

Sabbath School

Topic: WCF 1.8 (1): The Immediate Inspiration of Scripture

Date: 4/19/20

WCF 1.8

The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic;^[a] so as in all controversies of religion the Church is finally to appeal unto them.^[b] But because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God who have right unto, and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them,^[c] therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come,^[d] that the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship him in an acceptable manner,^[e] and, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope.^[f]

Scripture Proofs

[a]: Mt. 5.18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

§1. Introduction

- A. Subject of WCF 1.8: The immediately inspired, purely preserved Old Testament in Hebrew, and New Testament in Greek are the authentic Word of God, and judge of all controversies in religion.
- B. Immediate inspiration and pure preservation are requisite to authenticity.

§2. Definition of Immediate Inspiration

- A. Organic View of Inspiration Rejected
- B. Proper Mode of Inspiration: Every Word of Scripture Dictated by the Holy Ghost

1. Scriptural Witness: 2Pt. 1.20-21, Mt. 10.20, Ps. 45.1, Jer. 20.9, Ps. 39.2-3, Amos 7.14-15, Mt. 22.31, 2Sam. 23.2-3, Heb. 1.1

2. Reformed Witness:

John Calvin: “the Spirit of Christ went before, and in a manner dictated words to them.”

Francis Turretin: “not only the matter and sentences, but even the very words were directly dictated by the Holy Spirit”

“[God] dictated and inspired each and every word to these inspired men”

John Owen: “[The prophets] obtained nothing by study or meditation, by inquiry or reading (Amos vii. 15). Whether we consider the matter or manner of what they received and delivered, or their receiving and delivering of it, they were but as an instrument of music, giving a sound according to the hand, intention, and skill of him that strikes it.”

“The laws they made known, the doctrines they delivered, the instructions they gave, the stories they recorded, the promises of Christ, the promises of gospel times they gave out and revealed, were not their own, not conceived in their minds, not formed by their reasonings, not retained in their memories from what they heard, not by any means beforehand comprehended by them (1 Pet. 1:10, 11), but were all of them immediately from God; there being only a passive concurrence of their rational faculties in their reception.”

William Perkins: “The Scripture is the Word of God written in a language fit for the Church by men immediately called to be the Clerkes, or Secretaries of the Holy Ghost, 2 Peter 1:21: *‘For prophetic came not in old time by the will of man, but the holy men of God spake as they were carried and mooved by the holy Ghost.’*”

James Ussher: “God alone is to be accounted the Author [of Scripture], who inspired the Hearts of those Holy Men, whom he chose to be his Secretaries; who are to be held only the Instrumental Causes thereof. (2 Peter 1:20-21.)”

William Whitaker: “We confess that God hath not spoken by himself, but by others. Yet this does not diminish the authority of scripture. For God inspired the prophets with what they said, and made use of their mouths, tongues, and hands: the scripture, therefore, is even immediately the voice of God. The prophets and apostles were only the organs of God. It was God who spake to the fathers *in* the prophets and *through* the prophets (Hebrews 1:1; 2 Peter 1:21).”

“It is manifest, that all the books of the old and new Testaments were written not merely by the will and command, but under the very dictation of Christ; nor yet merely occasionally, or under the suggestion of some slight circumstance, but with the deliberate purpose of serving the church in all ages.”

“We believe that they were induced and moved to write by the special authority of Christ and the Holy Spirit: for the scripture is called **ΘΕÓΠΝΕΥΣΤΟΣ** (theopneustos), that is, delivered by the impulse and suggestion of the Holy Ghost. And 2 Peter 1:21, Peter testifies that holy men of God spake “*as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*” Which makes it plain that they followed the impulse and authority of the Holy Spirit, not their own will and choice. The men were merely the *instruments*; it was the Holy Ghost who dictated to them.”

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