

“The Word of our God shall stand for ever” (Isa. 40. 8).

... THE ...
INSPIRATION
OF THE SCRIPTURES.

Suggestive thoughts concerning
THE MEANING OF INSPIRATION.
THE MANNER OF INSPIRATION.
REASONS FOR BELIEVING IN INSPIRATION.
INTERNAL PROOFS OF INSPIRATION.
THE BENEFITS ACCRUING FROM INSPIRATION.

BY
JOHN R. CALDWELL.
Editor of *The Witness*,
Author of “God’s Chosen People,” “Things to Come,” &c.

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The Scriptures.

A glory gilds the Sacred page,
Majestic, like the Sun :
It gives a light to every age ;
It gives, but borrows none.
Let everlasting thanks be Thine
For such a bright display
As makes a world of darkness shine
With beams of Heavenly Day.

WILLIAM COWPER, 1779.

THE INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.

PAUL, in giving his last instructions to Timothy, whom indeed he loved and cared for as his own son, seeks to impress upon him that, amid the abounding evils of "the last days," his safety lies in adherence to "the Holy Scriptures." They and they alone could make him "wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy iii. 15). Exactly on the same line is his exhortation to the elders of Ephesus, as he finally took leave of them: "I commend you to God and the word of His grace" (Acts xx. 32).

I.—ALL SCRIPTURE INSPIRED.

The reason of this great confidence which Paul had in "the Scriptures" is stated thus — "All Scripture is given by inspiration of

God." The last five words are all one word in the original, and might be literally rendered "God-breathed."

Much as we value the "Revised Version" as a book of reference, there are not a few instances in which our old-fashioned Authorised Version is vastly to be preferred, and this is one of them. The Revisers render it, "Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable," &c. Surely this is the merest truism. What sense is there in stating that that which is inspired of God "is also profitable"? How could it possibly be anything else? Only men whose much critical learning had led them to question the divine authority of the Scriptures could have entertained such a perversion, and it is a matter of thankfulness that they have given the true rendering in the margin, if not in the text.

We may ask, then, to what does the apostle refer when he says "*All Scripture*"? Clearly, in this instance, the New Testament, at least in its entirety, could not be referred to directly, though doubtless it is by implication, as we shall yet see. The "*Holy*

Scriptures” referred to in the previous verse as familiar to Timothy must have been the Old Testament, and so also the “*all Scripture*” of verse 16. It answers exactly to the expression so often used by the Lord Jesus, “Ye do err, not knowing *the Scriptures*” (Matthew xxii. 29). “How then shall *the Scriptures* be fulfilled?” (Matthew xxvi. 54). “He expounded to them in *all the Scriptures* the things concerning Himself” (Luke xxiv. 27). “Search *the Scriptures*” (John v. 39). “The *Scripture* cannot be broken” (John x. 35). The word occurs in the New Testament about fifty times, and not in one single instance is it applied to any book but that known to us as “the Old Testament.” Neither is there any hint at any one portion of “the Scriptures” being more true, more authoritative, more divine than another. “The Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms” (Luke xxiv. 44), comprise the whole, as it was known to the Jews in the days of Christ, and as it is still known to us.

The Lord Jesus Himself, as recorded in the Gospels (and doubtless much more frequently than is recorded), refers to Genesis,

Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, Psalms, Proverbs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Jonah, Micah, Joel, Zechariah, and Malachi. To Him "*the Scriptures*" were a final appeal. They could not be broken. Not to destroy but to fulfil the law He came, and this not in a merely general sense, but in every "JOT AND TITTLE." No hint fell from His lips as to Moses not being author of the five books attributed to him, or a shadow of doubt cast on the genuine authorship of any of the Prophets. All were accepted by Him, as He received them, in child-like simplicity, faith, and obedience.

"After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, *that the Scripture might be fulfilled*, saith, "I thirst." "When Jesus, therefore, had received the vinegar, He said, 'It is finished.' 'I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do'." All that was written of Him in Moses, and the Prophets, and the Psalms, was fulfilled. *Every word* received its full accomplishment ere He bowed His head and yielded up His

Spirit. "Yet ignorant Professors, cold as ice, who call themselves learned, are teaching students who listen to them to sneer at the word of Moses and the Prophets which the Lord Jesus treated with such awful and loving reverence."

In the words of an eloquent servant of Christ we may say, "How many things we prize because of their associations: how I love my own dear father's old Bible. I see his marks in the margin; I see the traces of his tears, of his joys, of his sorrows, of his holy communion with the God he loved. I love it, for it is *his* Bible. And shall I not love it because it is my *Lord's* Bible—the Bible my Saviour loved? There are His marks upon it, the traces of His fingers, the marks of His tears, the echoes of His sighs, and His songs, and His prayers. And, therefore, whatever difficulty assails me, and whatever question perplexes me, and whatever enemy of truth comes to unsettle my faith, I am ready to say: If my Lord read the Bible, I'll read it—if He loved it, I'll love it—if He taught it, I'll teach it—if He found comfort from it, I'll find comfort from it—if He

upheld the Divine authority of it, I'll uphold the Divine authority of it. When the enemies of my faith come, I will say, 'Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever'" (Ps. cxix. 111).

II.—THE MANNER OF INSPIRATION.

Those who speak of such men as Shakespeare, Milton, or Burns as having been "inspired" or "semi-inspired," only show that they are quite ignorant of the true meaning of the term. These were no doubt men of great intellect. They were close observers, and looked at men and things with penetrating glance. Reflecting on what they saw and heard, they turned it to account for the entertainment and partly also for the instruction of men. But they never rose, or pretended to rise, above what was attainable by natural intelligence.

Very different is the theory of inspiration as taught in the Scriptures. Already we have seen that "all Scripture is God-breathed" (2 Tim. iii. 16), but we are further instructed as to the manner of this inspiration in 2 Peter i. 20, 21, "No prophecy of Scripture is of

any private interpretation." Concerning this, Alford remarks : " By the word ' interpretation ' we are not to understand the subsequent interpretation of a prophecy already given ; the sense is that prophecy springs not out of human interpretation, *i.e.*, is not a prognostication made by a man knowing what he means when he utters it."

Then follows the positive statement as to what " prophecy " really is, viz., " Men spake from God, moved by the Holy Spirit " (Revised Version). Comparing this with 1 Peter i. 10-12, we find that so really were " the prophets " the instruments of God in what they spake and wrote that the things they uttered became the subject of their devout searching and inquiry after they had uttered them. It was " the Spirit of Christ which was in them " that gave the message and the words. The will of man and the intelligence of man were alike excluded from such communications. They were purely divine.

In perfect accordance with these Scriptures, we read in 2 Samuel xxiii. 2, " The Spirit of the Lord (Jehovah) spake by me, and His

Word was in my tongue; the God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me." Again in Psalm xlv. 1, "My tongue is the pen of a ready writer." Could any language more fully bear out what we have seen in 2 Peter i. 21, "Men spake from God moved by the Holy Spirit"?

In Hebrews i. 1 we read, "God who . . . spake in time past unto the fathers by [or literally '*in*'] the prophets hath in these last days spoken unto us by [or literally '*in*'] His Son." The prophets were not the speakers, but "the Spirit of Christ which was in them" used their lips as His mouth-piece. So in Luke i. 70, "As He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began," and Acts iii. 18, "But those things which God had shewed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled" (see also verse 21).

See also Acts i. 16: "This Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit by the mouth of David spake," &c., and iv. 25, "Who by the mouth of Thy servant David hast said," &c. And, again,

Acts xxviii. 25, "Well spake the Holy Spirit by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying," &c.

But it is well here to look at another point of importance to which attention has not been given sufficiently, viz., the use of the Greek preposition "*dia*" or "through." We do not wish to thrust "Greek" upon simple readers, for whom mainly we write. But we think this point is so plain and obvious that the simplest may understand it.

The ordinary preposition to express our English word "by," is "*hupo*." This is used in Matthew xxii. 31, which refers to words spoken by God to Moses, and not spoken by Moses from God. The same word is in Luke ii. 18—"told them *by* the shepherds." Acts x. 22, "Warned from God *by* an holy angel." Acts xxvii. 11, "Believed the master of the ship more than those things which were spoken *by* Paul." Hebrews ii. 3, "Which at the first began to be spoken *by* the Lord," &c. These passages suffice to show the use of the preposition "*hupo*."

But there is another class of passages in which the word used is not "*hupo*," "by,"

but "*dia*," "through," clearly implying that the word spoken does not originate with the speaker, but comes from another who speaks through him. Of this character is Matthew i. 22, "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord through (not by) the prophet, saying," &c.* Also Matthew ii. 15, "Spoken of [*hupo*, by] the Lord through (*dia*) the prophet." Also verse 23. See also Matthew viii. 17; xii. 17; xxiv. 15; Luke xviii. 31; Acts xxviii. 25; Romans i. 2. The reader will find that it is not wasted time to refer to such passages and mark them. They go to prove beyond all controversy that the Scriptures of the prophets are really the very word of God committed to writing for the instruction of succeeding generations, and providentially preserved for us in their entirety. Another word used in the New Testament shows how fully the divine origin of the Scriptures is maintained. They are called "the lively oracles" (Acts vii. 28); and again "the oracles of God" (Romans iii. 2; Hebrews v. 12; 1 Peter iv. 11). This can mean nothing

* This distinction is noted in every passage in Newberry's Bible.

less than that the utterances referred to—viz., the Holy Scriptures—are the very words of God though spoken through human lips.

We have thus before us a clear and unmistakable definition of what “prophecy” is. Whether it be in the Old or New Testament the divine use of the term prophet or prophecy is one. That which a prophet uttered from God, being the message of God, the word of God, formed a part of the “oracles of God.” It is *not* “*exhortation*” merely, though exhortation should be spiritual in character and “according to the oracles of God” in substance. It is *not* “*teaching*.” The teacher has no power or right to go one syllable beyond “that which is written.” These gifts are carefully distinguished from prophecy in Rom. xii. 6-8, 1 Cor. xii. 29, and Eph. iv. 2. A right understanding of what constitutes “prophecy” and what distinguishes it from every other ministry, would save from many errors.

It is not necessarily prediction of future events; many prophecies were the divine exposing of the condition of the people to whom they were spoken: but *in every case*

it was that which the Spirit of God spake through the prophet—he being for the time the instrument used. Some, who were thus used, were ungodly persons; for example, Balaam, Saul, Caiaphas—so little had the grace or intelligence of the person to do with the words uttered. But this was exceptional. It was God's usual way to speak through His "holy prophets."

III.—REASON FOR BELIEVING SCRIPTURES INSPIRED.

There are divine glories in creation apparent to the natural eye, others are disclosed to us by means of the telescope, and yet another field in which the wisdom and power of the Creator are displayed is opened up by the microscope. In like manner the Word of God contains enough to satisfy the reader of the most ordinary capacity of its divinity, provided he have ears to hear and eyes to see. He who beholds with open eye the light of the sun requires no other evidence to prove to him that it shines. The blind may question it, but not "the seeing eye."

The student of prophecy is like one who has a telescopic view of the divine glories of the Word. Fields of infinite grandeur are unfolded to him, which other eyes have not discovered. Yet there are other glories still—those in which the accuracy and importance of the minutest details are as by a microscope brought to view. Thus the Scriptures constitute their own best evidence of their divine origin, and leave the reverent enquirer as fully convinced that they are no human production, as the observer of nature by telescope or microscope that the heavens and the earth were created by an infinitely wise and almighty God.

In the prophecy of Isaiah, God claims to be believed upon three grounds:

(1) Chapter xlv. 18, He is CREATOR; therefore He says, "I am the Lord, and there is none else."

(2) Again, verse 21, He is a SAVIOUR; and so He adds, "for I am God, and there is none else."

(3) Lastly, in xlv. 9, 10, "I am God, and there is none like Me, *declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things*

that are not yet done." On the same principle we conclude that THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE PROPHETIC SCRIPTURES is one mighty evidence that they are divinely inspired. For not only are the sufferings of Christ portrayed hundreds of years before Christ was born into the world, but many other events quite as evidently fulfilled are predicted, such as God's dealings with the Jewish nation—their present period of scattering, and the desolation of their city and land—all which having been plainly foretold, has become matter of history; whilst even at the present time, that people, beloved for the fathers' sakes, are a living miracle, bearing witness to the divine authorship of the Scriptures.

Considerable attention has been given of late years to the subject of unfulfilled prophecy, but it appears as if the study of fulfilled prophecy had been almost wholly neglected. Yet nothing is more calculated to establish faith in the infallibility of the Word of God, in its bearing upon the present and the future, than a careful examination of the very numerous passages of Scripture which have been absolutely, literally, and exactly

fulfilled, though written centuries before the events. To go into such a subject fully would occupy volumes; therefore, in a paper such as this it is only possible to indicate a few of the most striking instances.

"The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. xix. 10). The Lord Jesus Himself, speaking of the Old Testament Scriptures, said, "they are they which testify of Me" (John v. 39). "To Him give all the prophets witness" (Acts x. 43). Their principal theme was "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow" (1 Pet. i. 11).

It is therefore in what is recorded historically of Him that we expect to find the richest vein of instruction as to fulfilled prophecy.

We shall therefore look at a few

(I) PROPHECIES AS TO THE TIME OF MESSIAH'S
APPEARANCE.

Genesis xlv. 10 shows that the tribe of Judah would retain its position as an ordered and governed tribe until "Shiloh," which is another name for the Messiah. The other tribes lost all distinct tribeship after their

captivity.* Not so Judah. Since the coming of Christ, Judah also has been scattered; but up till the time that He appeared it retained its position and powers of self-government, though limited by Roman supremacy. Thus the fact of the birth of Christ occurring after the other tribes had disappeared as tribes, and before the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of Judah, is a definite fulfilment of this remarkable prophecy.

Haggai ii. 7-9 shows that Messiah would stand in that temple, and that it would be glorified by His presence. This took place, but since then the total destruction of the temple is proof that Messiah must have come.

Daniel ix. 24-26. Here more than five centuries before the birth of Christ, the time of His appearance is accurately predicted. "Weeks" here are "hepdomads," or periods of seven years. See same use of the word in Genesis xxix. 27.

The margin of our Bibles gives the date of the commandment to rebuild the wall of

* The best authorities give "tribeship" as an equally correct rendering of the word translated "sceptre."

Jerusalem as B.C. 446. (See Neh. i.) Add to this 33 years for the life of Christ, and four years for the well-known chronological discrepancy at the beginning of our era, and you have a total of 483 years, exactly 69 periods of 7—the very date at which Daniel foretold that Messiah should be cut off. None but God could have made known the future as to the time of the birth and death of the Messiah as do these Scriptures.

We shall next look at

(2) PROPHECIES CONCERNING HIS HUMAN
LINEAGE.

In Genesis iii. 15 we learn that He was to be “the seed of the woman,” and in Isaiah ix. 6, “a child born.” In Genesis xxii. 18 we learn that He was to be of *the seed of Abraham*. In Deuteronomy xviii. 15 He was to be of the children of Israel, the tribe not being yet specified. In Isaiah xi. 1 we are told He is to be of “*the stem of Jesse*”—the father of David; and in Jeremiah xxiii. 5, 6 He is to be the lineal descendant of David. Thus we trace His descent as Son of Man, as Son of Abraham, and as Son of David.

In demonstration of the faithfulness of the prophetic Scriptures, the genealogy of the Lord is given in Matthew and in Luke, and then all certainty of genealogical descent ceases with the destruction of Jerusalem. Ever since, genealogies are to be avoided (1 Tim. i. 4). They have no further value. We shall now only remark on

(3) A FEW INCIDENTS DISTINCTLY FORETOLD
AND ACCURATELY FULFILLED.

Zechariah ix. 9. The riding into Jerusalem on the ass's colt, the mother, according to her instinct, being allowed in this transitory scene of gladness, to follow.

Zechariah xi. 12. His being betrayed for 30 pieces of silver, the price of a Hebrew slave (see Ex. xxi. 32).

Psalms xxii. 16. The piercing of His hands and feet. Not a Jewish mode of execution, and to bring about which He must be delivered into the hands of the Gentiles. Altogether unlikely, therefore, to human foresight. And no mention here is made of the piercing of His side, for that was *after death*, and did not properly form part of His *sufferings*.

Psalm xxii. 18. The parting of His garments and casting lots for His vesture. This being done by Roman soldiers, could be no human device to bring about consistency between prophecy and its fulfilment.

Psalm lxix. 8. The unbelief of His brethren. (Compare John vii. 5.) Who could conceive that those so intimately associated with such a character, and witnesses doubtless of many of His mighty works, could fail to believe in Him. And, notice, it is "an alien to My mother's children," not "to My Father's children." Those who are the children of His Father are such through faith.

Isaiah liii. 9. His grave, appointed with the wicked; probably the graves for the three criminals—one cross and one grave originally intended for Barabbas—had already been dug, that no time might be lost after the execution. But the Scripture must be fulfilled, and Joseph of Arimathea comes forward and begs and obtains the body of the Lord Jesus and lays it in his own new sepulchre, wherein man never lay.

We give these merely as specimens, leaving

many others, and also prophecies concerning Israel, to be searched out by the reader.

Some admit in a general way that the Scriptures are inspired, but deny their verbal inspiration. They admit the inspiration of the *men* who wrote, but not the inspiration of the *words* written. But this position is altogether untenable and contrary to what the Scriptures themselves teach.

The men were fallible. Paul was in error when he said to the High Priest, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall," but when he wrote as the apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, it was "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth" (1 Cor. ii. 13), and such words were characterised by him as "Christ speaking in me" (2 Cor. xiii. 3), and the commands he wrote were "the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. xiv. 37).

Peter was in error when, at Antioch, Paul was obliged to "withstand him to the face" (Gal. ii. 11-14), but those things which he wrote are by himself put on a level, as to authority, with those things "spoken before by the holy prophets" (2 Peter iii. 2), and in

the same chapter (verse 16), referring to the epistles of the Apostle Paul, he puts them on a level with "the other Scriptures"—those concerning which we have seen that they are "God-breathed."

That which constitutes a prophet is not that the thoughts of God are in his heart, but that "the Spirit of the Lord speaks by him and His words are in his tongue" (2 Sam. xxiii. 2). He may be intelligent or unintelligent as to the meaning of what he utters, as king Saul or his messengers (1 Sam. xix. 20-24); willing or unwilling as Caiaphas, who "spake not of himself" (John xi. 51); or Balaam, who came to curse but was compelled to bless, for he could only speak "the word that God put in his mouth." The fact of paramount importance for us is not the character of the man, or of the thoughts occupying his mind, but that the words put in his mouth, and consequently spoken or written, were the very words of God. That which concerns us is not the character of the men who wrote, but that "the sacred writings" (or "holy letters")—the very words and phrases—are divinely

inspired. In accordance with this Peter exhorts the believers to "be mindful of *the words* which were spoken before" (2 Peter iii. 2), and Paul exhorts Timothy to "hold fast the form of sound words" (2 Timothy i. 13). "If any man consent not to wholesome *words*, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . he is proud," &c. (1 Timothy vi. 3). Jude exhorts to "remember the *words* which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 17).

And who would dare to say that divine thoughts could possibly be expressed accurately and intelligently in any other words than those selected by the Spirit of God? "The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times" (Ps. xii. 6). Even in the expression of human ideas how often does language prove to be inaccurate, if not inadequate, and consequently a wrong impression is conveyed. How essential, then, that the thoughts of God should be conveyed to man in

THE VERY WORDS OF GOD.

This, then, the Scriptures of truth profess to be, and really are. Differences of manu-

script and translation are numerous. We cannot be too thankful for the reverential care and patient labour bestowed by learned and godly men upon the Scriptures in order that the rank-and-file of believers might have in their possession the very words of God as originally given and written. But these differences in no way affect the truth we contend for. It is *because* we so firmly believe in the divine and verbal inspiration of that which was written that we so value every help to arrive at the actual words that God gave, and the accurate rendering of them into our own tongue.

WHY GIVEN IN HEBREW AND GREEK.

The wisdom of God in giving the Word in Hebrew and Greek, languages which are not in general use in any living nation, and which are consequently called "dead languages," is most evident. Living languages are continually subject to a process of change. In our English language very many words have not now at all the significance they bore a century ago. Old words fall into disuse, and a constant infusion of new ones gathered from other tongues, chiefly

from ancient Greek and Latin, is taking place. The unsuitableness of such a tongue for giving permanent expression to the eternal truths of God is evident. But Hebrew and Greek having become "dead languages," are, so to speak, *crystallised*. They are not subject to change. There they remain with all their original force and significance after the lapse of millenniums. "Change and decay in all around we see," but the Word of the Lord endureth for ever—not one "jot or tittle" can pass away till all be fulfilled.

It was from the lips of the blessed Lord Himself that there came these remarkable words: "And the Scripture cannot be broken" (John x. 35). Such was His estimate of the Book. Man's words may be broken, but the Scripture cannot. Now put beside this another verse where we find that strong expression "cannot" (Titus i. 2): "God, that cannot lie." The Scriptures *cannot* be broken, because the God that breathed them *cannot* lie. When apprehended by His enemies, why did not the blessed Lord appeal to His Father for help, knowing

that one word from His lips would have summoned to His aid more than twelve legions of angels? The answer is given by Himself: "How then shall the Scripture be fulfilled, that thus it must be" (Matthew xxvi. 54)? Patiently will He suffer even unto death, but the fulfilment of the written Word of God is to Him above every other consideration. Let us ask ourselves, Have we this reverence for the Word of God? He showed His belief in its divine character by His obedience to its every letter. In vain shall we contend for the doctrine of inspiration if our lives give the lie to our belief. The strongest argument we can use is our reverence for it, and our obedience to it, and the consequent gladness and blessing it imparts.

IV.—HOW NEW TESTAMENT CONCLUSIONS
PROVE THE INSPIRATION OF THE
OLD TESTAMENT.

We have now only to remark upon a few passages which clearly show how the inspired writers of the New Testament were led to found conclusions upon Old Testament Scriptures, which involve in

the most absolute way the fact of their verbal inspiration.

AN INSPIRED S.

Turn to Galatians iii. 16. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not 'And to *seeds*,' as of many: but as of one, 'And to thy *seed*,' which is Christ." Here the apostle founds his teaching on the fact that in Genesis the word "seed" is in the singular and not in the plural. And he does so in an authoritative way, as though no question could arise as to the infallibility of the word referred to. His language betrays no hesitation about so using the words of the Old Testament, nor any suspicion that an argument based on so minute a point would fail to carry conviction. Surely this is in perfect harmony with the mind of Christ. "For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot [*"iota,"* answering to "*yod*" ('), the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet] or one tittle [a minute point distinguishing some of the Hebrew letters from others which, without this point, would be similar] shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled."

AN INSPIRED TYPE.

Turn now to Hebrews vii. 1-3, and mark attentively the use here made of every word of that short but pregnant passage which gives all that God saw fit to record concerning Melchizedec.

1st. The two names, or rather the name and the title, given to this notable person are given.

2nd. The interpretation of each, King of Righteousness and King of Peace, at once opening to us a vein of rich instruction in the significance of Scripture names.

3rd. The order in which the names come. Righteousness coming before peace. (Compare Psalm lxxxv. 18; Isaiah xi. 4-9, xxxii. 16, 17; Romans xiv. 17.) “*First*, King of Righteousness—*after that*, King of Peace.”

4th. That although a King, he was also “Priest of the Most High God.” In this, differing from the Aaronic order of priesthood—the honour of kingship pertaining to the tribe of Judah and not to Levi.

5th. The omission of any mention of his pedigree or parentage, showing that even the *omissions* of Scripture are significant, as, for

instance, the omission of any record of the death of the descendants of Cain in Genesis iv.; whilst of each of the descendants of Seth, in Genesis v., except Enoch, it is said, "and he died."

6th. The omission of any reference to the date or even the fact of his birth or of his death.

All this and much more is alluded to, and doctrinal teaching founded upon each point, as typically applicable to the Son of God. Such a use of the words of Genesis can only consist with verbal inspiration in its fullest and most absolute sense. The appeal is final: "To the law and to the testimony"; there is no higher authority, for it is the authority of God.

INSPIRED WARNINGS.

In three different parts of the Scriptures special warning is given against adding to or taking from the words of the Book (see Deuteronomy xii. 32; Proverbs xxx. 5, 6; Revelation xxii. 19). Thus God attests the perfection of His written Word, and guards it against unholy hands that would mar its integrity. The "Scriptures of Truth" contain

all things that are profitable for life and godliness; nothing need be added, for there is nothing lacking. And equally true is it that there is nothing superfluous. That animal which had anything "superfluous," or anything "lacking," was unfit for the altar of Jehovah, except as a free-will offering. For a vow it could not be accepted (see Leviticus xxii. 23). In Him who was the "Word made flesh" all was perfection. Even so it is with the Word written.

Be it ours then to reverence the Scriptures, to hide the words of God in our hearts, to feed upon them as our necessary food, to esteem them to be more precious than gold and sweeter than honey, to take them as "a light to our path and a lamp to our feet," even "a light that shineth in a dark place till the day dawn and the day-star arise."

THE PERSONAL AND THE WRITTEN WORD.

The great truth of the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures is intimately connected with another of the fundamental doctrines of our faith, namely, the Divinity of the Lord Jesus. The affinity between the personal

Word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the written Word of God is so close that the one throws light upon the other, and, indeed, the two doctrines stand or fall together.

The sublime opening of the Gospel by John declares that the Word who was in the beginning with God, and who was God, became flesh and dwelt among us. This title is given to Him in connection with creation, redemption, and judgment. Compare John i. 3, 14, and Rev. xix. 13.

The transition from the spoken to the personal Word is remarkable in Hebrews iv. 12, 13: "The Word of God is quick and powerful (living and active, R.V.), sharper than any two-edged sword neither is there any creature that is not manifest in HIS sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of HIM with whom we have to do."

That the Lord Jesus is a Divine Person, is fully proved in Scripture. If no other passage proved it, Hebrews i. is sufficient, this being the very purpose for which the chapter was written. Not less clearly is His perfectly true but sinless manhood

declared in chapter ii.: "As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same." And equally in the written Word the divine and the human are united.

Christ, "as concerning the flesh," was of the seed of Israel. The Scriptures also came through Israel. No Gentile was used of God to put pen to parchment to record the Word of God. It was to the circumcised, and to them alone, that the oracles of God were committed (Rom. iii. 2). The giving into their custody of the law and the promises constituted no small part of their national advantage and glory (Rom. ix. 4).

Thus the flesh of Christ and the outward form (sometimes called "the letter") of the Word are alike human—truly, absolutely human. To the carnal eye the Lord was *only* human. He was "the carpenter"; the son of Joseph and Mary; He hungered and thirsted, and was wearied, and groaned, and sighed, and wept. In all things He became "like unto His brethren." Being in their eyes a man, and nothing more, they sought to entangle Him in His words, they brought

witnesses to falsely accuse Him, and erroneously report His sayings. They set Him at the bar as a man to be criticised, judged, questioned, tortured, mocked, railed at, and finally they put Him to death.

So to the carnal eye the Scripture, the written Word of God, is only human. Human indeed the Book is, so human that the very character of each writer is discernible in the language he uses and the themes of his discourse; but the reality of its human character has been made the occasion of setting it also at the bar of man, to be examined as to whether it be true or false. Witness has been sought for against it; false witnesses have charged it with errors, contradictions, impossibilities, immoralities. It has been tortured (see literal meaning of "wrest" in 2 Peter iii. 16), railed at, mocked, and burnt all down the ages; yet it lives, for as the flesh of Christ was not of the will of man, but that which was born of the Virgin was of the Holy Spirit begotten, so even the outward form of the Word came not of the will of man, but was "God-breathed": "Men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter

i. 21, R.V.), "which things we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth" (1 Cor. ii. 13). To those who came in pride of heart to entangle Him in His words He was only seen as man, and though as a man He confounded them by His wisdom, yet they discerned not the divine in the lowly Man of Nazareth. But how different with those who came to Him in need and in faith! To them all His fulness overflowed at a touch, and His Godhead was instantly revealed. Such is the written Word to the critic—it is but a book, as any other, Shakespeare or Burns; but to those who come in conscious guilt and need, and who trust the words as the eternal truth, it is the Word of Life, the very Word of God.

In several passages in the Book of Revelation the Lord Jesus is called "the Alpha and the Omega" (R.V.). These are the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet, and in naming these it is as inclusive of the whole. The alphabet comprises all the signs used in any language to express all the words of which such language is or can be com-

posed. It is by means of his words, spoken or written in letters of the alphabet, that man reveals his thoughts. Without words, man would be incapable of conveying to others articulate thought. Without letters, these words would be incapable of being put on record in writing. To say that the Lord Jesus is "the Alpha and the Omega" is equivalent to saying that He is the revelation of God, the expression of the mind of God. He is the One in whom bodily God has fully made known His thoughts, His will, His counsels, His character, once for all. Christ is the Word, the great divine and eternal record of the mind of God. Hebrew was for Israel, Greek for Jew and Grecian, but for all other nationalities these must be translated, or they remain unknown. But Christ is the Word of God for all nations, for all time, for heaven and earth, for the universe and for eternity.

And it is in the Scriptures of Truth that He is to be found: as He said, "they are they which testify of Me" (John v. 39). In an infinitude of ways, which only the mind of God could have devised, He is to be found

there. Its histories are allegories (Galatians iv. 24): its personages are types or figures of Him that was to come (Romans v. 14): its ordinances profoundly illustrative of the Person, offices, character, and work of the Son of God (see Epistle to Hebrews). In the Psalms there are the breathings of His soul in secret communings with His Father and His God; in the Prophécies, His sufferings and the glories that are to follow; in the Gospels, the graphic histories of His life and teachings; in the Epistles, the exposition and practical application of His teachings to the life and testimony of the saints; in the Revelation, His official character as Son of man in judgment and as King of kings.

Truly the written Word of God is like the veil of the sanctuary, in whose "cunning work" of gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine, twined linen the person and character of Christ were so marvellously set forth. Human hands indeed constructed the sanctuary, but the plan of it, in every detail, and the skill that wrought it out, were equally Divine (see Exodus xxxv. 30-35; xxxvi. 1, 2).

Christ is the Man whom God has ordained to be the Judge of living and dead. But we also read: "He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath One that judgeth him: the words that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John xii. 48).

Men dared to set Him at the bar of judgment, and in like manner the written Word is judged and criticised; but the only critic recognised by Scripture is "the Word of God" (see Hebrews iv. 12, where the word "discerner," occurring nowhere else, is literally "critic," κριτικός).

Jesus stood at the bar of the High Priest, and of Herod and of Pilate; but they shall stand before Him for judgment, and the words that He spake will condemn them.

The Lord Jesus claimed to be believed because of the unique and superhuman and gracious character of His works (John xv. 24). Great was the condemnation of Chorazin and Bethsaida, where so many of His mighty works were done—all of them acts of redemption (Matthew xi. 20-24).

And may not the written Word also appeal

not so much to its works as to its fruits. The works of Christ were such as none other man ever did: His words such as no man ever spake. And so it may be said that wherever the Holy Scriptures have gone the fruits have proved the character of the Book. By its doctrines and precepts, but most of all by its testimony to the grace of God in Christ Jesus, it has turned savages into saints, heathens into intelligent worshippers of the living and true God. Slaves of alcohol and opium and other lusts and vices have been transformed by the renewing of their minds, so that they lived "soberly, righteously, and godly."

Those who are conversant with the work of God in these lands have seen conversions enough of sinners of deepest dye through the Word to convince them that the words of the Book are "quick and powerful"—are indeed the words of God. As it was in apostolic days, so it is now. When received "not as the word of men," but "as it is in truth the Word of God, it "effectually worketh in them that believe" (1 Thess. ii. 13). The Scripture accounts in Acts and Epistles

of its triumphs are glorious, but not more so than are found in modern times in records of Gospel work in the Pacific Islands, New Hebrides, China, India, Central Africa, notably in Livingstonia, and in other parts.

And the character of Chinese Christians as it has shone out upon the awfully dark background of the recent persecutions and massacres, affords abundant evidence that the Word wherein they trusted was indeed the Word of God, and the power that sustained their faith was the power of God.

When the infatuated Jew cried, "Away with Him! away with Him!" Pilate asked, "Why? What evil hath He done?" And now that the Scriptures are being declared to be mythological; its histories discredited; its books neither written by the authors nor at the periods they profess; its prophecies speculations; its personalities imaginary; its miracles fictitious; a human compilation of old and unreliable manuscripts—well may we cry out in astonishment, "Why? What evil have they done?"

Some would hold the Scriptures accountable for the evil ways of those who profess

the faith of the Bible, but in works deny it. Is it honest to do so? As well blame the Lord for Peter's rash stroke that cut off Malcus' ear, and which his Master healed! Men are not so foolish as to charge upon the bank responsibility for the forgery whereby its notes are discredited.

Yet even now, from ancient stones in Assyria and Egypt, modern science is deciphering daily a cumulative mass of evidence which goes to shatter the hypotheses of adversaries and to confirm the statements of the Book.

The condemnation of the witnesses that gave testimony against the personal Word was that "their witness agreed not together." And so is it still with the thinly-veiled sceptics and adversaries of the Word who dare to criticise the divine; they may safely be left to demolish one another. The WORD incarnate rose again from the dead superior to them all, and the written Word of God shall abide for ever when heaven and earth have passed away.

Criticism so called has its proper sphere. The work of taking forth the precious from the vile amidst a multitude of ancient manu-

scripts and versions has been an invaluable labour. The work of translation into our own tongue and into hundreds of other languages, demanding learning and labour and patience almost beyond conception, is one of the most valuable and responsible that man can engage in. To set before us as far as possible the very words spoken by the holy prophets, spoken by the Lord Himself, and by His apostles (see 2 Peter iii. 2), is a work worthy of men of the highest erudition and of the most exalted spirituality.

But to raise questions about the genuineness of the original, to exercise skill to discover discrepancies and objections, is doing the part of the men who used their utmost ingenuity (but in vain) to convict the personal Word of God of error and sin.

The words of another may form a fitting conclusion to this article. "Do I then despise the letter? God forbid. With sincerest faith I receive it, and thank God for it throughout Scripture. Most precious is it, speaking to all in words of truth, showing how the outward daily life on earth may be sanctified, and is watched and cared for

by God. Especially now, when so many act as if the earthly calling were a path of which God took no notice, and in which faith availed as nought, most precious is the letter, as showing God, for He changeth not, in all His providence over the outward path of those who love and fear Him; showing how the path of lonely men, if they walk with Him, their wells, and sheep, and feasts, and conflicts are all His interests; that not a marriage, birth, or death—not the weaning of a child, or the dismissal of a maid—not the bargain for a grave, or the wish respecting the place of burial—but He watches and directs it. Thus precious is the letter; a daily guide and comfort to us as dwellers here.

“But holding this, I see much more—that while the letter is a guide for things on earth, in spirit it veils and yet reveals to us the things in heaven; in this, like the world around us, which, while supplying means for this life, in those very supplies sets before the opened eye the secrets and treasures of the world within the veil; it is, too, like the Lord, coming under our hands in human form, under that lowly form veiling and yet

revealing the glory of the eternal Son. Christ, the Incarnate Word of God, seems to be, not an illustration only, but a proof, both of the preciousness of the letter and of the deeper spirit which everywhere underlie the letter throughout the Word of God. He was Man, but He was God. There was the human form of the Word, the outcome of David and Abraham, for He sprung out of Judah. This was the humble form, which men despised; but besides, and under this, was the Divine, 'full of the unspeakable depths of the wisdom of Almighty God; giving forth draughts of that wisdom, emitting rays of that light, to as many as had capacity to receive of His fulness, and yet in mercy hiding from others awful depths which they were unfit to know; being, like the world His hands had made, an 'open secret' to all around Him.

"Such also is the written Word. Coming to us in human form, as the outcome of David or of some other Israelite, and judged by most as Joseph's Son, it has a higher birth, truly human indeed, and yet no less Divine; in its letter, in its human form,

coming down to teach men upon the earth, full of lessons of love and truth for us as pilgrims here; in its spirit, to show us the things within the veil, and to lift us up to live and walk and dwell above; in the letter, even as the flesh of Christ, 'never to see corruption' though rejected; and in spirit to be seen as shining with unearthly glory.

"I have known Christ after the flesh. I can never cease to adore the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for the grace of the mystery of His holy incarnation, by which He has come as a Man to speak to men; but I have also seen His glorious resurrection and ascension, and the coming of the Holy Ghost. So have I known the Word in the letter. Most sweetly has it spoken. When I walked, it led; when I slept, it kept; when I awaked, it talked with me. It has been my guide, my staff, my bread, my counsellor, my comfort all through this lonely pilgrimage. But I have also felt its spirit, and seen the depths within the veil, where I could but fall down, and cry, 'Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty'!"

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