

The
AUTHORSHIP
AND CREDIBILITY
OF THE
BIBLE



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2 Timothy 3:16

Published by:

Associated Bible Students
6324 Tutbury Lane
Troy, MI 48098
USA

www.BibleToday.com



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Printed in the United States of America

*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path.*

Psalm 119: 105

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WHILE the Bible is generally accepted by Christian people as of divine authority, comparatively few are able to clearly state just why they so esteem it. The internal evidence of its truthfulness, and its grandeur of doctrine, are the principal evidences on which its testimony is, and should be, generally received; and truly these are strong, and convincing of its divine authorship and authority; yet the man of God who would be thoroughly furnished with the truth, and armed against every attack of skepticism, should endeavor to know all he can of the time, manner, circumstances, etc., under which it was written; whether it has been preserved free from corruption; and whether in its present condition it is worthy of full confidence. Let us, therefore, briefly consider what testimony we have to the credibility of the Sacred Writings.

From numerous expressions, references and quotations in the New Testament by our Lord and the apostles it is evident that a certain body of writings was at that time considered to be of divine authority. The Sacred Scriptures then in existence are now characterized as the Old Testament Scriptures (the Scriptures of the Old or Law Covenant), while that which was added by our Lord and the apostles is termed the New Testament (the New Covenant) Scriptures.

No other book which the world has ever known has such a history as the Bible. Its origin and authorship, its antiquity, its wonderful preservation in the midst of the unparalleled and continuous opposition which sought to destroy it, as well as its diversity and teaching, make the Bible the most wonderful book in existence.

It is a collection composed of sixty-six separate books, written by about forty different writers, living centuries apart, speaking different languages, subjects of different governments, and brought up under different civilizations. Over 1500 years elapsed between the writings of Moses and of John.

As no other reliable history dates so far back as the Bible, we are obliged to look mainly to its own internal evidence, as to its origin, authorship, and the reason for its existence, and indeed for its credibility in every respect; and further, we should look for such corroboration of its statements as reason, its own harmony with itself, and with other known facts, and subsequent developments furnish. And indeed this is the evidence of reliability on which all history must rest. To such evidence we are indebted for all our knowledge of past events and of all present events as well, except such as come under our own immediate observation. He who would cast away Bible history as unworthy of credence, must on the same ground reject all history; and to be entirely consistent, must believe nothing which does not come under his own personal observation.

If its statements, thoroughly understood, are contradictory, or are colored by prejudice, or are proven untrue by a positive scientific knowledge, or if subsequent developments prove its predictions un-

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true, and thereby show the ignorance or dishonesty of the authors of the Bible, then we may reasonably conclude that the entire book is unworthy of confidence, and should reject it. But if, on the contrary, we find that a thorough understanding of the Bible, according to its own rules of interpretation, shows its statements to be in harmony with each other; if it bears no evidence of prejudicial coloring; if many of its prophecies have actually come true, and others admit of future fulfillment; if the integrity of its writers is manifested by unvarnished records, then we have reason to believe the book. Its entire testimony, historic, prophetic, and doctrinal, stands or falls together. Science is yet in its infancy, yet in so far as positive scientific knowledge has been obtained, it should and does corroborate the Bible testimony.

INTERNAL EVIDENCES

Those who will make a study of the Bible plan will be fully convinced of the conclusive evidence of the credibility of the Sacred Scriptures, which is furnished in the purity, harmony and grandeur of its teachings. Outside of the Scriptures we have nowhere to look for an account of the circumstances and motives of the earliest writers: but they furnish these items of information themselves, and their integrity and evident truthfulness in other matters is a sufficient guarantee of truthfulness in these.

Our first definite information with reference to the Sacred Writings is afforded by the direction given to Moses to write the law and history in a book, and put it in the side of the ark for preservation. (See Exodus 17:14; 34:27; Deuteronomy 31:9-26.) This book was left for the guidance of the people. Additions were made to it from time to time by subsequent writers, and in the days of the kings, scribes appear to have been appointed whose business it was to keep a careful record of the important events occurring in Jewish history, which records--Samuel, Kings, Chronicles--were preserved and subsequently incorporated with the Law. The prophets also did not confine themselves to oral teaching, but wrote and in some cases had scribes to record their teachings. (See Joshua 1:8; 24:26; 1 Samuel 10:25; 1 Chronicles 27:32; 29:29,30; 2 Chronicles 33:18,19; Isaiah 30:8; Jeremiah 30:2; 36:2; 45:1; 51:60.) As a result we have the Old Testament Scriptures, composed of history, prophecy and law, written by divine direction, as these citations and also Paul's testimony (2 Timothy 3:15,16) prove. These writings collectively were termed "The Law and The Prophets," and the Hebrews were taught of God to esteem them of divine authority and authorship, the writers being merely the agents through whom they received them. They were so taught to esteem them, by the miraculous dealings of God with them as a people, in confirmation of his words to them through the prophets, thus endorsing them as his agents (See Exodus 14:30,31; 19:9; 1 Kings 18:21,27,30,36,39); and further by the establishment and enforcement of the law as proclaimed and recorded by Moses.

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The political interests and the religious veneration of the Israelites, under God's immediate overruling and protection, combined to preserve and protect these writings from contamination. Religiously, they were rightfully regarded with the deepest veneration, while politically they were the only guarantee which the people possessed against despotism. The Jewish copyists regarded these documents with great veneration. A very slight error in copying often led them to destroy it and begin anew. Josephus says that through all the ages that had passed none had ventured to add to, take away from, or transpose, aught of the Sacred Writings.

In the degeneracy of the Jewish nation, under the idolatrous administration of the successors of Rehoboam, these Sacred Writings fell into disuse and were almost forgotten, though they seem never to have been taken from their place. In the reformation conducted by Josiah, they were again brought to light. Again, in the Babylonish captivity this book was lost sight of by the Israelites, though it appears that they were accustomed to meet together in little companies in Babylon to be instructed by the scribes, who either taught the Law from memory or from copies in their possession. On the restoration of the Jews to Jerusalem, the Scriptures were again brought out, and Ezra and his companions read the law to the people, commenting upon and explaining it. (Nehemiah 8:1-8.) This public reading of the Scriptures was the only means of keeping them before the people, as printing was yet unknown and the cost of a manuscript copy was beyond the reach of the people, very few of whom could read. At the time of our Lord's first advent, these Old Testament Scriptures existed substantially as we have them today, as to matter and arrangement.

One of the strongest evidences of the authenticity of the Old Testament Scriptures is found in the fact that the law and the prophets were continually referred to by our Lord and the apostles as authority, and that while the Lord denounced the corruptions of the Jewish Church, and their traditions, by which they made void the Word of God, he did not even intimate any corruption in these Sacred Writings, but commends them, and refers to and quotes them in proof of his claims.

In fact, the various parts of the entire book are bound together by the mutual endorsement of the various writers, so that to reject one is to mar the completeness of the whole. Each book bears its own witness and stands on its own evidence of credibility, and yet each book is linked with all the rest, both by their common spirit and harmony and by their mutual endorsement. Mark, for instance, the endorsement of the account of creation in the commandment of the law concerning the Sabbath day.--Exodus 20:11. Also compare Deuteronomy 23:4,5; Joshua 24:9; Micah 6:5; 2 Peter 2:15; Jude 11-13; Isaiah 28:21; Habakkuk 3:11; Matthew 12:40.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

The earliest copy of the New Testament known is written in the Syriac language. Its date is estimated to be about the year A.D. 100. And even at that early date it contained the same books as at present with the exception of the Second Epistle of Peter, the Third Epistle of John, Jude and the Book of Revelation. And these omitted books we know were written about the close of the first century, and probably had not been widely circulated among the Christian congregations at that time. All the books of the Old and New Testaments as we now have them appear, however, in the Greek, in the Sinaitic Manuscript, the oldest known Greek MS., whose date is about A.D. 350.

The first five books of the New Testament are historical, and present a clear and connected account of the life, character, circumstances, teachings and doings of Jesus of Nazareth, who claimed to be the Messiah promised in the Old Testament Scriptures, and who fully substantiated his claim. The four accounts of the Evangelists, though they differ in phraseology, are in harmony in their statements, some important items being recorded by each which seem to have been overlooked by the others. These Evangelists testified to that of which they had positive knowledge. The Apostle John says: That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you--"that which was from the beginning [the beginning of the Lord's ministry], which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life; for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness." (1 John 1:1-3) They testify also that they saw Christ after his resurrection. The fifth book presents a valuable account of the doings of the Apostles after their anointing with the Holy Spirit, of the establishment of the Christian Church, and of the first preaching of the good news to the Gentiles.

The Apostolic Epistles were written to the various local congregations or churches, and were directed to be publicly read, and to be exchanged among the churches; and the same authority was claimed for them by their writers as that which was accorded to the Old Testament Scriptures. (1 Thessalonians 5:27; Colossians 4:16; 2 Pet. 3:2,15,16; Hebrews 1:1,2; 2:1-4.) These letters and the five historical books were carefully preserved by the different congregations, and were appealed to as authority in matters of doctrine.

The letters of the apostles, claiming, as they did, divine authority equal to that of the Old Testament Scriptures, were treasured and guarded with special care by the various congregations of the early church. The New Testament was completed by the Book of The Revelation, about the close of the first century A.D., after which, these epistles, etc., began to be collected for more permanent preservation.

The original copies of both the Old and New Testaments have, of course, long since disappeared, and the oldest manuscript (the Sinait-

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ic) is reckoned to have been written about three centuries after the death of Christ. Those of earlier date were either destroyed in the persecutions under which the church suffered, or were worn out by use. These oldest manuscripts are preserved with great care in the Museums and Libraries of Europe. During the Middle Ages, when ignorance and corruption prevailed and the Bible was hidden in monasteries away from the people, God was still carrying on his work, preserving the Scriptures from destruction even in the midst of Satan's stronghold, the apostate Church of Rome. A favorite occupation of the monks during the Middle Ages was the copying of the manuscripts of the New Testament, which were esteemed as relics more than as God's living authoritative Word;--just as you will find in the parlor of very many worldly people handsome Bibles, which are seldom opened. Of these manuscripts there are said to be now more than two thousand, of various dates from the fourth to the fifteenth centuries. The quiet seclusion of those monks gave them special opportunities for careful copying, and years were sometimes spent in the copying of a single manuscript.

RELIABILITY OF PRESENT TRANSLATIONS

The idea exists in some minds that during the lapse of centuries the Scriptures have become largely corrupted, and therefore a very uncertain foundation for faith. They reason that this is surely to be expected of a book which has survived so many centuries, and which has been claimed as divine authority by so many different factions, and which can be read by the majority only from translations, made by somewhat biased translators. And the late revisions of the book are supposed to be an acknowledgment of the supposed fact.

Those, however, who are acquainted with the manner in which the ancient manuscripts of the Scriptures have been preserved for centuries, carefully copied, diligently compared and translated by pious and learned linguists, whose work was thereafter subjected to the most learned and scrutinizing criticism of an age in which scholars are by no means few, are prepared to see that such an idea is by no means a correct or reasonable one, though to the uninformed it may appear so.

It is a fact that the Scriptures, as we find them today, bear internal evidence of their original purity; and ample means, both internal and external, are now furnished so that the careful student may detect any error which might have crept in either by fraud or accident. While there are some errors in translation and a few interpolations in our common English translation, on the whole it is acknowledged by scholars to be a remarkably good transcript of the Sacred Word.

Before the invention of printing, the copying of the Scriptures, being very slow and tedious, involved considerable liability to error in transcribing, such as the accidental omission of a word or paragraph, the substitution of one word for another, or the misunderstanding of a

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word where the copyist wrote from the dictation of another person. And again, sometimes a marginal note might be mistaken for a part of the text and copied in as such. But while a very few errors have crept in, in such ways, and a few others seem to have been designedly inserted, various circumstances have been at work, both to preserve the integrity of the Sacred Writings, and also to make manifest any errors which have crept into them.

Very early in the Christian Era translations of the New Testament Scriptures were made into several languages, and the different factions that early developed and continued to exist, though they might have been desirous of adding to or taking from the original text in order to give their claims a show of Scriptural support, were watched by each other to see that they did not do so, and had they succeeded in corrupting the text in one language, another translation would make it manifest.

Even the Douay translation, in use in the Romish church, is in most respects substantially the same as the King James translation. The fact that during the "dark ages" the Scriptures were practically cast aside, being supplanted by the decrees of popes and councils, so that its teachings had no influence upon the masses of the people who did not have copies in their possession--nor could they have read them if they had them--doubtless made unnecessary the serious alteration of the text, at a time when bold, bad men had abundant power to do so. For men who would plot treason, incite to wars and commit murders for the advancement of the papal hierarchy, as we know was done, would have been bold enough for anything. Thus the depth of ignorance in the dark ages served to protect and keep pure God's Word, so that its clear light has shone specially at the two ends of the Gospel age. (1 Corinthians 10:11.) The few interpolations which were dared, in support of the false claims of Papacy, were made just as the gloom of the "dark ages" was closing in upon mankind, and are now made glaringly manifest, from their lack of harmony with the context, their antagonism with other scriptures and from their absence in the oldest and most complete and reliable manuscripts.

RELATIVE VALUES OF ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS

As to the relative values of ancient manuscripts, we quote the following comments from the pen of that eminent German scholar, Constantine Tischendorf, who spent many years of his life in diligently searching out and comparing the various ancient manuscripts and translations of the Scriptures in many languages, and who has furnished to the church the results of his investigation in a careful exhibit of the various departures of the English Authorized Version of the New Testament from the three oldest and most important manuscripts.

Mr. Tischendorf says: "As early as the reign of Elizabeth the English nation possessed an authorized translation, executed by the Bishops

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under the guidance of Archbishop Parker; and this, half a century later, in the year 1611, was revised at the command of James the First by a body of learned divines, and became the present 'Authorized Version.' Founded as it was on the Greek text at that time accepted by Protestant theologians, and translated with scholarship and conscientious care, this version of the New Testament has deservedly become an object of great reverence, and a truly national treasure to the English Church. The German Church alone possesses in Luther's New Testament a treasure of similar value...

"The Authorized Version, like Luther's, was made from a Greek text which Erasmus in 1516, and Robert Stephens in 1550, had formed from manuscripts of later date than the tenth century. Whether those manuscripts were thoroughly trustworthy--in other words, whether they exhibited the Apostolic original as perfectly as possible--has long been matter of diligent and learned investigation. Since the sixteenth century Greek manuscripts have been discovered of far greater antiquity than those of Erasmus and Stephens; as well as others in Latin, Syriac, Coptic, and Gothic, into which languages the sacred text was translated between the second and fourth centuries; while in the works of the Fathers, from the second century downwards, many quotations from the New Testament have been found and compared... One thing is agreed upon by the majority of those who understand the subject, namely, that the oldest copies approach the original text more nearly than the later ones.

"Providence has ordained for the New Testament more sources of the greatest antiquity than are possessed by all the old Greek literature put together. And of these, two manuscripts have for long been especially esteemed by Christian scholars, since, in addition to their great antiquity, they contain very nearly the whole of both the Old and New Testaments. Of these two, one is deposited in the Vatican, and the other in the British Museum. Within the last ten years a third has been added to the number, which was found at Mount Sinai, and is now at St. Petersburg. These three manuscripts undoubtedly stand at the head of all the ancient copies of the New Testament, and it is by their standard that both the early editions of the Greek text and the modern versions are to be compared and corrected.

"The effect of comparing the common English text with the most ancient authorities will be as often to disclose agreement as disagreement. True, the three great manuscripts alluded to differ from each other both in age and authority, and no one of them can be said to stand so high that its sole verdict is sufficient to silence all contradiction. But to treat such ancient authorities with neglect would be either unwarrantable arrogance or culpable negligence; and it would be indeed a misunderstanding of the dealings of Providence, if after these documents had been preserved through all the dangers of fourteen or fifteen centuries, and delivered safe into our hands, we were not to

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receive them with thankfulness as the most valuable instruments for the elucidation of truth.

"It may be urged that our undertaking is opposed to true reverence; and that by thus exposing the inaccuracies of the English Version, we shall bring discredit upon a work which has been for centuries the object of love and veneration both in public and private. But those who would stigmatize the process of scientific criticism and test, which we propose, as irreverent, are greatly mistaken. To us the most reverential course appears to be, to accept nothing as the Word of God which is not proved to be so by the evidence of the oldest, and therefore most certain, witnesses that he has put into our hands. With this in view, and with this intention, the writer has occupied himself for thirty years past, in searching not only the Libraries of Europe, but the obscurest convents of the East, both in Africa and Asia, for the most ancient manuscript, of the Bible; and has done all in his power to collect the most important of such documents, to arrange them and to publish them for the benefit both of the present age and of posterity, so as to settle the original text of the sacred writers on the basis of the most careful investigation.

"The first of these great manuscripts already referred to which came into possession of Europe was the Vatican Codex. Whence it was acquired by the Vatican Library is not known; but it appears in the first catalogue of that collection which dates from the year 1475. The manuscript embraces both the Old and New Testaments. Of the later it contains the four Gospels, the Acts, the seven Catholic Epistles, nine of the Pauline Epistles, and the Epistle to the Hebrews as far as 9:14, from which verse to the end of the New Testament it is deficient; so that not only the last chapters of Hebrews, but the Epistle to Timothy, Titus and Philemon, as well as the Revelation, are missing. The peculiarities of the writing, the arrangement of the manuscript, and the character of the text--especially certain very remarkable readings --all combine to place the execution of the Codex in the fourth century, possibly about the middle of it.

"The Alexandrine Codex was presented to King Charles the First in 1628 by Cyril Lucar, Patriarch of Constantinople, who had himself brought it from Alexandria, of which place he was formerly Patriarch, and whence it derives its name. It contains both the Old and New Testaments. Of the New the following passages are wanting:--Matthew 1:1 to 25:6; John 6:50 to 8:52; 2 Corinthians 4:13 to 12:6. ...It would appear to have been written about the middle of the fifth century.

"The Sinaitic Codex I was myself so happy as to discover in 1844 and 1859, at the convent of St. Catherine, on Mount Sinai, in the later of which years I brought it to Russia to the Emperor Alexander the Second, at whose instance my second journey to the East was undertaken. It contains both Old and New Testaments--the latter perfect with-

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out the loss of a single leaf... All the considerations which tend to fix the date of manuscripts lead to the conclusion that the Sinaitic Codex belongs to the middle of the fourth century. Indeed, the evidence is clearer in this case than in that of the Vatican Codex; and it is not improbable (which cannot be the case with the Vatican MS.) that it is one of the fifty copies which the Emperor Constantine in the year 331 directed to be made for Byzantium, under the care of Eusebius of Caesarea. In this case it is a natural inference that it was sent from Byzantium to the monks of St. Catherine by the Emperor Justinian, the founder of the convent. The entire Codex was published by its discoverer, under the orders of the Emperor of Russia, in 1862, with the most scrupulous exactness, and in a truly magnificent shape, and the New Testament portion was issued in a portable form in 1863 and 1865.

"These considerations seem to show that the first place among the three great manuscripts, both for age and extent, is held by the Sinaitic Codex, the second by the Vatican, and the third by the Alexandrine. And this order is completely confirmed by the text they exhibit, which is not merely that which was accepted in the East at the time they were copied; but, having been written by Alexandrine copyists who knew but little of Greek, and therefore had no temptation to make alterations, they remain in a high degree faithful to the text which was accepted through a large portion of Christendom in the third and second centuries. The proof of this is their agreement with the most ancient translations--namely, the so-called Italic, made in the second century in proconsular Africa; the Syriac Gospels of the same date, now transferred from the convents of the Nitrian desert to the British Museum; and the Coptic version of the third century. It is confirmed also by their agreement with the oldest of the Fathers, such as Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement and Origen.

"These remarks apply to the Sinaitic Codex--which is remarkably close in its agreement to the 'Italic' version--more than they do to the Vatican MS., and still more so than the Alexandrine, which, however, is of far more value in the Acts, Epistles and Apocalypse than it is in the Gospels... "No single work of ancient Greek classical literature can command three such original witnesses as the Sinaitic, Vatican the integrity and accuracy of its text. That they are available in the case of a book which is at once the most sacred and the most important in the world is surely matter for the deepest thankfulness to God."

OTHER MEANS OF VERIFICATION

Another remarkable means for preserving and verifying the New Testament writings is their copious quotation in other writings. Origen, who wrote in the early part of the third century, quotes 5745 passages from all the books in the New Testament; Tertullian (A.D. 200) makes more than 3000 quotations from the New Testament books; Clement (A.D. 194) quotes 380 passages; Irenaeus (A.D. 178) quotes 767 pas-

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sages; Polycarp, who was martyred A.D. 165, after serving Christ 86 years, quoted 36 passages in a single epistle; Justin Martyr (A.D. 140) also quotes from the New Testament. These were all Christian writers; and in addition to these, the Scriptures were largely quoted by heathen and infidel writers, among them Celsus (A.D. 150) and Porphyry (A.D. 304). Indeed the entire New Testament, with the exception of about a dozen verses, has been found scattered as quotations through various writings that are still extant. And if every copy of the New Testament had been destroyed by its enemies, the book could have been reproduced from these quotations contained in the writings of the early Christians and their enemies.

While the means for the preservation of the Scriptures have been thus remarkably complete, and in view of the unparalleled opposition with which they have met give evidence of Divine care in their preservation, the means for their verification, and for arriving at an understanding of them in God's due time, are found to be none the less remarkable. No other book in the world has ever had such attention as this book. The labor that has been spent in the preparation of complete concordances, indexes, various translations, etc., has been enormous; and the results to students of the Bible are of incalculable value. And while we recognize the providence of God in all this, we should and do appreciate these labors of his children and their great service to us, though we utterly repudiate, as useless, the labor that has been spent on many so-called theological writings, which are nothing more than miserable efforts to support the vain traditions of men, the accumulated monstrous volumes of which would indeed form a monument of human folly.

Just in "The Time of the End," when the prophet (Daniel 12:9,10) declares that "the wise [the meek and faithful children of God] shall understand," we find these wonderful aids coming forward to our assistance. And parallel with these has happened the general spread of intelligence and education and the placing of the Bible in the hands of the people, thus enabling them to use the helps provided.

In view of these things, our only reasonable conclusion must be, that this wonderful book has been completely under Divine supervision in its preparation, and in its gradual and seasonable unfolding to the understanding; and yet it has all been accomplished through human agency. Those who are too careless, or too indifferent, or who permit themselves to be too much engrossed with the cares of this life to give it a studious examination, should not be expected to comprehend its weight of authority, and its full evidence of credibility. We are aware of the fact that in these days when the art of printing has flooded the world with literature of every description, good, bad, and indifferent, one might reasonably reply, We cannot examine everything. Very true, but this book has a claim superior to that of any other book in the

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world, and no man is as justifiable in laying it upon the shelf, as he would be in doing with the Koran or the Vedas.

The very existence of such a book, animated with such a spirit of justice, wisdom, love and power, and disclosing such good tidings of great joy to all people, having such a history and authorship, and containing such varied information--historic, scientific, and moral; and so remarkably preserved for so many centuries, though so violently opposed, is sufficient to awaken at least a suspicion of its value, and to claim the attention and investigation of every reasoning mind. The claims of this book upon our attention are by far superior to those of any other, and these reasonable claims appear on its very surface, while every systematic and properly directed effort at investigation rewards the diligent student with copious and abundant proof, both of its truthfulness and of its value.

THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

The Bible claims to be a book written under divine inspiration. The word *inspire* signifies *to breathe in, to infuse, to fill, to inhale*--as to inspire the lungs with air. (See Webster's Dictionary.) Hence, when it is said that certain scriptures, or writings of godly men, were given by inspiration of God (2 Timothy 3:16), it signifies that those men were in some way, whether through miraculous or natural means, inspired by, or brought under the influence of God; so as to be used by him in speaking or writing such words as he wished to have expressed. The prophets and apostles all claimed such inspiration. Peter says, "The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the holy Spirit."--2 Peter 1:21.

Through Moses we have the law of God and the only existing credible history of mankind from the creation of Adam down to his own time, covering a period of about 2500 years. While Moses and the other Bible writers were holy men, inspired with pure motives and holy zeal, and while personal pride, ambition, etc., were no part of their spirit, we learn that Moses was inspired with the knowledge of God's law, both in its great principles and also in the minutiae of its typical ceremonies, by direct revelation from God at Mount Sinai, and of some points of duty at the burning bush at Horeb, etc.

As for his historical writings, Moses was evidently guided of God in the collation and presentation in its present complete and connected form of the history of the world down to his day, which was really in great part the history of his own family back to Adam with an account of the creation doubtless given by God to Adam while he was yet in fellowship in Eden. Nor does a correct handing down of family information, covering a period of over 2300 years, seem impossible, or liable, as it would now be, to have become polluted; for, aside from the fact that it was handed down through the God-fearing family line of Seth, it should be remembered that at that time the bodies, brains and memo-

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ries of men were not so weak as they are now, and as they have been since the flood; and finally, because the long lives of two men link Adam with the family of Abraham, the family of covenant favor,--with Isaac, the typical seed of promise. These two men were Methuselah and Shem. Methuselah was over 200 years old when Adam died, and had abundant opportunity, therefore, for information at first hands; and Shem, the son of Noah, lived contemporaneously with Methuselah for 98 years, and with Isaac for 50 years. Thus, these two living, God-fearing men acted as God's historians to communicate his revelations and dealings to the family in whom centered the promises, of which Moses was one of the prospective heirs.

In addition to these facts, we have the statement of Josephus that Methuselah, Noah and Shem, the year before the flood, inscribed the history and discoveries of the world on two monuments of stone and brick which were still standing in Moses' time.

As for the writings of the prophets, their devoted, godly lives attest their sincerity; their lives were spent for God and in the defense of righteousness, and not for gain and worldly honor. And as for proofs that God acted through them and that they merely expressed his messages, as Peter declares, it is to be found in the fulfillment of their predictions.

This brings us to the examination of the inspiration of the New Testament. Of the four gospel narratives and the book of the Acts of the Apostles, which are merely historic narratives, it might with considerable force be argued that no inspiration was necessary. But we must remember that since it was God's will that the important doings and teachings of our Lord and his disciples should be handed down, for the information and guidance of his Church throughout the age, it was necessary that God, even while leaving the writers free to record those truths in their own several styles of expression and arrangement, should nevertheless exercise a supervision of his work. To this end it would appear reasonable that he would cause circumstances, etc., to call to the memory of one or another of them items and details which, otherwise, in so condensed an account of matters so important, would have been overlooked. And this was no less the work of God's spirit, power, or influence than the more noticeable and peculiar manifestations through the prophets.

The Apostle Peter tells us that the prophets of old time often did not understand their own utterances, as they themselves also acknowledge (1 Peter 1:12; Daniel 12:4,8-10); and we should remember that the twelve apostles (Paul taking the place of Judas--Galatians 1:17; 1 Timothy 2:7) not only filled the office of apostles--or specially appointed teachers and expounders of the Gospel of the New Covenant--but they also, especially Peter and Paul and John, filled the office of prophets, and were not only given the spirit of wisdom and

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understanding by which they were enabled to understand and explain the previously dark prophecies, but in addition to this we believe that they were under the guidance and supervision of the Lord to such an extent that their references to things future from their day, things therefore not then due to be fully understood, were guided, so as to be true to an extent far beyond their comprehension, and such consequently were as really prophetic as the utterances of the old-time prophets. Illustrations of this are to be found in the Revelations of the Apostle John, in Peter's symbolic description of the Day of the Lord (2 Peter 3:10-13), and in numerous references to the same period by Paul also, among which were some things hard to be understood even by Peter (2 Peter 3:16) and only partially then by Paul himself. The latter, however, was permitted to see future things more clearly than others of his time, and to that end he was given special visions and revelations which he was not allowed to make known to others (2 Corinthians 12:1-4), but which, nevertheless, influenced and colored his subsequent teachings and his epistles. And these very items which Peter thought strange of, and called "hard to be understood," are the very items which now, in God's due time, for which they were intended, so grandly illuminate not only Peter's prophecies and John's Revelation, but the entire word and plan of God,--that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished.--2 Timothy 3:16,17.

That the early church considered the writings and teachings of the apostles different from all others, in authority, is manifest from the early arrangement of these writings together and the keeping separate from these, as apocryphal, other good writings of other good men. And yet there were, even in the days of the apostles, ambitious men who taught another gospel and claimed for themselves the honors of special revelations and authority as apostles and teachers of no less authority than the twelve apostles.

And ambitious men of the same sort have from time to time since arisen--Emanuel Swedenborg and many less able and less notable--whose claims, if conceded, would not only place them in rank far above Paul, the prince of the apostles, but whose teachings would tend to discredit entirely, as "old wives' fables," the whole story of redemption and remission of sins through the blood of the cross. These would be apostles, boastful, heady, high-minded, have "another gospel," a perversion of the gospel of Christ; and above all they despise and seek to cast discredit upon the words of Paul who so clearly, forcibly and logically lifts up the standard of faith and points to the cross--the ransom--as the sure foundation, and who so clearly showed that pseudo-apostles, false apostles, would arise and deceive many.

It not only required an inspiration to write God's plan, but it also requires an inspiration of the Almighty to give an understanding of that revelation; yet this inspiration is of a different sort. When any one has realized himself a sinner, weak, imperfect and condemned, and has

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accepted of Christ as his Redeemer, and full of love and appreciation has consecrated his heart (his mind, his will) to the Lord, to henceforth please not himself but his Redeemer,--God has arranged that such a consecration of the natural mind brings a new mind. It opens the way for the holy mind or will of God, expressed through his written word, to be received; and as it is received into such a good, honest, consecrated heart, it in-forms that heart and opens the eyes of the understanding, so that from the new standpoint (God's standpoint) many things wear a very different aspect, and among other things the Scripture teachings, which gradually open up as item after item of the divine plan is fulfilled, and new features of the unfolding plan become due to be understood, and from the new standpoint appreciated and accepted.

Just as with astronomers, the close observation of facts and influences already recognized often leads them to look in certain directions for hitherto undiscovered planets, and they find them, so with the seekers after spiritual truths; the clear appreciation and close study of the known plan lead gradually, step by step, to the discovery of other particulars, hitherto unnoticed, each of which only adds to the beauty and harmony of the truths previously seen. Thus it is that "The path of the just is a shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

Of course the writings of all such as have their wills fully subjected to the mind of God, as revealed in his Word, must be also somewhat inspired by God's spirit, received from his Word by their complete subjection to its leading. The spirit of the truth inspires and controls to a greater or lesser extent not only their pens but their words and thoughts, and even their very looks. Yet such an inspiration, common to all the saints, in proportion to their development, should be critically distinguished from the special and peculiarly guided and guarded inspiration of the twelve apostles, whom God specially appointed to be the teachers of the church, and who have no successors in this office. Only twelve were "chosen," and when one of these, Judas, fell from his honorable office, the Lord in due time appointed Paul to the place; and he not only has never recognized others, but clearly indicates that he never will recognize others in that office.--Revelation 21:14.

With the death of the Apostles the canon of Scripture closed, because God had there given a full and complete revelation of his plan for man's salvation; though some of it was in a condensed form which has since expanded and is expanding and unfolding and will continue to expand and shine more and more until the perfect day--the Millennial Day--has been fully ushered in. Paul expresses this thought clearly when he declares that the Holy Scriptures are able to make wise unto salvation, and that they are sufficient.

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As we consider, then, the completeness, harmony, purity and grandeur of the Bible, its age and wonderful preservation through the wreck and storms of six thousand years, it must be admitted to be a most wonderful book; and those who have learned to read it understandingly, who see in it the great plan of the ages, cannot doubt that God was its inspiring Author, as well as its Preserver. Its only parallel is the book of nature by the same great Author. Δ

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Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 2 Timothy 2:15

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But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. 2 Timothy 3:14-17

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The path of the just is a shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. Proverbs 4:18

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Contact us about receiving the booklet *How to Study the Bible and Have It Make Sense.*