

down was inspired, for "inspiration" means simply that the writers have been kept from error of fact, of doctrine, or of judgment, in the presentation of the material which they have written under the direction of the Spirit of God. The words used are from their own vocabularies and the style of expression is their own. God has seen to it that their words should fit in with the words of other inspired writers and He has kept them from putting down on paper the many erroneous ideas which each of them had. *It should not be necessary to speak of verbal inspiration, for any true inspiration is inspiration of words so that these words may adequately express the desired ideas.*

There is much confusion caused by the fact that the word "inspiration" is commonly used in various senses. In the simplest usage inspiration is simply a drawing of breath into the lungs. From this it has come to mean the reception of an exalted mood or of a wonderful idea. Recently a godly minister said that Shakespeare represents the best of human inspiration and the Bible of divine inspiration. This is an unfortunate confusion of thought. Shakespeare showed a marvelous understanding of human nature and expressed his ideas in extremely beautiful poetry. But there is no claim made for him by anyone that his writings have been kept from error. Nothing at all similar to the inspiration of the Scriptures is claimed for Shakespeare.

Are English Translations Inspired?

It is important, of course, that we recognize that inspiration refers to the original manuscripts of the Scriptures.

Christians have believed through the ages that these were kept from error as originally written. Our present versions are, of course, not free from error; little mistakes have crept in at various points in the process of copying and recopying the manuscripts. However, careful examination shows clearly that God has providentially overseen the transmission of these books so that the number of errors in them is extremely small, and this is easily demonstrated by comparing the proper names in the Hebrew Old Testament with those found on monuments put up by kings who are named in it. The accuracy of preservation is hard to parallel anywhere else. God's providential care over the preservation of the Scriptures has given us a Book which today has remarkably few errors in it. The original manuscripts, being inspired of God, were absolutely free from error.

What About O. T. Quotations?

Many students have been troubled by the fact that when the Old Testament is quoted in the New Testament, one frequently finds that the English translation of the New Testament quotation differs somewhat from that of the Old Testament passage which it is quoting. It might seem that verbal inspiration would not allow any such difference. However, it will be readily seen that if the New Testament writer desired to quote the verbally inspired Old Testament statement, he would have to quote in the Hebrew, since Hebrew and Greek differ widely, and the Greek translation could hardly be an exact replica of the original Hebrew. In fact, it is far easier to make a good English translation of a Hebrew