their writings are classed on the level of the Old Testament. This authority has been confirmed by their own lives, the doctrines they taught and its power, plus the miracles they brought by testimonies of the early Christians. For example: Moses claimed that he wrote the Pentateuch by divine command. In addition, the Old Testament writers speak with 'thus says the Lord'. Again this was confirmed by the fulfilment of many of their predictions, the holiness of their lives, the moral and spiritual perfection of their doctrine and through many of their prophecies and the endorsement of Jesus Christ and His apostles. Christ constantly quoted the Old Testament. He declares that it cannot be falsified and that the whole law was fulfilled and all things foretold concerning himself in Moses, the prophets and the Psalms. All the apostles habitually appealed to the words of Scripture as the final authority. This proves infallibility.

Every part of Scripture bears evidence of a human origin. The writers of all the books were men, and the process of writing through which they originate was characteristic all human. The characteristics of thought and feelings of these writers have acted spontaneously in their literary activity, and have given character to their writings in a manner precisely similar the effect of character upon writing in the case of other men. Furthermore, every part of scripture affords moral and spiritual evidence of its divine origin. There are transcendent truths revealed, a perfect morality, an unveiling of the absolute perfection of the Godhead, foresight of future events. Another characteristic, taken in connection with the foregoing, proves incontestably their divine origin as a whole and in every part. The sacred Scriptures are an organism, which is a whole composed of many parts, the parts all differing in matter, forms, and structure of each other. Sometimes, in quoting the Old Testament Scriptures, the New Testament writers quote the

Septuagint version. In regards to so called discrepancies, the Church has never held to the verbal infallibility of our translations, or the perfect accuracy of the copies of the original Hebrew and Greek Scriptures now possessed by us. These copies confessedly contain many 'discrepancies' resulting from frequent transcription. It is, nevertheless, the unanimous testimony of Christian scholars, that while these variations embarrass the interpretation of many details, they neither involve the loss nor abate the evidence of a single essential act or doctrine of Christianity. Such discrepancies as defined are a violent improbability. Proof must be shown of such discrepancies indeed if they exist. As to other questionable comments such as, 'I speak as a man' is a phrase occurring frequently, and its sense is determined by the context. The words of Paul are claimed as inspiration which makes Paul's word equal to that of Christ in infallibility and authority.

Inspiration of superintendence meant precisely the definition of inspiration. By the inspiration of elevation is meant that divine influence which exalted their natural faculties to a degree of energy otherwise unattainable. The words, inspiration of direction means divine influence which guided the writers in the selection and disposition of their material and the words inspiration of suggestion mean that divine influence which directly suggested to their minds new and otherwise unattainable truth. These ideas come from a failure to distinguish between revelations the frequent and constant.

In the matter of sin, Philip and Cherian go on to say that the human mind is totally blinded by sin. If we allow it, even as Christians, sin can completely rule our lives, but depending on the degree of unrepentance of that sin, the question then is whether they are a child of God. It knows nothing except rebellion against God. Thus anything that comes out of pure human speculation about God and His nature is bound to be wrong and most likely coming from the devil. Thus whatever people of other religions write about God on the basis of purely human intuition or (human wisdom) is bound to be totally erroneous. Any similarity with the Christian scripture is only a coincidence, and such similarities are not to be overemphasized. Nowhere does the Bible indicate that people would be saved through the methods of salvation found in their own faiths. This error has resulted from the wrong assumption that God has given His inspired revelation outside the Bible also. In turn this erroneous view has developed because of human philosophy and carnal wisdom which is running rampant in the world today as more false gods arise and are acknowledged today. Bible as Revelation gives much attention to the subject of divine revelation, and repeatedly affirms where this revelation has been recorded.

There are many references to the fact that God has revealed to His chosen prophets his true revelation. The same idea is found in throughout the Old Testament, and no less than 3800

times it says that only the specific revelation recorded through the Jewish prophets was to be considered the Scripture.

There are dozens of non-Christian religious books about which their writers acknowledge direct supernatural help or dictation. The Theosophical society, being one, has many books produced through the dictation of a demon by the name of Dhvaj Khu according to Philip and Cherian. Interestingly, the Theosophists give great lip service to the Bible, and many statements in their religious books are similar to statements found in the Bible. Even the church of Satan believe in the Bible and God in heaven! Yet quoting from them is quoting from the devil because they came from the source of evil spirits. About quoting from sources that are demonic, the Bible has the following to say: "Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils", I Tim. 4:1 According to I Corinthians 2:14, "But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned".

Today, again, according to Philip and Cherian, we stand at a time in history when the doctrinal knowledge of people has decreased considerably. It simply isn't being taught in the churches because pastors are afraid that people will not agree with them. People today, sadly to say even those who call themselves Christians, show more loyalty to various other religious books other than to the Bible. They give more credit to what other religious leaders says about their own religions. Though similarities are found between statements in the Bible and almost all other religions such as Hinduism. Like the Bible, the Hindu scriptures talk about God, salvation, condemnation, heaven, earth, sin, justification, afterlife, incarnation, and many other subjects of interest to Christians also. The Quran says good things about Jesus and I have heard some Roman Catholics say, there's no real difference between Christianity and Islam. This is the danger in regards to Islam. If Jesus is no longer important in your life and you stop seeing him as God, then in some ways Islam is not different. Many churches today that are (dead) no longer believe in the authority of the Scriptures and no longer believe who Jesus is. They don't even believe that he died on a cross for us. Many church openly teach that the Bible isn't true. Since spending some 15 years in the Middle East, I would think that any references to the Bible and Christians in the Quran are the work of the devil to create confusion. I may be wrong about this but I cannot come to think that there is anything good in the Quran. However, this doesn't mean that God can't speak to his people today; one can not deny that God through the Holy Spirit leads and guides and teaches us. But also, miraculous signs have been given to those who aren't Christians in order to bring them into a relationship with God. Special revelation is given

to many within the church to those who love Jesus. Of course, any revelation given to His children must be in line with Revelation already stated in the Bible.

So as these religions use these nice words in describing Jesus just as a prophet; it does not mean that Jesus is nothing but a prophet. The Christian talks of salvation in the sense of escaping from condemnation, hell, and a new life. His personality and individuality are not obliterated. For a Hindu, salvation means being merged back into the Ultimate Reality (Para-Brahma), who himself is an impersonal cosmic force and not a person. For the Muslim, salvation will not be revealed until they come face to face with Allah and their sins will be weighed against their good deeds. This teaching along is ripe in many church today. So while the Christian idea of salvation is speaking about an individual rising to the most blessed personal state, the Hindu salvation is talking about going out of personal existence. The Muslim will have untold virgins in heaven. I often wonder what does the Quran teach in regards to what the women will have. The Hindu scriptures speak about sacrifices for salvation, and the Christian swallows this proposal hook, sinker, and the pole. The Christian also makes their sacrifices as do Muslims in the month long time of fasting during the day and eating during the night. This is called Ramadan.

Many people close their eyes to these comparison because they simply don't know and they are afraid of appearing dumb. Islam is becoming more open in New Zealand and eagerly accepted by many because they don't see any difference between it and Christianity. We have failed the community not teaching this difference. The context is so ignored that any kind of meaning can be imposed upon what is said. This one 40 year old guy obvious oblivious to the Bible accepted Islam just to marry an Islamic girl. He said that he doesn't go to 'church' a lot; he actually means the mosque here. To him, the idea of Jesus being God just wasn't important; what was important was the fact that they still looked upon him being important. That was enough.

There is even negativity among Christian when you speak in terms of these false religions. They seem to be afraid as if there may be something true about them. It is all that certain groups seem to focus on. And I include Christians and certainly non-Christians. This was very present in the Bible College I attended many years ago in the States. In a way many Christians have accepted non Biblical scriptures, without realizing it. There is lip service given to an acceptance of different religions. Yet, in spite of this, there are actually very positive and exciting things happening in the Christian Church worldwide. In spite of what I've said, the Holy Spirit is a live and well dealing with people's hearts in almost every country of the globe.

Also mentioned above is that any similarity with the Christian scripture is only a coincidence, and such similarities are not to be overemphasized. In my mission and other missions also, there's been a long time emphasizes on what we call 'contextualization'. The idea is to relate the Gospel to people's own culture. This is a good teaching principle; taking the person from a known to an unknown. The idea is good and I certain use it all the time but some go too far as to try to use the Quran to reveal Jesus. I certainly agree with the authors on the issue of how so many Christians believe whatever they are told. This comes through with Mormons in New Zealand. But may I remind you that Paul declared in Athens the 'unknown god' which people already believed in and surly this 'unknown god' was some kind of fabrication of another heathen god for themselves, but Paul used this as a starting point to explain the Gospel. I refer back to my point on contextualization. Paul used it to relate to non-Christians, approaching them from their own religious point of view and showing them the truth in Jesus Christ thus eventually revealing to them their false hood in their own religious beliefs. Not all believed but some did and that was the start of the church in Athens. I certainly don't see this approach as dishonest and unethical. How does this apply to Islam and the Quran where there is information that directly relates to Christians and the Bible in the Quran? Now, I have read the Quran and I certainly believe it is a book of the devil and very evil, but at the same time, indeed, I also see that God can use these things to reveal the truth of Jesus Christ to Muslims.

The Inspiration of the Scriptures is an important subject as pointed out in this essay. If one doesn't believe it, then they will never be sure about anything in the Bible. I believe it with all of my heart. I believe it a fundamental basic belief that one must have to be a Christian. In researching this article, it has confirmed my own thinking and convictions and certainly gives me more confidence in my teaching and with speaking to others about Biblical topics.

False doctrines of inspiration include Pantheistic, Materialistic, and Naturalistic principles, and of course rationalistic principles in all their forms. There is no partial inspiration of the Scriptures.

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