# THE TRINITY REVIEW

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare [are] not fleshly but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And they will be ready to punish all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled. (2 *Corinthians* 10:3-6)

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# Peter Enns, the Bible, and Its Humanity

# By John Hooper

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It has often been said that the process God used to bring the Bible into being has given it two dimensions – Divine and human. Hence, good men have not only spoken of the divinity of Scripture, but also of its humanity. The Swiss Reformed theologian Louis Gaussen, a staunch defender of verbal, plenary inspiration, felt it necessary to stress this aspect: "In Scripture all the words are man's; as there, too, all the words are God's." B. B. Warfield wrote that the Bible is "a divine-human book, in which every word is at once divine and human."

Some have gone further to draw a parallel or analogy between Scripture and the person of our

Lord Jesus Christ. Not only does Christ possess both divine and human natures in one person, but both Christ and Scripture are the Word of God, further strengthening the case for the analogy. Orthodox men like Warfield, Herman Bavinck, and Abraham Kuyper have used it. Moving into the twentieth century, René Pache (1904-1979) wrote, "by the incarnation Christ is at once perfect God (*John* 1:1, 14; 20:28; *Romans* 9:5) and perfect man (*Hebrews* 2:14, 17). The Scriptures also, by the miracle of inspiration, are at the same time a divine word and a human word." He quotes from Adolphe Monod and Louis Gaussen to support his case. Gaussen, for example, wrote the following:

The dogma of inspiration is like that of incarnation.... Do not say then, "If Jesus Christ is God, how is it that He is man." Or "If Jesus Christ is a man, how is He God?" And do not say either: "If the Scriptures are the Word of God, how are they the word of man?" Or "If the Scriptures are the word of man, how are they the Word of God?" No, let us simply read and study, believe, and adore!4

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Louis Gaussen, *The Plenary Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures*, Passmore and Alabaster, 1888, 31. *Publisher's note: See also Louis Gaussen*, God-Breathed: The Divine Inspiration of the Bible, *The Trinity Foundation*, 2001, 39.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Quoted by Guy Prentiss Waters, For the Mouth of the Lord has Spoken, Christian Focus Publications, 2020, 77. Publisher's note: See B. B. Warfiield, "The Biblical Idea of Inspiration," in The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible, Presbyterian and Reformed, 1970, 131-166. Consult also for notes 5 and 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> René Pache, *The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture*, Sheffield Publishing Company, reissued 1992, 40.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Quoted in René Pache, 41-42.

Notice that Gaussen was happy to bring together the doctrines of inspiration and incarnation and stress their resemblance. This is what is sometimes called the *incarnational analogy*. But Warfield was cautious. He noted: "But the analogy with our Lord's Divine-human personality may easily be pressed beyond reason. There is no hypostatic union between the Divine and human in Scripture; we cannot parallel the 'inscripturation' of the Holy Spirit and the incarnation of the Son of God."<sup>5</sup>

Yes, older writers have been prepared to recognize a parallel of sorts, but they were careful, particularly Warfield. According to him, the analogy "amounts to no more than that in both cases Divine and human factors are involved, though very differently."

But what happens when caution is thrown to the wind? What happens when the incarnational analogy is taken too far and given central place in one's understanding of the character of the Bible?

#### **Incarnation and Inspiration**

Many of us will have some familiarity with Theological Seminary Westminster Pennsylvania, USA. It is the seminary established in 1929, largely under the faithful leadership of J. Gresham Machen, in response to the liberal direction pursued by Princeton Theological Seminary. From 1994 to 2008 the Professor of Old Testament at Westminster was a man named Peter Enns. Enns had already been in post for over 10 years when, in 2005, he wrote a book on Scripture and published it under the title Incarnation and Inspiration. Early on he writes, "The starting point for our discussion is the following: as Christ is both God and human, so is the Bible. In other words, we are to think of the Bible analogously to how Christians think about Jesus.... In the same way that Jesus is - must be both God and human, the Bible is also a divine It is often difficult to pin Enns down as he raises questions without directly providing answers. As Gregory K. Beale has noted, "the reader is left to connect the dots to determine his view." It is as though Enns' aim is to challenge the old received truths and sow seeds of doubt in the minds of his readers.

#### The Battle for the Bible

We are familiar with the battles fought between liberals and conservatives since the midnineteenth century, but Enns tries takes a step back from all of that. He wants us "to move beyond the impasse of the liberal/conservative debates of the last few generations" (37); to rise above the fray and be guided simply by the "evidence" and the "data" provided by extra-Biblical sources, especially by the science of archaeology. But Scripture teaches us that there will always be a battle, a fight, and it is a good fight (1 Timothy 6:12; 2 Timothy 4:7), as the founders of the Bible League recognized. Enns wants to bring "the battle for the Bible" to an end, but there will always be a battle because there will always be a very active enemy striving to do mischief and undermine the high status and doctrine of the Word of God. It strikes me that Enns is very much a part of that on-going battle, and that he represents a new flank opened up for us to engage.

and human book" (5).<sup>7</sup> So, while older writers recognized an analogy of sorts and were prepared to leave it there, simply reading, studying, believing, and adoring, Enns uses it as a springboard, or "starting point," – an approach that ought always to make us wary of what is coming – from which to launch his radical ideas. Notice Enns' use of the phrase "in the same way...." This already marks a departure from the caution of those older writers. Where does Enns take us from here?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Quoted by Guy Prentiss Waters, 276.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Quoted by Guy Prentiss Waters, 276.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Peter Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation*, Baker Academic, 2015, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 5. Further quotations from this book will be identified simply as page numbers in the text.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Gregory K. Beale, *The Erosion of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism*, Crossway, 2008, 27.

And then there is the whole issue of extra-Biblical sources, among which are those derived from archaeology. It is fair to say that the great burst of archaeological activity in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries brought to light a huge amount of material of interest to the student of the Bible. But with it came responsibility. When we bring information from external sources to the Bible, we are bringing it to a book that is unlike any other book. It is the inspired revelation of God to His people. The Old Testament is not to be approached as a human record of the history of an ancient Near Eastern people, but as God's own record of the history of redemption. This careful, respectful, spiritual approach has not always been adopted, with the result that archaeology itself has become embroiled in the battle for the Bible.

So, what is Enns saying?

#### The Bible and Culture

To be clear, Peter Enns is not claiming that there is some kind of hypostatic union between the Divine and human in Scripture as there is in Christ. Actually, he has very little to say about the incarnation itself or the humanity of Christ incarnate. He takes us down a different route altogether, but it is a strangely familiar one. Concerning the humanity of Christ, Enns says that He

completely assumed the cultural trappings of the world in which he lived. In fact, this is what is implied in "God with us." Perhaps this is part of what the author of Hebrews had in mind when he said that Christ was "made like them, fully human in every way" (Hebrews 2:17). Jesus was a first century Jew. The languages of the time (Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic) were his languages. Their customs were his customs. He fit, he belonged, he was one of them.

So too the Bible. It belonged in the ancient worlds that produced it.... It was

connected to and therefore spoke to those ancient cultures." (5)9

The implication Enns has drawn from the name Emmanuel, "God with us," is staggering. But culture, and what Enns sees as its influence on the writers of Scripture, occupies a substantial place in his thinking, and he believes it should be in ours too. It is his contention that our interpretation of the Bible should be guided by its cultural setting. The Bible, he claims, is "encultured" (5); "The Bible is not unique to its environment" (8). "What the Bible is must be understood in light of the cultural context in which it was given" (30). Enns recognizes, and we will too, that there is nothing new in this (44). For the last 150 years liberals have been telling us that the Bible is a culturally conditioned human production. What is new is that Enns and his followers claim to be evangelicals.

Also new is Enns' use of the so-called "incarnational analogy" to give legitimacy to his argument. He is saying that the human writers of the Bible were so influenced by their cultural context as to produce works that were not unique but shared a great deal in common with other writings of their day. Many of these writings, largely in the ancient Akkadian language of Babylon and Assyria, came to light in the archaeological finds of the nineteenth century. Enns notes, "They told stories that had not been read for over two thousand years.... It is not an overstatement to say that how people viewed the Bible would never be the same again" (13). This last comment is undoubtedly true, but the shift in attitude, even among professing evangelical Christians, has been toward a view of the Bible as a less divine and more human, more fallible, less authoritative book.

That is not, of course, what Peter Enns means by his comment. He sees the discovery of ancient extra-Biblical evidence as a great advance by which "the Spirit *leads* the church to truth," prior to which her understanding of Scripture was

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Enns' emphasis. His Biblical quotations are taken from the *New International Version*.

"provisional and incomplete" (38 - Enns' emphasis). The Akkadian texts are to be seen as "shedding light on the Old Testament" (16), as though for the two thousand or so years those texts lay undiscovered, the Old Testament was shrouded in incomprehensible darkness, or at least liable to misunderstanding. In contrast, with 150 years of accumulated extra-Biblical material available to us, no generation has been so blessed with opportunity to gain a better grasp of God's Word than our own. However, if the fruit of that accumulation is a grasp of Scripture such as we find in Inspiration and *Incarnation,* it is little wonder that the church is at a low ebb. Future discoveries may reveal that our understanding too is woefully deficient. It is never possible for the church to be sure that she comprehends the Bible correctly because the truth may always lie buried in the sand.

#### Old Testament "Stories"

We are being asked to "acknowledge that the *Genesis* story is firmly rooted in the worldview of its time" (16), so let's take a look at that worldview and a few examples of the kind of extra-Biblical evidence Enns uses. First, there is the *Enuma Elish* Babylonian creation myth which, while in many ways is very different from *Genesis* 1, shares some similarities. Enns concludes, "Whether or not the author of *Genesis* was familiar with...*Enuma Elish*, he was certainly working within a similar conceptual world.... The *Genesis* account must be understood in its ancient context..." (16).

Secondly, Enns refers to two ancient Babylonian "flood stories," the *Atrahasis* text and the better-known *Gilgamesh* story, and notes that these "parallel *Genesis*" (17). His concern is that we should consider "how the Akkadian evidence influences our understanding of the historical nature of the [B]iblical story" (19). Do you see what Enns is suggesting? By pointing out similarities between *Genesis* and older non-Biblical Near Eastern flood stories, he is questioning the historicity of the Biblical record. Are they not *all* "stories"? He says, "The problem

raised by these Akkadian texts is whether the [B]iblical stories are historical" (29).

Thirdly, there is the *Code of Hammurabi*, the legal system of a Babylonian king who ruled in the eighteenth-century BC. In this, Enns finds parallels with the laws of Old Testament Israel, even making those laws "look somewhat commonplace" in comparison. He tells us, "the [B]iblical story" of God revealing His laws to Moses on Mount Sinai "occurred centuries after Hammurabi" (20-22). He goes on to ask, "What can we say about the uniqueness of the Bible when, in so many areas, it bears striking similarities to the beliefs and practices of the other nations?" (22). Enns also uses the Hittite suzerainty treaties and several other ancient texts to the same ends.

And so, we come to the crucial question, "how can we say logically that the Biblical stories are true, and the Akkadian stories are false when they both look so very much alike?" (29). Of course, Enns is not the first to notice these similarities, but he says very little about the differences. Again, he is not the first to do this. Writing about resemblances between the Biblical and Babylonian creation accounts, Merrill Unger wrote in 1954, "Although these similarities are genuine, they are commonly exaggerated, and erroneous conclusions are frequently drawn from them."10 He went on, "The Genesis account is not only the purest, but everywhere bears the unmistakable impress of divine inspiration when compared with the extravagances corruptions of other accounts. The Biblical narrative, we may conclude, represents the original form these traditions must have assumed."11

Unger also noted "numerous similarities" between the Babylonian flood story and *Genesis*, but the differences are "much more significant and fundamental.... Even where the parallels are most striking, the radical underlying differences

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Merrill Unger, *Archaeology and the Old Testament*, Pickering & Inglis, 1954, 31.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Unger, *Archaeology and the Old Testament*, 37, (emphasis Unger's).

of theology, morality, and philosophy of religion remain the salient features beside which the resemblances...are quite superficial."<sup>12</sup> It was Unger's assessment that the theology, morality, and philosophy of the two accounts are "in diametrical contrast."<sup>13</sup> Again, it is the Biblical narrative, revealed and written by divine inspiration, that provides the original record.

But Enns views the Biblical narrative as something much less than inspired revelation:

God reveals. The [B]iblical writers interpret God's revelation. Those interpretations eventually become the Bible. The fact that different writers are interpreting God's revelation at different times, for different reasons, and for different circumstances accounts for why the Bible contains diverse and contradictory points of view.<sup>14</sup>

In this one paragraph the entire Evangelical doctrine of Scripture is dismantled.

#### Myth?

Enns regards the myth-history distinction as "a modern invention." He says, "Taking the extra-Biblical evidence into account, I question how much value there is in posing the choice of *Genesis* as either myth or history" (38). He sees no reason why God would not use what we call "myth" to convey truth to the Israelites of the Old Testament, though he does admit to a problem. The term "myth" carries baggage that prejudices from the outset any discussion. His response is to draw up his own definition: "Myth is an ancient, premodern, prescientific way of addressing questions of ultimate origins and meaning

in the form of stories: Who are we? Where do we come from?" (29).

This avoids using what is surely a key word in the definition of myth, the word *fictitious*. My dictionary tells me that myth is "a purely fictitious narrative...." <sup>15</sup> It strikes me that Enns has given us an example of postmodernism, in which words only mean what we want them to mean. <sup>16</sup>

In the absence of modern science, ancient peoples made up stories to address fundamental questions such as how life began, and Enns thinks that "this leads to a big problem for Christians today and their Bible." The sub-title of his book is *Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament*, but it may be that many of us did not realize there was a problem! The problem, as Enns' sees it, is this:

If the ancient Near Eastern stories are myth (defined...as prescientific stories of origins), and since the [B]iblical stories are similar enough to these stories to invite comparison, does this indicate that myth is the proper category for understanding *Genesis*? Before the discovery of the Akkadian stories, one could quite safely steer clear of such a question, but this is no longer the case. (30)

Enns' viewpoint is that the Bible was written in a culture of storytelling, and it is only by looking through this lens that the narratives of the Old Testament can be properly understood, *i.e.*, as stories suited to the culture of their times. He asks, "Is it not likely that God would have allowed his [W]ord to come to the ancient Israelites according to standards they understood" rather than the modern standards of our own culture? (30 – original emphasis). This is what Enns means by the human

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Unger, Archaeology and the Old Testament, 65-66.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Unger, Archaeology and the Old Testament, 66-68.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Peter Enns, "Another Thought on Contradictions: The Biblical Writers Didn't Record God's Revelation—They Interpreted It," *The Bible for Normal People* blog, February 27, 2017,

https://the bible for normal people. com/contradictions-biblical-writers-interpreted/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, Volume 2, Book Club Associates, 1983, 1381.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> It was Humpty Dumpty in Lewis Carroll's *Alice Through the Looking Glass* who said, "When I use a word ... it means just what I choose it to mean — neither more nor less."

dimension of Scripture. Its humanity gives it the marks and characteristics of the culture to which it was connected, by way of its human writers. Therefore, we should not be judging "the early stories in the Old Testament...on the basis of standards of modern historical enquiry and scientific precision" (30). We should not impose upon the Bible our modern, scientific worldview by, for example, asking questions about the nature of the creation days, or the extent of the flood, but understand it "in light of the cultural context in which it was given" (30). Take careful note: cultural context allegedly provides light for our understanding of Sacred Scripture.

In summary, then, Enns sees the norm for the heathen nations of the ancient Near East as also being the norm for Israel, the people of God. They all lived at a time when everything was to be explained by myth.

#### **Inerrancy**

Since Peter Enns believes much of the Genesis narrative to be myth, it will not come as a surprise that he has a problem with inerrancy. He once described himself as a "progressive inerrantist" (ix). Apparently, that meant he was able to say that the Bible contains factual errors while at the same time claiming it to be inerrant. Now he has moved on to prefer, with greater "non-inerrantist" the term honesty, represents this view in a book called Five Views in Biblical Inerrancy. Five views! Evangelicalism must be awash with capitulation to 19th century liberalism.

Enns is quite frank in claiming there to be "inherent ambiguities," "tensions," and "inconsistencies" in the Bible, and he sees these as forming part of the Bible's "diversity." They are to be viewed positively, "respected" and "embraced." They exemplify further what he sees as the humanity of Scripture. He claims, "the Bible is diverse because life is. And God does not shy away from it" (72). "What the diversity of the Bible tells us is that there is no superficial unity to the Bible. Portions of the Bible are in tension with each other..." (96). To give just one example of this, when Enns reads the two records of the

Ten Commandments, in *Exodus* 20 and *Deuteronomy* 5, and finds there are "noticeable differences in the wording" (75), his response is to suggest that "God seems to be perfectly willing to allow his law to be adjusted over time." He goes on to say, "God Himself understands...that even the law has a situational dimension" (77), and we can see where he is going with that. Enns contends, "To accept the diversity of the Old Testament is not to 'cave in to liberalism,' nor is it to seek after novelty," (95) but it is difficult to know what else it can be.

When asked if there are contradictions in the Bible, Enns replies that there are not, which might surprise us, but once again we find him defining a word to suit himself: "What are referred to as "contradictions" are only so if one assumes that the purpose of inspiration (however it works) is to align or override the down-to-earth diverse voices we actually encounter in the Bible." Again, he says, "The 'contradictions' in the Bible aren't contradictions, for the Bible does not reflect the 'perfectly consistent mind of God,' but the diversity of time and place of the writers." 18

Again and again, we find in Enns the Bible being stripped of its divinity, reduced to little more than a work of human storytelling. But "the incarnational analogy" requires affirmation that Scripture is fully divine as well as fully human. How, then, is Enns able to affirm the Bible as fully divine if contains it tensions. inconsistencies, and contradictions? He affirms strongly his belief that the Bible is the Word of God (e.g., 96). He says, "the Bible is God's [W]ord in written form; Christ is God's Word in human form" (98). But if God's Word in written form contains myths and inconsistencies, what does that say about God's Word in human form? And what does it say of the latter's divinity? I cannot

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Peter Enns, "There Are No Contradictions in the Bible (Yeah, You Heard Me)," *The Bible for Normal People*, blog, May 23, 2018,

https://thebiblefornormalpeople.com/there-are-no-contradictions-in-the-bible/.

 $<sup>^{18}</sup>$  Enns, "There Are No Contradictions in the Bible (Yeah, You Heard Me)."

put it better than Guy Prentiss Waters does—"Enns' formulation of the incarnational analogy is incapable of preventing the legitimate attribution of error to the [B]iblical text. It is equally incapable of preventing the legitimate attribution of error to the man Christ Jesus." 19

If this represents "the best in [B]iblical scholarship," as Enns claims on his website,<sup>20</sup> then may we be delivered from it.

## **Enns and Inspiration**

One might be forgiven for having great difficulty in understanding how Enns arrived at this point, having started with the Savior's incarnation. He has taken us far from anywhere that Warfield and Gaussen *et al.* could have anticipated. But when men use Scripture merely as a starting point or springboard there is no knowing where their landing ground will be. Any connection with the original launchpad can be very tenuous as men go off in the direction they want to take.

So, let's go back to where Enns began. Remember what he said - "The starting point for our discussion is the following: as Christ is both God and human, so is the Bible" (5). Were we to deny the Bible its humanity or regard it as something that is "only apparent, to be explained away," we would, he says, be guilty of "scriptural Docetism," a reference to an ancient heresy stating that Christ only appeared to be human. But is that the heresy we are facing today? Who are the Scriptural Docetics he is warning us against? It seems to me that the heresy of our day is not a denial of the humanity of Scripture but an effective denial of the divinity of Scripture, reducing it to little more than a story book.

It is difficult to understand how Enns can continue to claim adherence to any kind of doctrine of inspiration, but he makes the attempt. He says, "a firm grounding in ancient myth does not make *Genesis* less inspired.... [S]uch rootedness in the culture of the time is precisely

what it means for God to speak to his people" (44). But this is not divine inspiration as taught by the Bible itself.

#### The Bible's Doctrine of Inspiration

Unlike His creation of the universe, God used secondary means for the producing of Scripture. He did not use angels, nor specially created sinless human beings, but men like ourselves, fallen, sinful and fallible. When Peter writes, "No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation," the meaning is that the words of Scripture are not an expression of the opinion or will of man. He goes on to say this expressly in the next verse: "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man" (2 Peter 1:20-21).

Next, coming to the positive aspect of inspiration, Peter tells us, "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (verse 21). When he says they were "holy" men, this is not to suggest that those men were without sin, but that they were especially set apart by God and prepared by Him for the work He had ordained for them to do. They were chosen and called men, such as Moses, David, Matthew and Paul, and they wrote "as they were moved [i.e. carried, driven along, just as a sailing ship is carried along by the wind] by the Holy Ghost." Thus, they wrote not according to "the will of man" - their own will, that is - but of God, for it is the Holy Ghost alone who is the author of Scripture.

Thus, a distinction can and must be made between the divine author and the human writer. Cornelis Van Dam has expressed it perfectly when he writes, "There is one divine author working through the human writer." Thus, Scripture is the Word of God.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God...." says 2 *Timothy* 3:16. We are very familiar with this verse, so much so that we can become careless in the way we think of it and speak of it. Sometimes, in our rather casual way of expression, we might suggest that it was the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Waters, 295.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Peter Enns, *The Bible for Normal People*, about page, https://thebiblefornormalpeople.com/about-b4np/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Cornelis Van Dam, *In the Beginning: Listening to Genesis* 1 *and* 2, Reformation Heritage Books, 2021, 20.

writers who were inspired, or that the general idea of their message was inspired, but that that is not what the text is saying. It is the Scripture itself that is inspired. The very words the human writers spoke and wrote were breathed out by God Himself. This is the Bible's own testimony concerning itself, not only here but elsewhere too. We could look at many passages to demonstrate this but here is just one example. God said to Isaiah, as also to Moses and Jeremiah, "I have put my words in thy mouth" (Isaiah 51:16; Deuteronomy 18:18; Jeremiah 1:9).

Inspiration is not an arrangement of cooperation between God and man whereby some words of Scripture are divine, and some are human, leaving us to sort out which is which. Neither can we attribute individual words partially to God and partially to men. The Bible is not partly divine and partly human. The miracle of Scripture is that it is God's Word and for that reason we bow before its authority, treasure it and take care never to adopt a terminology that might detract from this exalted view.

### A Right View of the Bible's "Humanity"

Out of a concern to maintain a high view of Scripture, the process of inspiration has sometimes been caricatured as one of dictation, the human writers being little more than stenographers, but, as Gordon H. Clark has pointed out, we need to consider the involvement of the omnipotence and wisdom of God. Then, he says, "a very different picture emerges." Taking Moses as an example of a Biblical writer, Clark notes that God

so controlled events that Moses was born at a given date, placed in the water to save him from an early death, found by Pharaoh's daughter, given the best Egyptian education possible, driven into the wilderness to learn patience, and in every detail so prepared by heredity and

<sup>22</sup> Gordon H. Clark, *God's Hammer: The Bible and Its Critics*, The Trinity Foundation, [1982] 2011, 29.

environment that when the time came, Moses' mentality and literary style were instruments precisely fitted to speak God's words.<sup>23</sup>

How is it that the Scriptures were written by their distinctive with own personalities, writing styles and cultural backgrounds so perfectly suited to God's purpose? Is it the case that God looked around in search of men best qualified to write Scripture for Him? No, that is to diminish God. We are rather to think in terms of God being active in His sovereign predestination to eternally ordain, raise up and providentially prepare each human instrument to pen the part or parts of the Bible that He had assigned for him. It is not the case that God looked for a poet to write the Psalms and found David, or for a herdsman to write a book of prophecy and found Amos, or for a converted Pharisee to write New Testament letters and found Paul. Each one was ordained by God in His eternal counsel to be born just at the right time in history and just in the right place and circumstances, to be raised, educated, fashioned, and perfectly equipped with the gifts, personality, and spiritual heart to write what He had eternally decreed him to write. Those gifts, personalities and, yes, cultural characteristics too, shine through in their writing.

It might be quite legitimate to speak of this as the "human dimension" of inspiration, but it is probably unwise to go so far as to speak of the "humanity of Scripture." We need to hold in our minds that this "human dimension" too is God's work because the writers were "God's men, shaped and formed by the hands of the Almighty."<sup>24</sup> Remember God's rebuke to Moses: "Who hath made man's mouth? … have not I the LORD?" (*Exodus* 4:11).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Clark, God's Hammer: The Bible and Its Critics, 29. Publisher's note: See also B. B. Warfield's chapter referred to above.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Herman C. Hanko, *The Battle for the Bible*, Peace Protestant Reformed Church, 1993, 6.