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3) It ultimately means that finite, sinful humans must use their finite, sinful minds to determine which part of the Bible is more or less inspired. This creates a major problem for situations in which there are differences of opinion on the level of inspiration of a particular text, whose opinion is correct? The issue boils down to an argument between one person's finite, sinful view, versus another person's finite, sinful view.

(False Theory #4) - The Partial Theory of Inspiration.

This theory is in close proximity to the Degree Theory of Inspiration. The partial theory of inspiration is one that states some parts of the Bible are inspired by God and some parts are not inspired. For example, those who postulate this position might suggest that the doctrinal portions of the Bible and information that was written which was beyond the knowledge level of a human were inspired by God, but the historical facts and information which could be known from contemporary research was not inspired. The main difference between the degree theory of inspiration and the partial theory of inspiration is that the degree theory admits that all of the Bible is inspired, but to various degrees, whereas the partial theory states that not all of the Bible is inspired.

Charles Baker cites an interesting illustration from a certain bishop who held to the partial theory of inspiration. Apparently, this bishop appealed to Hebrews 1:1 as a support for his belief, stating that he believed this verse allowed for a partial inspiration view. The bishop ended up being completely embarrassed when a layman asked: "How do you know that Hebrews 1:1, the one Scripture upon which you base your argument, is one of those inspired spots?" The layman truly hit at the crux of the issue, if only parts of the Scripture are inspired, how does one determine which parts are inspired and which parts are not inspired? (Baker, p.38)

In some cases, "Red Letter Editions" of the Bible have promoted a partial inspiration mentality. There are some, for example, who think the words of Jesus are much more inspired than the words written by Moses or Paul. Still others believe the spiritual truths and doctrinal teachings are inspired but not historical, geographical or scientific references.

There are many weaknesses with this theory:

- 1) It clearly contradicts II Tim.3:16.
- 2) It leaves one finite, sinful man to subjectively judge with his own finite, sinful mind, which passages are actually inspired.
- 3) It opens the door for a variety of uninspired mistakes and errors to exist in the Bible.
- 4) It is not logical that God would give men a writing in which he must try and decipher which parts are inspired parts and which parts are not inspired parts.

(False Theory #5) - The Natural Theory of Inspiration.

This theory is one that postulates the belief that the Bible was nothing more than a production of men who were extremely spiritual and gifted. This theory suggests that the men who wrote the

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Bible reached a level of profound insight and were able to put into writing the natural outworking of their level of understanding. This view suggests that just as great artists naturally produce great paintings and just as great musicians naturally produce great music, so these extremely spiritual and gifted men naturally produced a great spiritual masterpiece, the Bible.

As with all other false theories, this one lacks in many ways:

- 1) It eliminates God as the author of Scripture and elevates man to be the author of Scripture.
- 2) It directly contradicts the Bible which says God is the One who inspired His word-II Tim.3:16
- 3) It directly contradicts Biblical statements which clearly teach that no sinful man can naturally on his own achieve any level of profound insight concerning the things of God (I Cor.2:14; Rom.3:11; Ps.14:2-3).
- 4) It directly contradicts Biblical statements which specifically say that man cannot naturally figure out deep things, even salvation (I Cor.12: 13).

One may be absolutely certain that the Bible is not a writing naturally produced by men.

(False Theory #6) - The Mystical Theory of Inspiration.

Primarily this view states that since God is working in every believer (Phil.2:13), those who wrote the Bible were mystically empowered by God just as every believer is mystically empowered by God. Dr. Charles Ryrie gives an excellent analysis of this theory in stating: "This viewpoint goes a step farther than natural inspiration, for it conceives of the writers as more than natural geniuses in that they were also Spirit-filled and guided. 'The inspiration of the books of the Bible does not imply for us the view that they were produced or written in any manner generically different that of the writing of other great Christian books...There is a wide range of Christian literature from the fifth to the twentieth century which can with propriety be described as inspired by the Holy Spirit in precisely the same formal sense as were the books of the Bible.' (Alan Richardson, Christian Apologetics, p.207). Thus, (a) other Christian writings are as inspired as the Bible; (b) the Bible books are not infallible even though (c) they represent great religious literature that may even contain messages from God." (Ryrie, p.73)

If this theory were accepted, then one would have to believe that at any time a believer could be mystically inspired to write more Scripture. This of course is directly forbidden (Rev.22:18). Furthermore, the emphasis on this theory is once again upon man, not God. This theory does not agree with the Bible which says "All Scripture is inspired by God." (II Tim.3:16)

All of these theories are false theories that do not express the truth of God's word, therefore we reject all of them. Any time one tries to discredit the Word of God, is very serious to the mind of God.

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QUESTION #11 - What is an accurate perspective of verbal, plenary inspiration?

As we have already discussed, "verbal inspiration" means that the Bible, in its original writing, was inspired to the very word. We have also observed that "plenary inspiration" means that the Bible, in its original writing, is all equally inspired.

Those who misunderstand the doctrine of verbal, plenary inspiration and hold to one of the false theories previously examined, usually do so not because of a denial of the fact of inspiration, but because of an attempt to explain the how of inspiration.

Verbal, plenary inspiration is a fact of Scriptural testimony. The how or process of verbal, plenary inspiration is a mystery. It is precisely at this point where false, man-made theories of inspiration have surfaced. Men, many of whom love God and His word, who do have a zeal to explain inspiration, attempt to give an explanation as to the specific "how" of inspiration. Instead of leaving the matter to the realm of Divine mystery of God, some invent theories of inspiration, which are not able to be supported by both logic and certain passages of Scripture.

The exact process as to how God specifically inspired His word, in moving men to write, is a great mystery. Dr. Chafer observed: "The Scriptures give abundant teaching as to the fact of inspiration but do not offer explanation of this phenomenon. The how of every miracle is wanting, and inspiration is a miracle. Concerning this and all miracles, man is called upon to believe and not to elucidate. Christ called attention to man's limitations when He said: 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and wither it goeth.'" (Vol.1, p.82)

Having established this important point, it is very wise for serious students of God's word to be as precise in our understanding of God's word as one possibly may be. This is also certainly true when it comes to the subject of verbal, plenary inspiration. In order to clearly understand important doctrine, certain key truths need to be understood:

(Truth #1) - Verbal, plenary inspiration does not mean that every word in the Bible is what God said. The Bible is a book that not only contains what God said, but it also contains what various men and women and even angels have said. The Bible contains things Satan and Demons have said and it also contains many historical events and descriptions of places, times and circumstances. What verbal, plenary inspiration does guarantee is the accuracy of every word in the Bible. It does not mean it is solely the words and statements of God.

(Truth #2) - Verbal, plenary inspiration **does not** mean that every statement in the Bible is true. There are lies and distortions made by liars which are recorded in the Bible (Gen.3:4). Lies of Satan and lies of men show up in Scripture (Gen.4:9). The Bible does contain things which are not true. Saul, many times said things that were not true - (I Sam.23:7,21).

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Verbal, plenary inspiration guarantees that every statement in the Bible is accurately recorded. When lies are stated in Scripture, they are precisely stated. This is what verbal, plenary inspiration demands.

(Truth #3) - Verbal, plenary inspiration does not mean that the men, who wrote the Bible, were inspired or infallible. All men, who were used to record God's inspired word, were sinners who were beset with various weaknesses and infirmities. Verbal, plenary inspiration pertains to the writing, not the writer.

Verbal, plenary inspiration guarantees that when God moved men to write, every word ended up being the precise truth which God wanted put into writing. Verbal, plenary inspiration is a doctrine which has had its share of critics. There are those who have attacked this doctrine through a series of objections. However, when these certain truths of inspiration are admitted and understood then, as Chafer said, almost every recorded objection is dissolved (Ibid., p.85)

There are typically three main objections to the doctrine of verbal, plenary inspiration:

Objection #1 - Verbal, plenary inspiration is not legitimate because of the contradictions between the Bible and Science.

This is perhaps the easiest objection to refute. As we have already stressed, true science, based on true fact, has **never** contradicted the Bible. In Science, one must always remember that much is considered is theoretical, not factual. Most scientific discovery begins because some scientist theorized or guessed at something and discovered that some particular postulation happened to be correct. But what must also be admitted is that many times- "science has often proved science wrong." (Charles Baker, Dispensational Theology, p.44)

When faced with a supposed contradiction between the Bible and Science, the wise and careful student will do very well if he/she carefully discerns theory from fact. True facts will **never** contradict the Bible even in areas of science. Just as the scientific area of archeology has proven the Bible to be true, time and time again, so also true scientific discovery will do the same. When all is said and done the Bible will have proved to be accurate to the very word. Verbal, plenary inspiration is a legitimate doctrine proved by fact, not theory.

Objection #2 - Verbal, plenary inspiration is not legitimate because of contradictions in doctrine.

There are those who do not understand certain doctrinal things of the Word of God and as a result cannot reconcile certain doctrinal developments and changes which do occur in Scripture. For example, how does one explain in one passage the Bible commands circumcision (Gen.17:10-14), and in another passage it absolutely forbids it (Gal.5:2-4)? How does one explain that in one passage eating pork is an abomination (Is.66:17) and in another passage it is perfectly acceptable (I Tim.4:3-4)? How can one explain that in one passage salvation seems to be a matter of works (Mt.25:31-46) and in other passages it has nothing to do with works (Rom.4:5; Eph.2:8-9)?

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How do we reconcile these seeming contradictions with our doctrine of verbal, plenary inspiration? The fact is, all objections can be reconciled, but the problem is very few know how to reconcile these kinds of things so they reject the doctrine of verbal, plenary inspiration or they accept the doctrine but live life confused in some form of schizophrenic system of theology.

Although many of these matters are carefully studied under their proper doctrinal categories, the above illustrations are easily understood once one realizes that circumcision was for the physical seed of Abraham, until **the** seed, Jesus Christ, came (John 1:17; Gal.3:19). Eating pork was an O.T. restriction for Israel under O.T. Law. This dietary restriction is **not** for the Church in the age of Grace. The works of Matthew are a matter of true salvation during the Tribulation (Mt.24:29). This has nothing to do with salvation in the Church age of Grace.

Those who do not or cannot "rightly divide" or "accurately handle" sound doctrine and God's word must either reject the doctrine of verbal, plenary inspiration or live life as a very confused believer. When all is carefully examined, it must be concluded that there are **no** real contradictions whatsoever in the inspired word of God. In fact, these kinds of issues prove that there is an inspired symmetry, which must in fact be the work of a Perfect God.

Objection #3 - Verbal, plenary inspiration is not legitimate because of variations between manuscripts.

It is absolutely true that there are a few textual difficulties in some of the Biblical manuscripts which God has preserved, which we still have available to this day. Dr. Gleason Archer gets to the crux of this matter when he writes: "The real question at issue in regard to scribal error is whether an accumulation of minor slips has resulted in the obscuring or perversion of the message originally intended. ... Is there objective proof from the surviving manuscripts of Scripture that these sixty-six books have been transmitted to us with such a high degree of accuracy as to assure us that the information contained in the originals has been perfectly preserved? The answer is an unqualified yes. ... In fact, it has long been recognized by the foremost specialists in textual criticism that if any decently attested variant were taken up from the apparatus at the bottom of the page and were substituted for the accepted reading of the standard text, there would in no case be a single, significant alteration in doctrine or message." (Gleason Archer, Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties, pp.29-30).

Those who were entrusted with the responsibility of hand-copying Biblical manuscripts did make a few scribal and copyist errors. This is long before there was "spell-check." The following are examples of the types of variations which are found between manuscripts.

(Error Type #1) - Haplography.

This is an easy error to make in which a writer writes once what should have been written twice. An English example would be "inerant" (missing one "r"), instead of "inerrant."