

## NON-BIBLICAL THEORIES OF INSPIRATION

### I. NATURAL INSPIRATION

#### A. The Theory Presented.

1. The Bible written by good and faithful men.
2. Their work was guided and "inspired" by the Holy Spirit *only* in the sense which *any* writer of intelligence or moral worth may be inspired.
3. According to this theory, every person who has ever brought a helpful lesson to mankind is inspired, i.e. Shakespeare, Bunyan, etc. (But not to the same degree as Paul, Matthew and the other Biblical writers.) (Some claim inspiration to the same degree!)

#### B. Objections.

1. It eliminates the supernatural.
2. It reduces the Biblical writings to the level of secular. (Thus mere human productions.)
3. It would mean that the Biblical writers were subject to error.
4. Natural inspiration is no inspiration at all.

### II. INSPIRATION BY DEGREES.

#### A. The Theory Presented.

1. *First (Highest) degree* - Covers actual revelation.
2. *Second (Lesser) degree* - Secures the writers against any serious error in recording doctrine and facts already known.
3. *Third (Least) degree* - Gives Divine Authority to the remaining portions of the Bible with those parts composed without inspiration.

B. Objections.

1. This theory still falls short of the Biblical teaching of inspiration.
2. Who is to decide the *contents* of these various portions?
3. Who is to decide to which *degree* each portion belongs? (Would the decisions agree?)

NOTE: There are degrees of *value* but not of *inspiration*.

III. INSPIRATION BY ILLUMINATION.

A. The Theory Presented.

1. The Bible writers inspired as all "Christians" of all ages have been inspired. (cf. Biblical writing with early "Christian" writer!)
2. The average Christian today is as inspired as was Paul.

B. Objections.

1. Again this is unscriptural inspiration.
2. This theory provides no protection for the writers against serious errors.

IV. INSPIRED CONCEPTS.

A. The Theory Presented.

1. The "*thoughts*" of the writers are inspired.
  - a. God gave *thoughts* to the writers.
  - b. God permitted men to express these *thoughts* in their own *words* as they might remember them.
2. In some cases the "thoughts" would be written down years later.

B. Objections.

1. It makes the infallible God entrust His infallible truth to fallible men.

2. It allowed the writers to write as *they* thought best.
3. It falls short of the Biblical doctrine of inspiration which extends beyond the thoughts, even to the words. (cf. John 17:8; 2 Pet. 1:21; cf. 1 Cor. 2:13)
4. It is foolish to talk about inspired thoughts apart from inspired words! (The word "*thoughts*" is never used in connection with inspiration.)

V. *PARTIAL INSPIRATION.*

A. The Theory Presented.

1. The Bible is inspired in spots.
  - a. Parts of it are inspired.
  - b. Parts of it are not inspired.
2. "The Bible *contains* the Word of God."
3. There are disagreements between those who hold this theory as to which portions are inspired and those not inspired.
  - a. Some believe only fundamental truths are inspired - but of human origin are the:
    - 1) Historical facts.
    - 2) Arguments.
    - 3) Explanations.
    - 4) Numbers.

*NOTE:* What infallible person will decide which truths are fundamental?
  - b. Some believe that parts of the Bible which are good morally are inspired - but not the rest.
  - c. Others believe that only the prophetic portions are inspired!
  - d. Still others believe that the doctrinal sections are inspired -but not the historical.

## B. Objections.

1. It robs the Bible of all authority.
2. It is in total conflict with *2 Timothy 3:16*.
3. It leaves us with uncertainty as to what is the Word of God and what is not the Word of God.
4. It gives no proof that the Holy Spirit guided the writers in certain aspects and left them unattended in others.
5. If the historical parts are uninspired, what assurance do we have that the doctrinal portions are inspired?
6. According to this theory (also note "occasional inspiration"), human reason and error are so intermixed with Divine Truth, it would be impossible to know what really is *the Word of God*.

## VI. VERBAL DICTATION.

### A. The Theory Presented.

1. It is sometimes called "mechanical inspiration."
2. Every word of scripture (in the original languages) were dictated to the writers (e.g. stenographer).
3. It is not to be confused with verbal inspiration.

### B. Objections.

1. It practically denies the inspiration of the *writers*.
2. It makes the writers mere machines - a pen, not a penman.
3. It does not account for the different styles of writing.
4. The executive does not inspire his secretary when he dictates to her.
5. Dictation excludes the possibility of inspiration.

*NOTE:* The true teaching of inspiration is Biblical inspiration, i.e. *plenary verbal inspiration*.