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Dr. DeWitt was so widely known by reason of his varied and distinguished services to the Church of God, and so highly esteemed not only for what he accomplished but also for what he was, that it is altogether fitting that this REVIEW, to which he contributed so many of the products of his gifted pen, and of which he was for several years the managing editor, should contain an article commemorative of his life and work. The task of preparing such a memorial might well have been entrusted to more competent hands, and among his colleagues there are those who would have had the advantage of being able to draw upon a longer period of acquaintance with our venerated friend; but when the duty was laid upon me, I could not but welcome the appointment as giving me an opportunity of placing a wreath of affection upon the grave of one whose friendship I have cherished for years as one of my highest honors and greatest blessings. In tender and grateful regard, therefore, for his memory, but under the restrictions of sober fact—for Dr. DeWitt needs no exaggerated praise, and the simple statement of the truth will be eulogy enough—I shall sketch the salient features of his career and undertake an estimate of his character and achievements.

John DeWitt, on his father's side, sprang from one of the most ancient and influential families of the colonial period of our history. He was a lineal descendant, in the sixth generation, of that Tjerck Claessen DeWitt who, born in Westphalia in 1620, emigrated to New Amsterdam in 1656—sixteen years before the murder of his cousin, Jan DeWitt, the Grand Pensionary of Holland—and whose marriage to "Barbara Andriessen van Amsterdam" is recorded in the Register

THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

In order to the establishment of Christianity as the supernatural and so the true and the final religion equally for us and for all men, it is not enough to prove the historicity of the New Testament. It is necessary also to show that in the Old and New Testaments we have Christianity's supernatural and so infallible record and description. This subject, of fundamental interest, quite as much to the ordinary Christian as to the professional theologian, assumes special importance at this time because it is one of the points at issue in the controversy now dividing our churches. It is basic to the whole controversy. Deny the inspiration and consequent infallibility of the Bible and we cannot be sure whether the other positions assailed are worth contending for.

I. INSPIRATION MEANS MORE THAN CREDIBILITY

That the Bible has this; that its writers intended to speak only the truth, and in the main have said only the truth; that therefore, they are reliable in the same sense and to the same degree and for the same reason that Thucydides and Tacitus are trustworthy,—all this is involved in what are known as the Evidences of Christianity. In claiming, however, that the Bible is inspired, we assert for it much more than this. We affirm that it is the Word of God in such a sense that its words, though written by men and having indelibly impressed on them the marks of their human authorship, were written, nevertheless, “under such an influence of the Holy Ghost as to be also the words of God, the adequate and infallible expression of his mind and will for us.”¹ Hence, though the Bible leaves much unsaid, all that it says is true *in the sense in which it says it*. What it states as history is real history. Its descriptions of the processes of nature, though not scientifically exact, are, as popular statements always aim to be and as scientific statements could seldom be, true to what ap-

¹ Dr. B. B. Warfield, *Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, Vol. IV, p. 180.

pears. When discourses are reported, the different reports agree in language when the divine intention was to preserve the precise words; but when, as often, only the general thought was regarded essential, there are verbal variations, yet these are such as not to affect the idea that God would convey. When the mistakes of men or the lies of Satan are given, it is an infallible record of mistakes or of lies that we have. In a word, the inspiration of the Scriptures, though seldom verbal as to its method, is always verbal as to its result. Thus, while the credibility of the Bible means only that it takes its place with the best histories of human production, the inspiration of the Bible implies, that, however it may resemble such histories, it belongs to an entirely different category; that, as no other writings are, it is not only generally reliable, but errorless and incapable of error; and that it is this because it differs absolutely from all other books in being itself, even as to its words, the very *Word of God*. In every one even of its words it is the adequate and infallible expression of what God would say to us.

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DOCTRINE OF INSPIRATION

A. It is *not* because the truth of Christianity rests upon it. With Dr. Marcus Dods in his famous address at the meeting of the Alliance of the Reformed Churches at London, we would protest earnestly against representing that "the infallibility of the Bible is the ground of the whole Christian faith." "Were there no such thing as inspiration," to quote Dr. Warfield,² "Christianity would be true, and all its essential doctrines would be credibly witnessed to us in the generally trustworthy reports of the teaching of our Lord and his authoritative agents in founding the Church, preserved in the writings of the apostles, and their first followers, and in the historical witness of the living Church." We may and should go further. As Dr. Henry B. Smith has said, "Even without the Scriptures, the evidence for Christianity on historical grounds alone is such that, *excluding* the Old and the

² *Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, Vol. IV, pp. 209, 210.

New Testaments, the balance in a comparative line of argument, is for Christianity as against any and all other religions.”³ This can scarcely be insisted on too strenuously. It is important that such a misapprehension as that the divine origin and nature of Christianity and the doctrine of inspiration or even the claim that the Scriptures are credible are bound up together and so must stand or fall together, should be corrected. Christianity is such an integral part of history that if the latter be true, the former must be. In a word, disprove Christianity, and history goes with it.

B. While all this is so, it is of great importance that the inspiration of the Scriptures should be established for the following reasons:

I. Though the truth of Christianity is not conditioned on the inspiration of the Bible, our assurance that we know precisely what Christianity is does so depend. If Christianity be supernatural, it is only from its own account of itself that we can determine its nature. That which comes from another world must speak for itself; it must even declare how far earthly analogies may be used in its interpretation. He who would improve a communication from God must remember that his “thoughts are not our thoughts nor our ways his ways: for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways higher than our ways and his thoughts than our thoughts” (Isa. lv. 8, 9). Unless, therefore, we had his Word to be “a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path” (Ps. cxl. 105), we could not understand and obey even such a revelation of himself as he has made in Christ. We should do, as those who deny the inspiration of the Scriptures actually tend to do,—we should bring Christ down to our level instead of trying ourselves to rise to his; we should reduce Christianity to the category of earthly religions instead of endeavoring to raise them into conformity with it as the one and only way of life. Nor may it be said, that the distinction which we are making is without a difference; that we can not

³ *Introduction to Christian Theology*, p. 153.

know that Christianity is true and not know precisely what it is; and that, consequently, if the credibility of the Bible is sufficient to prove Christianity to be true, it is also sufficient to certify us as to its nature. On the contrary, the distinction that we would draw is a very real one, and it may be seen to be so in all matters somewhat analogous. American republicanism is a real thing. Its influence on the world would prove it to be this, and Bancroft's history of its development and Bryce's exposition of its principles would render it doubly sure. Hence, to be convinced of the reality of American republicanism, we should not have to familiarize ourselves with its authoritative constitution; we should not need even to inquire whether there were such a constitution. And yet such an authoritative constitution we must have that we may be certain as to just what American republicanism ought to be and as to just what it may require of us. In a word, what guarantee would there be of the permanence of American institutions, if the authority of the Constitution were denied? And in like manner, what guarantee would there be of the continuance of true Christianity if the infallibility and consequent inspiration of the Scriptures were questioned? There must be an authoritative declaration of what American republicanism is by its founders, not to prove its reality, but that it may continue true to its reality. And in the same way, there must be an infallible statement from the author of Christianity as to what Christianity is, not to prove its supernatural reality, but that it may be kept true to its supernatural reality. In both cases, we need to prove *infallibly* the precise nature of the reality, though in both cases that it *is* a reality is already evident.

2. The inspiration of the Scriptures needs to be established also from the apologetic standpoint. Though the supernatural source and nature of Christianity can be proved independently of the inspiration of the Bible and should be so proved, nevertheless, there are certain valuable arguments which become much clearer when we can base them on the infallible Word of the Lord. Such arguments are those from Christian Ethics and from Christian Sociology. These, which,

as confirmatory of Christianity's claim otherwise established, are among the most effective of all the evidences, can not but be weakened, if there is even the least room to question what Christianity does teach as to ethics and as to sociology. If we are at liberty to reject as unchristian so much of the ethical or sociological teaching of the Bible as does not commend itself to us, and if every one else has the same right, we can not fail to weaken greatly any argument that we may draw from the superiority of Christian ethics or of Christian sociology. Logical though the argument may be in itself, it will rest at best on an uncertain foundation. Indeed, the argument can not have its unique confirmatory force, unless it can be based on a "Thus saith the Lord."

III. THE ARGUMENT FOR INSPIRATION

A. "The practical proof of the inspiration of Holy Scripture—in some sense which avails to distinguish this volume from all other books known to men—is found," says Professor Fisher, "in the life-giving power which abides in it, and which remains undiminished, from age to age, in all the mutations of literature, and amid the diverse types and advancing stages of culture and civilization. . . . The general proposition that the Bible is at once the foundation of spiritual light and life, the prime source of religious knowledge, and the rule of faith and of worship among Christians, admits of no contradiction."⁴ Its influence demonstrates this. When asked why he believed the Bible to be inspired, Mr. Moody replied, "Because it inspires me."

B. That this unique sense in which the Bible is inspired is that one which has just been unfolded,—such is the teaching and claim of the Scriptures themselves. While the Bible is unmistakably a word of man in the senses, that all of its books and all parts of each one of them were written by men; that these men were intensely human, and wrote from human impulses and with earthly events for their occasion and with definite and different designs of their own; that each had a

⁴ *The Grounds of Theistic and Christian Belief*, p. 408.

style of his own and wrote each in his own style; that each was subject to the limitations of personal knowledge and mental condition and environment; that, in a word, their human characteristics, so far from being suppressed, would seem even to have been emphasized,—while one can scarcely read the Scriptures and not see that, at least in the above senses, as it is on the one hand, preëminently a word of man: so, on the other, it is equally clear that it claims positively to be “the Word of God,” in all its parts and even words, the infallible expression of God’s will with reference to man. Indeed, the doctrine of Verbal Inspiration is a product of Biblical Theology. It rests on the carefully and inductively ascertained doctrine of the Scripture writers on the subject. If men will only follow the excellent programme outlined by Dr. Charles A. Briggs in his “Inaugural Address,” and will really ask, not, What do the creeds teach? What do the theologians say? What is the authority of the Church? but, what does the Bible itself teach us? and “fencing off from the Scriptures all the speculations, all the dogmatic elaborations, all the doctrinal adaptations that have been made in the history of doctrine in the church,” limit themselves strictly to the theology of the Bible itself, it is to the doctrine of verbal inspiration that they will come. As Dr. Warfield has well said, “It is not Biblical criticism that has destroyed verbal inspiration, but it is scholastic theories which have drawn us away in this matter from the pure deliverances of Biblical Theology.”⁵

In proof of the essentially Biblical character of the doctrine of inspiration as it has just been stated, it should be observed:

1. The *express declarations* of Scripture affirm it. Only specimens of these statements can here be adduced, nor can they be unfolded in all their implications. Whatever conviction, therefore, the argument from these affirmations may carry, it should be remembered that that could easily be made much stronger.

At this point we will introduce an extract from an article

⁵ *Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, Vol. IV, p. 145.

by Dr. Warfield which is the best summary known to us of the more conspicuous teachings of the Bible with regard to its own inspiration :

. . . who can open the pages of his New Testament without seeing how deeply this conception of Scripture [that it is the infallible "Word of God"] is imbedded in its very substance? The Evangelical proclamation begins with the formula, "Even as it is written" (Mark i.1). "The first word spoken by Christ in his ministerial office," as John Lightfoot reminds us, "is an assertion of the authority of Scripture": that threefold, "It is written!" "Again, it is written!" "It is written!," which he opposed to Satan's temptations in the wilderness. And even after his resurrection the Lord of Truth rebuked his sorrowing disciples that they were slow of heart "to believe in all that the prophets had spoken"; and "beginning with Moses and all the prophets, interpreted to them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself" (Luke xxiv.25-27)—the resurrected Lord still honoring the Scriptures of God! The whole New Testament is founded on the assumption of the complete divinity of the Old, and assumes its divine inspiration, and its divine trustworthiness, and its divine authority on every page. Those lofty titles, "Scripture," "The Scriptures" even "The Oracles of God," with which the New Testament writers designate it, and "the sacred formulas" "It is written," "It is said," by which they cite its words, already imply their conception of it as a book of God, to every word of which man must yield belief and obedience. This is the more apparent as it is evident that for them to say, "Scripture says" is equivalent to their saying "God says" (Rom. ix.17; x.19; Gal. iii.8). They distinctly declare that the writers of Scripture wrote in the Spirit (Matt. xxii.43; Luke xx.42; Acts ii.34), and their meaning in this is further defined by the statement that it is God who speaks their words (Matt. i.22; ii.15), even those not ascribed to God in the Old Testament itself (Acts xiii.35; Heb. viii.8; i.6, 7, 8; v.5; Eph. iv.8); whence it follows that while the human authors speak, God speaks through their mouths (Acts iv.25). Still more narrowly defining their doctrine, it is specifically stated that it is the Holy Ghost who speaks the written words of Scripture (Heb. iii.7), and that, even in the narrative parts (Heb. iv.4). It can create no surprise, therefore, that the New Testament writers everywhere use the Old Testament as authoritative, and appeal to its very words as "not to be broken." Christ himself builds an argument on a tense (Matt. xxii.32), and twice elsewhere finds an argument on specific words (Matt. xxii.43; John x.34); and it is in connection with one of these word-arguments that he declares of the whole Scripture that it can not be broken, thus affirming its verbal trustworthiness throughout. Paul, following his divine exemplar, expounds the

significance of the number of an Old Testament word (Gal. iii.16). When, then, he declares that "Every Scripture is inspired by God" (2 Tim. iii.16), we can not pretend to be ignorant of the conception of inspiration, in its nature, extent and effects, which he held, and which he explicitly attributes to Scripture in the direct affirmation that all Scripture is so inspired.

Nor is this high doctrine of the New Testament writers confined to the inspiration of the Old Testament books—the ancient Scriptures of their people, to the reverence of which they were bred. They do not for an instant permit us to suppose that they looked upon themselves as less divinely guided, as the Apostles of the New Covenant, than were the prophets of the Old. They claim to have been "made sufficient as ministers of a new covenant" (2 Cor. iii.6); and as part of this sufficiency they accounted the superintendence of the Holy Spirit over both the matter and form of their teaching (1 Cor. ii.13). They received their Lord's promise of a supernatural guidance both at the beginning of their ministry (Matt. x.19, 20) and at the close of his life, when he was to leave them, but not to leave them orphans (Mark xiii.11; Luke xxi.14-15; John xiv-xvi). And depending on this promised Spirit they claim divine authority. As historians, they betray no doubt as to the exact truth of their every word; as teachers, they demand entire credit; as governors of the flock, they require absolute obedience to their every command (2 Cor. x.7, 8). If even an angel from heaven should oppose them, the angel is indubitably wrong and accursed (Gal. i.7, 8). And how freely they deal in commands (1 Thess. iv.2; 2 Thess. iii.6-14)—commands, too, which they hold to be absolutely binding upon all—so binding that it is the test of a man's being led by the Spirit that he shall recognize them as God's commands (1 Cor. xiv.37), and no Christian ought to company with one who rejects them (2 Thess. iii.6-14). Nor is it doubtful that this authority is claimed for their written word. It is the "things which I am writing" that must be recognized by the Spirit-led man as the commands of the Lord (1 Cor. xiv.37); it is the teaching transmitted by letter as well as that orally delivered that is to be immediately and unquestioningly received (2 Thess. ii.5; iii.6-14). To them, therefore, their words are not their own. Paul claims to be but the transmitter of his teaching (1 Thess. ii.13, *παρά*); it is, indeed, his own, but the transmitted word is God's Word (1 Thess. ii.13). It is he that speaks indeed and issues commands, but they are not his commands, but Christ's—given through him by Christ (1 Thess. iv.2). Therefore, even in matters where Christ has left no commands, the Apostle's "opinion" is of divine authority; in it, too, he has the Spirit of God (1 Cor. vii.40). It is quite clear that in all this there is a claim advanced—a claim to a divine inspiration no less high than what is accorded to the Old Testament. It cannot sur-

prise us to find Peter, therefore, placing the Epistles—"all his Epistles"—of "our beloved brother Paul" among "the Scriptures" (2 Peter iii.16); or Paul quoting Luke as equally Scripture with the Old Testament (1 Tim. v.18).

Now, none of these points are weakened in either reference or meaning by the application to the New Testament of the principle of historico-critical exegesis. On the contrary, they are in every regard strengthened. We may be quite safe, therefore, in concluding that an exact and scientific exegesis does not invalidate the fact that the doctrine of inspiration held by the New Testament writers is that high one which the church has always understood them to teach.⁶

2. Nor may this judgment be charged with orthodox bias. On the contrary, it is the result of the most stringently and coldly scientific exegesis of our modern age, whether orthodox or not. Here the Kuenens and Reusses, and Pfeleiderers, and Riehms, and Stappers, and Farrars join hands with the Calvins and Calovs, the Quenstedts, and Gaussens, the Lightfoots and Lees of the church. For example, Archdeacon Farrar, the looseness of whose own views is well known, admits⁷ that this Apostle "shared, doubtless, in the views of the later Jewish schools—the Tanaim and the Amoraim—on the nature of inspiration. These views . . . made the words of Scripture coextensive and identical with the words of God." So also Otto Pfeleiderer, who would do away with the supernatural in religion, allows⁸ "that Paul fully shared the assumption of his opponents, the irrefragable authority of the letter as the immediately revealed Word of God." In like manner, Tholuck who, though evangelical, would not be regarded as orthodox in our sense recognizes⁹ that the application of the Old Testament, made by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "rests on the strictest view of inspiration, since passages where God is not the speaker are cited as words of God or of the Holy Ghost (Heb. i.6, 7, 8; iv.4, 7; iii.21; iii.7; x.15). This fact is worked out also with convinc-

⁶ *Christian Thought*, Vol. XI, No. 3.

⁷ *The Life and Work of St. Paul*, Vol. I, p. 49.

⁸ *Paulinism*, Vol. I, p. 88.

⁹ "Old Testament' in the 'New,'" in the *Bib. Sac.* XI, 612.

ing clearness by the writer of an odd and sufficiently free Scotch book of recent date; viz., *The Principles of Christianity* by James Stuart. The writer says: "There is no doubt that the author of Hebrews, in common with the other New Testament writers, regards the whole Old Testament as having been dictated by the Holy Ghost, or, as it were, mechanically inspired."¹⁰ More recently still Professor Stapfer of Paris, though himself denying the reality not only of an infallibility for the Bible, but also of any inspiration for it at all, declaring that "the doctrine of an inspiration distinct from revelation and legitimating it is an error"—yet can not deny that Paul held a different doctrine—a doctrine which made the Old Testament to him the divine Word and the term, "It is written," equivalent to "God says."¹¹ Once more, Richard Rothe, who seeks, wrongly, to separate Christ's doctrine of the Old Testament from that of the Apostles, says:

We find in the New Testament authors the same theoretical view of the Old Testament and the same practice as to its use, as among the Jews of the time in general, although at the same time in the handling of the same conceptions and principles on both sides, the whole difference between the new Christian spirit and that of contemporary Judaism appears in sharp distinctness. Our author looks upon the words of the Old Testament as *immediate* words of God, and adduces them expressly as such, even those of them which are not at all related as direct sayings of God. They see nothing at all in the sacred volume which is simply the word of its human author and not at the same time the very Word of God himself. In all that stands "written" God himself speaks to them, and so entirely are they habituated to think only of this that they receive the sacred Word; and hear God speaking in it *immediately*, without any thought of the human persons who appear in it as speaking and acting. The historical conception of their Bible is altogether foreign to them.¹²

But enough! It should not be more evident that the Scriptures affirm themselves to be plenary inspired than it is certain

¹⁰ p. 346.

¹¹ See also Kuenen, *Prophets*, p. 449; and Reuss, *History of Christian Theology in the Apostolic Age*, Vol. I, p. 352.

¹² *Dogmatik*, p. 177.

that modern exegesis, in so far as it is scientific, finds such to be the meaning of these affirmations.

C. The Biblical Doctrine of Inspiration is true.

1. It and the opposing doctrines of inspiration are exclusive. Hence, if it be vindicated, they are disproved. For example:

a. The *naturalistic* doctrine in all its forms falls when once it has been shown that the Bible is the very Word of God. If he himself said what its writers wrote, then it is absurd to argue on the Naturalistic hypothesis that the Bible is a purely human production. This theory becomes one of two contradictories; and the other having been proved true, it is of necessity false.

b. It is the same with the doctrine of *partial* inspiration. In whatever form this theory may be held, whether inspiration be regarded as extending to certain books rather than to others, as limited to doctrinal teaching as distinguished from historical narratives, or as confined to the concepts in opposition to the words of Scripture; whatever shape this theory may take, it falls when once it has been established that the Bible is the very Word of God in such a sense that even its individual *words* are his. If he himself uttered or endorsed every syllable that its authors wrote, then it is absurd to argue for any kind of partial inspiration. This theory becomes one of two contradictories; and the other having been proved true, it is of necessity false.

c. It is not otherwise as regards the doctrine of *gracious* inspiration. However much of grace this theory may allow to the writers of the Bible, so long as it denies any specific difference between the influence granted to them and that bestowed on ordinary Christians, it falls when once it has been shown that the Scriptures are the Word of God in such a sense that the difference between them and all other books is one of kind and not merely one of degree. If the holy men who wrote the Bible were moved and guided by the Spirit for a unique purpose and with a unique result, it is absurd to ar-

gue that Isaiah and Paul differed from Milton and Calvin only in having more of the Holy Ghost. This theory becomes one of two contradictories; and the other having been proved true, it can not but be false.

2. No objection can be drawn to the Biblical doctrine of inspiration from the looseness with which the Old Testament is cited in the New. The difficulty said to arise in this way is twofold:

a. The quotations are made so carelessly as would seem to indicate that the writers did not themselves believe in verbal inspiration. This may, however, leave the question of verbal inspiration just where it was before and so supported by the great body of evidence yet to be adduced for it. It may not bear on the question of inspiration at all. It may indicate that what the Holy Spirit wished to express was only the general sense and not the precise thought of the citation. Moreover, this would be against propriety no more than against inspiration. It is not improper even for us to paraphrase the Bible rather than to cite it verbatim. Much more might the Holy Spirit take this liberty, if we choose so to call it, with the Old Testament which he had himself inspired. Specially is this so in view of the facts that verbal inspiration was not then questioned as it now is, and that, as is not now the case, citation was then quite commonly only according to the sense.

b. Because the quotations are often from an incorrect version, the Septuagint, or are incorrectly made, it is said that the writers, even if they believed in inspiration, could not have been themselves inspired. The objectionable variations, however, may be explained as *intended*. Nor would there then be anything objectionable in them. If the Septuagint was more familiar than was the Hebrew, as was the case, would not this be a reason why the Holy Spirit should use it in the new revelation which he was giving? If an incorrect rendering was better adapted to what he was about to express than the original itself, why might he not cite the former? So long as it gave a sense suggested by or involved in any way in the original, might he not quote it as the original

just as we often give out a text and then preach from its secondary or implied meaning? In a word, both of these objections proceed on the unwarrantable assumptions that only one kind of quotation is true quotation, and that one can not believe in a principle, unless he is always asserting it.¹³

3. The objections to the Biblical doctrine of inspiration based on the facts implied in its statement amount to nothing, inasmuch as these facts are so analogous to others in the divine procedure that they themselves even raise presumptions in favor of the doctrine in question.

a. Inspiration involves the united and harmonious action of the divine and the human. *How* this is is a mystery, but it is not an unfamiliar one. We see it in the providential government of the world, in the work of grace on us and in us, specially in the person of Christ. It would be strange, therefore, if in inspiration the divine and the human were not harmoniously blended.

b. Inspiration is so specific that it controls even the *words* of men. But is not all God's action of the same kind? "Not a sparrow falls to the ground without his notice" (Matt. x.29). "By him the hairs of our heads are all numbered" (Matt. x.20). "He understands our thoughts afar off" (Ps. cix.2). It would be contrary to analogy therefore, for him to inspire the thoughts and not the words of his messengers. It is that inspiration does extend to the words that keeps it from being unlikely.

c. Many inspired men have been only ordinary men. There has been a great disproportion between their natural ability and the truths which they uttered. What, however, could be more in harmony with the general plan of him who "hath chosen the base things of the world, and things which are despised, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence" (1 Cor. i.26-29)? Thus the objections drawn from

¹³ *Vide*. Shedd's and Strong's Systematic Theologies on this subject, and Johnson's *Quotations of the Old Testament in the New*.

the nature of the Biblical doctrine of inspiration do but render it probable.

4. This presumption is increased by the fact that any other than the Bible doctrine would fail to meet the necessities of the case. Thought and language are neither identical nor inseparable. Nevertheless, God could not exactly make known his will to us, whether contained in special revelations or in human records, if he did not control the words as well as direct the thoughts of his prophets. In proportion as the truth to be expressed by man is above himself, does he need to have words given to him appropriate to the idea. Nor is the presumption that we have been considering weakened by the fact that inspiration was confined to the writers of the Bible instead of being continued to the copyists. A copy of infallible because divine truth, though there be some mistakes in it as to unessentials, is worth much more than a perfect copy of any merely human sayings.

Moreover, that the copyists of the Bible were left uninspired is in strict analogy with God's procedure elsewhere. In the apostolic age the disciples received miraculous gifts, but they were not miraculously guided in their exercise of these. The case of the Scriptures, therefore, is just what would be expected, if their writers were supernaturally inspired.

Beyond this, the providence of God as it appears in the text of the Bible is unique. Though only by natural means, no other book has been so guarded by him. Thus Dr. Hort estimates that in .999 of the New Testament we have the autograph.¹⁴ Is not this, if not a veritable miracle, yet a providential one? Does not this favor, if it does not suggest, that the book thus guarded is God's own Word?

5. The truth of the Biblical doctrine of inspiration is proved by three arguments:

a. The *credibility* of the New Testament involves it. Because the New Testament is credible, it will follow that its

¹⁴ *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, revised by Bishop Westcott and Dr. Hort, p. 20.

teaching as to inspiration is trustworthy, unless it can be shown that this teaching is unessential and unimportant.

(1) This, however, is the one thing that is essential. Our confidence in any book depends largely on what it professes to be. If it can not be relied on as to the representations which it makes of itself, doubt is at once thrown on all its statements. If Cicero's letters were not written by him, though purporting to be, we are bound to question their general credibility. So far, therefore, from its being unessential that the Bible should give a true account of itself, this is what is essential, if it is to be regarded as giving a true account of anything. Unless a witness would invalidate or at least weaken all his testimony, he must either say nothing about himself or else speak truly.

(2) The case of the Bible is stronger at this point than is that of any other book. It is admitted not to be an ordinary book. It is allowed, at any rate by all Christians, to be in some sense a revelation from God. Grant the truth of Christianity, as the study of its "evidences" binds us to do, and we shall not dispute this.

What we may question is the sense in which the Bible is a message from God to us; whether it is supernatural or natural, inspired or uninspired, infallible or fallible. But do you not see that it is just at this point that it is most essential that its testimony, if given at all, should be true; and that of all books it is the one whose testimony at this point needs *most* to be true? When a *royal* proclamation is received, it is important to know whether it is expressed in the king's own words or only in those which his ambassadors have attributed to him; and when the proclamation claims to be in the monarch's own language, it is supremely essential that there should be no room for doubt on this point, if the proclamation as a whole is to be received. In like manner, just because the Bible is in some sense the Word of God, it is important that it should be in his words; and it could not be accepted in any sense as his Word, if it claimed to be in his words and yet were not. *God* is the witness of all others whose testi-

mony must be true to itself, if it is to be regarded as true at all. Thus while the historical truth of the Bible does not, as we have seen, depend for proof on the inspiration of the Scriptures; it could not be maintained, except from outside considerations, if their inspiration were denied. We could not in advance trust in any respect a record which claimed to be in God's words but was not. A lie so blasphemous or a mistake so palpable would vitiate the whole.

(3) The argument is much strengthened when we consider what is involved in the denial that the Bible is credible in its teaching of its own inspiration. This denial means just this, that the Scriptures are not credible in anything. Those who believe in their credibility in any sense admit that they are credible in their doctrinal and ethical teaching. They may be full of historical blunders. They may contain no history at all. They may be throughout mythical. Still, though they must then be questioned when they enter the domain of history, they should be believed when they confine themselves to doctrinal statements. As to these, at least, they are credible: they must be, it is said; for these are the truths, rather than facts of history, that God meant to teach.

Do you not see, however, that you can not deny the credibility of the Scriptures as to the doctrine of verbal inspiration and not deny their credibility as to all other doctrines? The evidence for the inspiration of the Bible is "just the same evidence in amount and weight which is adduced in favor of any other Biblical doctrine." "It is the same amount and weight of evidence precisely which is adduced for the truth of the doctrines of the incarnation, of the trinity, of the deity of Christ, of justification by faith, of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, of the resurrection of the body, of the life everlasting." Each one of these doctrines is based on the fact that it is clearly taught in Scripture. Each one of them is itself an exegetical fact. If it were not, it would have no right to a place in Christian Theology. In this respect no speculative or *a priori* considerations could help it in the least. But neither is it on speculative or *a priori* considerations of any

kind that the doctrine of inspiration rests. Like all other Christian doctrines, it is an exegetical fact of the Bible. As we have seen, this is "a commonplace of exegetical science, the common possession of the critical schools of the left and of the right, a prominent and unmistakable deliverance of Biblical Theology." On what ground, therefore, may the truth of inspiration be questioned and yet the truth of the other doctrines, which rest on precisely the same ground, be admitted? In a word, if we deny that the New Testament is credible when it teaches the inspiration of the Bible, can we maintain its credibility as to doctrine at all? Thus while the credibility of the Scriptures as to doctrine depends on the fact of their inspiration no more than we have seen their historical trustworthiness to do, neither can be vindicated *from the Bible*, if its inspiration be disproved. Set it aside, and you have left a Bible which *may* be, instead of true history, only a collection of myths, and, instead of the doctrines of God, merely a string of lies.

(4) Nor may it be replied that, while the doctrine of verbal inspiration is an exegetical fact like the undisputed doctrines, it is not so frequent or so positive an exegetical fact. This is true, but without force. We may not say, that we will believe the Biblical writers when they assert a doctrine a hundred times, as the doctrine of redemption in the blood of Christ, and will not believe them, if they assert it ten times or only once; that we will believe them in the doctrines which they make the main subjects of discourse, as the resurrection of the body, but not in those which they advert to incidentally; that we will believe them in those which they explicitly formulate, as justification by faith, but not in those which they teach in their separate parts and elements. "The question is not *how* they teach a doctrine, but *do* they teach it; and when that question is once settled affirmatively, the weight of evidence that commends the doctrine to us as true is the same in every case; and that is the whole body of evidence that goes to show that the Biblical writers are trust-

worthy as teachers of doctrine.”¹⁵ When an honest and competent man has made a statement once, or even if he has only clearly and intentionally implied it, it is as certain as if he kept on repeating it indefinitely. What gives to it its certainty is his character for honesty and competency, not his much speaking. A knave might talk and even swear until doom’s day, but you would not believe him. The question, then, is not as to *how* the doctrine is taught. That it is, as we have seen, really and clearly taught, makes it at least as certain as are the other Christian doctrines at any rate as certain as the fundamental doctrine of the trinity, which is taught no more explicitly and formally, unless we are ready to deny the general credibility of the New Testament writers as teachers of doctrine at all. This is the appalling alternative to which we are driven, and it is well that we should face it. As another has truly said, “If the Biblical doctrine of inspiration is rejected, our freedom from its trammels is bought logically at the somewhat serious cost of discrediting the evidence which goes to show that the Biblical writers are trustworthy as teachers of doctrine. In this sense, the fortunes of distinctive Christianity are bound up with those of the Biblical doctrine of inspiration.”

b. The Biblical doctrine of inspiration is, as we have seen, the particular doctrine of *Christ and his Apostles*. To set it aside, therefore, is to discredit them; and to do this is to dethrone our Lord. This is the real issue in the controversy as to inspiration, the issue in comparison with which there is no other issue. Of course, those who would modify and even those who would reject this doctrine are seldom willing to admit this. They, as truly as we, would bow before “God manifest in the flesh.” They believe, too, that they do so. This, however, is only because they refuse to develop or to consider the implications of their theories. They manage to occupy two inconsistent positions because they shut their eyes to their inconsistencies. But this is no reason why we should do so. It is *the* reason why we should not. Logic is

¹⁵ *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, Vol. IV, p. 208.

bound to assert itself in time, even in the case of those who do not care to inquire whether they are logical. A man will go over the falls to destruction, if he is in the current; and it will make no difference how much he may now be looking at the sun rather than heeding the current. Hence, for the sake of those who differ from us as well as for our own sake, not to speak of loyalty to Christ, we are bound to consider and to expose the various theories on which the attempt has been made to show that the Biblical doctrine of Scripture can be modified, and yet the authority of our Lord and of his Apostles be preserved.

(1) The first of these theories would establish a distinction between the teaching of Christ and that of the Apostles. It would sacrifice the latter, but save the former. It would admit that the Apostles made the mistake of teaching the doctrine of verbal inspiration; but then Christ did not, and his authority is that which it is of most importance to maintain.

Even this compromise theory, however, is not tenable. The distinction on which it proceeds can not be made good.

(a) We have no Christ except the one whom the Apostles have given to us. Jesus himself left no treatises on doctrine. He left no written dialogues. We are dependent on the Apostles for our whole knowledge of him and of what he taught. If, therefore, they represent him as having taught differently from themselves, what guarantee have we that there is ground for the difference? Untrustworthy in *their* doctrine of inspiration, why should they not be untrustworthy also in their representation of Christ? Thus this theory assumes what prevents it from being held. It starts out by discrediting those on whose testimony alone it can rest.

(b) Christ is committed to the trustworthiness of the Apostles as teachers. He said that those who heard them would hear him. As another has written, "He represents his words on earth as but the foundation of one great temple of doctrine, the edifice of which was to be built by him through their mouths, as they spoke moved by his Spirit; and thus he

makes himself an accomplice before the fact in all they taught." Hence, in proportion as they are discredited as doctrinal guides, in that proportion he is discredited with them. And, therefore, the cry, "Back to Christ," that we hear so often in these days, is really a cry to go back on Christ.

(c) The assumed difference between Christ's doctrine of inspiration and that of the Apostles, as might be supposed from the points just made, does not exist. Our Lord teaches verbal inspiration quite as clearly and positively as they do. See John x.35; Matt. x.18; Luke xxi.17; Matt. xxii.43; etc. Moreover, that these passages do fairly teach the doctrine that we are considering appears in this, that Richard Rothe, the champion of the theory that we are refuting, sets some of them aside in a foot note simply with the remark, "not decisive *here*." That is, he admits that the passage in question, and the others like it, would teach verbal inspiration, were not that forbidden by the special theory that he is maintaining. He makes it govern the facts, instead of testing it by the facts.

(2) The second of the theories under review is that of *accommodation*. We may, they tell us, deny the doctrine of verbal inspiration and not impugn the authority of our Lord and his Apostles because in this case they deliberately accommodated their teaching to the prejudices of their age. They did not themselves believe that the Old Testament was verbally inspired; but every one around them did, and so they fell in with the popular way of thinking and speaking. They had to do so. They were commissioned to preach the Gospel, and they could not get even a hearing for it if they ran counter at the outset to what was so generally and so firmly held as verbal inspiration was held. Moreover, they ought to have done as they did. We should become "all things to all men" that the work of the Gospel may be advanced. Such is the accommodation form of the theory.

The following objections, however, are fatal:

(a) This theory assumes what is unproved and what is the very thing which demands proof. It takes it for granted

that Christ and his Apostles did not share the popular views as to inspiration, and yet it admits that in all that they said on the subject they seemed to do so. But how can we judge of a man's views save by what he says and does? What warrant, then, have we to infer that a man does not hold certain views when he always speaks and acts as if he did and when, moreover, every one around him holds them? Thus the theory of accommodation in this case presumes to explain phenomena which have not been shown to exist. Hence, it is as uncalled for as it is objectionable on other grounds. It is as if you were to affirm that a professor in a certain seminary held a doctrine of inspiration different from that which had always been taught in that Seminary; but that, rather than stir up opposition and introduce confusion, he had taught as the other professors did and had done. Do you not see that such talk would be ridiculous, not to say insulting, unless you could put your finger on the differences?

(b) This theory, as has just been intimated, cuts more deeply. It assails the veracity and so must impugn the authority of our Lord and his Apostles. There is accommodation and there is accommodation. It is one thing to adapt the teaching of truth to the stage of receptivity of the learner; but Christ and the Apostles, on this theory, did much more than this. It is another thing to adopt the *errors* of the time as the very matter to be taught; and this was what, on this theory, Christ and the Apostles did. It was an error that the Bible was the infallible Word of God, and yet whenever they spoke on the subject they affirmed or implied that it was. Had they kept quiet, the case would have been different. Even then, however, could their honesty have been vindicated? Professed teachers of a religion which claimed to be the fulfilment of the promises of the Old Testament, would they have had the right not to object to a *radically* false conception of that Testament and its promises? In such a case could silence on their part have been construed otherwise than as meaning consent? In a question of such *importance* not to object to the popular view could only have been to sanction it. A lawyer has no

right even merely to say nothing when a will is being explained, if he knows that there are or may be mistakes in it. Simply his presence at the family meeting is supposed to guarantee the family's belief in the inerrancy of the will. On the theory under consideration, therefore, Christ and his Apostles were dishonest; and if they were thus palpably dishonest, how can we in any respect maintain their credibility?

(3) This theory, however, assumes another and, as it is claimed, unobjectionable form. Indeed, the more modern advocates of it feel that the hypothesis of accommodation must be given up. They are almost ready to admit that Christ's general authority can not be preserved, if his veracity, even on the subject of inspiration, has to be questioned. Hence, they would adopt the more plausible, but not more tenable, hypothesis of *ignorance*. In a word, they would save our Lord's moral character at the expense of his intellectual. The views of that age with reference to the Old Testament's inspiration were wrong. According to many, they were ancient but still prevalent Jewish conceptions. According to the fashionable view of the origin of Christian thought in Hellenic sources, which has been given such vogue by Harnack, these views of inspiration that Christ and his Apostles held were essentially Greek. Be this as it may, though wrong, they did not know any better than to hold them. They were thoroughly under the influence of their age. They were so much so that it is only when Christ and the Apostles differ from their contemporaries that they can be regarded as correct.

With reference to this principle, which is fundamental to this form of the theory, we may observe:

(a) It is one of the most fallacious ever urged, and is destructive of all truth. If only that is true which is new, then, nothing is really true; for the new is ever becoming the old.

(b) Nor may it be replied, as it is, that this principle applies only to the particular time when Christ came. Why that should be is left unproved; and it is just what needs to be proved, if the theory is to be held.

(c) Moreover, if Christ and his Apostles were hopelessly blinded by the errors of their day, what sensible man will believe that they were infallibly correct when they went beyond the views of their age? Those who stumble for a certain distance usually keep on stumbling till they fall on their faces.

In a word, the plea of ignorance may save a man's moral character, but it is just as fatal to confidence in his credibility as dishonesty. In neither of its forms, therefore, can this theory be held and the general authority of our Lord and his Apostles not be impugned.

(4) Another attempt to set aside the New Testament doctrine of inspiration and not discredit the authority of Christ and the Apostles proceeds by distinguishing between their *belief* and their *teaching*. This was Archdeacon Farrar's view. Our Lord and his Apostles held the high doctrine of inspiration which we have been considering—to this extent they were blinded by their age: but they did not explicitly teach this doctrine; and we are bound, not by their opinions, but only by their explicit teachings. On this theory we should observe:

(a) The distinction drawn is a reasonable one. We certainly would not assert infallibility for the Apostles in aught else than their official teaching. We suppose that they shared the popular ideas in astronomy, but we would not on this account claim infallibility for these ideas.

(b) This distinction, however while in itself reasonable, can not in the present matter be established. It can not be shown that the doctrine of verbal inspiration is not explicitly taught. On the contrary, we are confronted by statements as clear and as positive as the following: "Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth" (1 Cor. ii. 13); and "For this cause we also thank God without ceasing that, when ye received from us the word of the message, even the word of God, ye accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it

is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe" (1 Thess. ii. 13).

(c) Even, however, if the distinction claimed could be established, the authority of our Lord and of his Apostles could not fail to be weakened, at least on the basis of the theory that we are considering. For the reason why the distinction must be drawn is, to quote Dr. Farrar's own words, because the doctrine of verbal inspiration is a 'mechanical and useless shibboleth, nay, more, a human idol, and (constructively, at least) a dreadful blasphemy.'¹⁶ Hence, though we can not deny that the Apostles themselves believed this doctrine, we are bound to show that they did not teach it. What confidence, however, can be reposed in men who held any view so blasphemous as this? This is a very different thing from holding the popular notions on astronomy. That could be done without moral obliquity. To accept a "dreadful blasphemy" could not. How, then, can we trust even the explicit teaching of men thus immoral? If the doctrines which lay under the teaching of our Lord and his Apostles were, as Farrar maintained, 'unintelligible, useless, idolatrous, blasphemous and profoundly dangerous, and actually have shaken to its centre the religious faith of thousands,' must we not say with Dr. Warfield, "On such a tree what other than evil fruits could grow?"

(d) Observe, too, how Farrar's view recoils on himself. One of his motives for opposing verbal inspiration is that it is an unscientific conception. Yet what could be more unscientific than the conception of inspiration and, indeed, of the Bible, which he is obliged to adopt? Its teaching must be confined to sporadic utterances, to isolated texts, instead of being expressed in its infusing spirit. That is, this advocate of Biblical as distinguished from speculative theology is by his own theory driven to a conception of the Bible which makes Biblical theology impossible. Nor is this all. It renders the inspiration of the Apostles a phenomenon similar to the

¹⁶ *Inspiration. A Clerical Symposium.* By the Rev. Archdeacon Farrar and others. London: James Nisbet & Co., 1888. 2 ed. pp. 219-241.

oracles of heathen shrines, and without even partial analogy in Scripture except, perhaps, in such cases as that of Balaam. That is, Dr. Farrar, in denying verbal inspiration, is, by his theory, driven back to "a quite mechanical and magical process of inspiration," a process in which the inspired man says the opposite of what he thinks. How true is it that nothing is so dangerous as the weapon with which one assails the truth.

(4) Another attempt to hold a lower doctrine of inspiration than that of the New Testament writers without discrediting them consists in distinguishing between the *facts* of the Bible and its *doctrines*. This position, which was that of Dr. Briggs, admits, on the one hand, that Christ and the Apostles teach verbal inspiration; but it claims on the other hand, that some of the facts or phenomena of the Bible, as its mistakes, conflict with such a doctrine, and that the meaning of the doctrine should be squared with the facts rather than the facts be at all interpreted in the interests of the doctrine. With reference to this claim in general it should be observed:

(a) There is much that is reasonable in it. If it means only that the true doctrine of inspiration should be ascertained inductively rather than speculatively, by what the sacred writers taught rather than by what we or others think that they should have taught, we can not endorse it too highly. If it means that we should use the actual characteristics of Scripture as an aid in, and a check upon, our exegesis of the teaching of Christ and the Apostles as we seek to discover their doctrine of inspiration, we must again give our hearty assent.

(b) This however, is not the real claim of the holders of this theory. Their position is, that a man's explanation of certain facts is to be learned, not from the explanation which he gives, but from the facts to be explained; that, for example, Paul's doctrine of inspiration is to be gathered, not from what he says on the subject, but from what the phenomena of the Scriptures show that he ought to have said. This position, however, is untenable as well as destructive of Christ and his Apostles.

It must be the latter, because if their doctrine of the inspiration of the Scriptures has to be modified by the phenomena of the Scriptures, this is clear evidence that their doctrine is not correct. And if this doctrine of theirs is not correct, what guarantee have we that their other doctrinal teaching, as, for example, that on the life everlasting or the resurrection of the body, will not have to be radically modified also by the facts of nature?

(c) Were this not so, however, the position under consideration would be untenable. It is true that Christ's doctrine of inspiration and that of his Apostles must be determined from facts; but it is not true, as is claimed, that the characteristics of their own writings are the facts relevant to the determination of their doctrine. The absurdity of such a claim appears in a precisely similar case. Who would think of determining Mr. Darwin's doctrine of natural selection, not solely by what Mr. Darwin says concerning it but equally by what we, in our own independent study of nature, find to be true as to natural selection? Now it is just as absurd to say that the New Testament doctrine of inspiration must be determined, both by the teachings of the New Testament on the subject, and by our view of the general phenomena of the Bible. These may prove the New Testament doctrine to be wrong and so may discredit Christ and the Apostles: but they can not be determining elements in the doctrine of inspiration held and taught by Christ and the Apostles. Even if they should be allowed to be such, nothing, as has been remarked, would be gained with regard to the point at issue. If our Lord and his Apostles had to be corrected by the facts, we could not conceive of them as teachers of fact.

(5) The final ground on which it is attempted to get rid of the doctrine of plenary inspiration and still not discredit our Saviour, and his Apostles is the *Kenosis Theory*. Indeed, it is probable that this is, more or less consciously, the basis of all the theories that we have reviewed. It is this:

“that when the Son of God ‘emptied himself’ (Phil. ii.7), and laid aside his glory, his knowledge became limited; that the divine nature did not supplement nor remove the self-imposed limitation; and that, accordingly, Christ during his humiliation did not possess infallible and superhuman knowledge.” As to this view, it should be observed:

(a) It does not, if true, help matters. It may save the veracity of our Lord, but it sacrifices his omniscience and so his infallibility. It may show that his mistakes were innocent, but it does not make them any the less mistakes.

(b) The theory, however, is manifestly untrue. Our Saviour does not exhibit the ignorance that it demands. On the contrary, he saw into the recesses of Nathanael’s heart when Nathanael was under the fig tree; he saw into the depths of the sea, and beheld the coin in the mouth of the fish; he read the whole past life of the woman of Samaria, whom he had never seen before during his earthly pilgrimage; he knew that Judas was going to betray him; he saw the man waiting on the road with the ass and the foal of the ass, and the other man who had prepared the guest-chamber for him to eat the passover with his disciples, though these men were not within the range of his physical vision. What do these and other examples that might be adduced show, what can they fairly show, but that our Lord, even in his humiliation, was omniscient with regard to all that it concerned him to know, as it certainly did concern him to know the Old Testament, which he studied, which he honored, which he taught, of which he was the chief subject, and of which he himself was the real author? They are not detached instances of supernatural knowledge, as in the cases that might be cited from the lives of the Hebrew prophets; they are rather examples of what was the constant state of our Lord, of what must have been the constant state of one who needed not that “anyone should bear witness concerning man, for he himself knew what was in man” (John ii.25). Thus this theory fails, as do all the more or less conscious modifications of it that we have considered. Not only does it not fulfil its purpose of sav-

ing the authority of Christ and so of his Apostles; but even in itself it is radically untrue. Can we need further proof that the denials of the New Testament doctrine of inspiration, the doctrine of verbal inspiration, are both vain in themselves and involve nothing less than the denial of the credibility, not to say the infallibility, of Christ himself and of his Apostles as teachers of doctrine? Of course, many of those who oppose verbal inspiration do not mean to make this denial, but this is just what their positions mean.

c. The denial of the verbal inspiration of the Bible brings us to positions which, *logically*, are fatal to consistent thinking and to belief in real existence. To show that this is so, let us assume, that the Bible is not, as it declares itself to be, the "Word of God"; or that the Word of God does not, as Christ and his Apostles believed and taught that it did, signify a human expression of the mind and will of God that is infallible even as to its words,—that is, let us, for the sake of argument, assume that the Bible is not what it clearly, and positively professes to be and so, as a whole, is on its face a lie or a mistake. How, then, can we explain certain facts as to the Bible which, nevertheless, demand explanation? and how can we escape certain positions which can not be maintained and thought be consistent or reality certain? Of these facts the more prominent are the following:

(1) The Bible holds and has held in the estimation of the civilized world generally a unique place as the greatest and best of books. Hence, it is known as the Bible, that is, *the Book*.

(a) So the finest individual minds have thought. When Sir Walter Scott was dying, he said to his son-in-law, "There is but one book; bring me the Bible." Goethe, who was so brilliant as to intoxicate every one with the richness, originality, and grasp of his ideas, writes: "It is a belief in the Bible the fruit of deep meditation, which has served me as the guide of my moral and literary life. I have found it a capital safely invested and richly productive of interest. No criticism will be able to perplex the confidence which we have

entertained of a writing whose contents have stirred up and given life to our vital energy by its own." Matthew Arnold says: "To the Bible men will return because they can not do without it. Because happiness is our being's end and aim, and happiness belongs to righteousness, and righteousness is revealed in the Bible. For this simple reason men will return to the Bible, just as a man who tried to give up food, thinking it was a vain thing and that he could do without it, would return to food; or a man who tried to give up sleep, thinking it was a vain thing, and he could do without it, would return to sleep." The great editor Charles A. Dana said: "The Bible, Shakespeare, and the Constitution of the United States are be added to.¹⁷ These that have been given are specially valuable essentials for a journalist." These quotations could easily be used because they express the views of men who can not be accused of orthodox bias.

(b) This individual estimate of the Bible is that of the civilized world as a *whole*. As ever, but more than ever, does the world regard the Bible as "the one book." Its circulation exceeds almost infinitely that of all books. It can now be read either in whole or in large part, in more than seven hundred and seventy tongues, and during the past decade it has appeared in a new language on an average every six weeks. There are at least thirty societies for the printing and distribution of the Bible. The annual output of these private firms is over twenty-eight million copies of the whole Bible or of important portions of it; and in the past century five hundred and fifty million copies have been prepared by the Bible Societies. The British Society alone issues two thousand Bibles every working hour, or one every two seconds, and yet it is but little more than one hundred years ago that Voltaire prophesied that in one hundred years the Bible would be an extinct book.

Nor may it be urged that these Bibles are simply issued. It is because they are called for to be read that they are pub-

¹⁷ Vid. "Chautauqua Text Books," No. VIII. *What Noted Men Think of the Bible*, by Professor Luther A. Townsend, D.D.

lished. The demand, too, for literature in explanation and illustration of the Bible is quite as remarkable as the size of its annual issue. Over two hundred thousand volumes have been written in exposition of the Scriptures. This demand for books on the Bible was never so great as it is now, and it is coming from all quarters and classes. More emphatically than in any previous age the civilized world is saying, "There is but one book, the Bible."

(c) This is the more remarkable in view of the wonderful progress that has been made in all departments of investigation. In consequence of this it is constantly becoming necessary to discount, and even to retract, many of the statements of even the most approved works of no more than a quarter of a century ago. We are not surprised, therefore, that Mr. Romanes should write: "What most deeply impresses me is the absence from the biography of Christ of any doctrine which the subsequent growth of human knowledge—in natural science, ethics, political economy, or elsewhere—has had to discount."¹⁸ No fact could have been so striking, no proof so cogent, as this, to one who, like Romanes, had been for twenty-five years absorbed with science and given over to skepticism. It could scarcely fail to convince such a thinker, of the uniqueness of the book of which Christ was the great subject. Another somewhat similar example of its uniqueness is that it is the only book that admits of translation into all languages. Even Mr. Gladstone's speeches must be paraphrased before they can be rendered into the tongues of India. On the contrary, history has written in shining letters on the forefront of the Bible, in the crisp words of Martin Kaehler, "This is mankind's book."

(d) The significance of the unique appreciation of the Bible can be felt only when we remember the trials which the Scriptures have sustained and to which they are still being subjected. In no outward respect is the Bible so conspicuously unique as in this. The Koran is widely circulated and the commentaries on it are legion. Yet even if in these re-

¹⁸ *Thoughts on Religion*, p. 157.

spects it could approach the Bible, the latter would still be sharply distinguished from it by the persecutions which it has endured and is still encountering. There has been nothing like them in history. The record of them constitutes, perhaps, the most important and significant chapter in modern history. Nowhere else can we read of such a massing of patience, learning, ingenuity, and malignity for the accomplishment of one end. Where, then, can we find such proof of the unique power of the Bible as that it has come out of all these assaults only strengthened by them? The book against the credibility of whose records a Celsus wrote his *True Account* and whose consistency a Porphyry labored to disprove; the book on the refutation of which in later times English deism and German rationalism and French atheism exhausted themselves; the book the attempts to discredit which in the last century called forth and destroyed a Strauss, a Renan, and a Baur,—the book which has suffered and triumphed under all this should not now fear because it is being subjected to a “higher” and often hostile criticism, more learned, more keen, more resolute than that to which any or all other writings have had to submit; and such a book by its foes, even more than by its friends, ought to be admitted, as through this opposition it has been proved, to be unique in its hold on the confidence and love of men. In a word, that, as never before, the Bible is still *the* book is rendered only the more conspicuous and impressive by the number and variety and force of the assaults that it has sustained and is yet successfully meeting. Indeed, the unique opposition which it has always had to encounter raises of itself a strong presumption that it is in a unique sense “the Word of God.” This is just the kind of resistance on the part of the Devil that we should expect, if the Bible were such.

(e) Its unique power and beneficence appear positively as well as negatively, in conquering the world no less than in resisting its own adversaries. The triumphs of missions have been achieved by “the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.” Sometimes the Bible has been the only

instrument in the regeneration of empires. New life and hope were introduced at first into Japan, not by any missionary, but simply through the truth recorded on a few water-soaked pages of a New Testament picked up in the harbor of one of the large cities.

(f) Nor may we pass over our own experience of the blessed power of the Bible. No book has been to us what it is. We have found it "a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path" (Ps. cxix.105). We turn to its consolations when we are in trouble, we rely on its promises when we are in temptation, we await the fulfilment of its prophecies for the consummation of our joy and glory. It responds to the deepest longings of our hearts, as does no other book, as do not all other books. If we could not prove it, we should still feel, so that no argument could convince us of the contrary, that it holds a unique place in all literature and that it does this because of its unique preciousness to our souls. Our experience of the Bible constrains us to say of it as Walter Scott also wrote of it:

Within this ample volume lies
The mystery of mysteries.
Happiest they of human race
To whom their God has given grace
To read, to fear, to hope, to pray,
To lift the latch, to force the way;
And better had they ne'er been born,
That read to doubt or read to scorn.

(g) Now the question that arises is this: Can the book which, in spite of the uniquely abundant and powerful criticism that it has sustained, continues to make so uniquely beneficent an impression for good on the greatest minds, to exert so uniquely blessed an influence on the civilized world, to effect so unique transformations in heathendom, and to be in our own experience nothing less than the very truth of God,—can *this* book be on its face either a lie or a mistake? Yet, as we have seen, it would be one of these, were it not even in its words "the Word of God." Such a supposition however, as that it is a lie or a mistake can not be appreciated

and not be felt to be impossible. If the Bible were not, as it claims, verbally inspired, then error would be more beneficent as well as more powerful than truth.

(2) The admitted source of many parts of the Bible. For example :

(a) The Ten Commandments. These, it is allowed, form the highest moral code. Some of the most profound jurists have been led to put their faith in the Bible simply because it contained the Decalogue. Yet Moses, who wrote the books which record it was the leader of a half-civilized and degraded body of Egyptian slaves. Whence, then, did he get the law in which the thinkers of each succeeding age have found more to wonder at and revere than did those of its predecessors? Had his moral and religious knowledge been only that which his education and environment in Egypt at the court of Pharaoh would have furnished, could he have composed it at all? The Romans in judicial spirit and in legal attainments were incomparably superior to both the Egyptians and the Hebrews. Yet in Cicero, that prince of Roman moralists as well as lawyers, there is nothing which for depth of insight and universality of application and comprehensiveness of expression can be even likened to that law, which Moses claimed to write because "God spake all these words" (Ex. xx.1) and gave them to him written with his own finger on tables of stone (Deut. ix.10). Whence, then, did Moses get it, if not as he claimed? To suppose that he wrote it of himself is as absurd as it would be to think of him, with the environment which we know that he had, composing *Hamlet* or the *Principia*.

(b) Take the Psalms. John Bright once said to Gladstone¹⁹ that "he would be content to stake upon them as they stood the great question whether there was or was not a divine revelation." He was correct. The Psalms are the prime and paramount manual of devotion. Wherever the pursuits of the inner life have been most largely conceived and cultivated, and in the same proportion, the Psalms have towered

¹⁹ *The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*, p. 148.

over every other vehicle of devotion. Yet their compilation began three thousand years ago with a shepherd. That shepherd belonged to a nation, a race, and a civilization, isolated then and now out of relation to us. They had no literature outside of their religion nor any fine art. We have appropriated and even rivalled the literature and the art of the greatest among the ancients. Yet no other people, no other religion, however cultivated, however in sympathy with us, has furnished anything at all comparable with that strange book of Hebrew hymns. They are as fresh today as when "the chief musician" first had them chanted. They are more precious. They voice forever the holiest aspirations of those whom history or experience has made most dear to us. How do you account for this universal and undying popularity of a work composed by men of the most isolated and narrowest of nations? Is any explanation so probable as that the Father of us all inspired the writers? Is any so inadequate as that they wrote just as men do ordinarily? As another has said, "The immense disparity between the Old Testament as a book and the Hebrew people as a nation shows that the knowledge of God and of divine things contained in the former, but wanting in the latter, came from *without*." It was not an evolution from within. It was communicated as the Bible itself claims, from on high.

Now the question that arises is this: Could a book containing, as we have just seen that the Scriptures must, revelations from God,—could such a book be on its face a lie or a mistake? Can we conceive that the God of truth would publish his thoughts in any book that was such? Could he thus sanction error and not lie and so deny himself? Yet, as we have seen, the Bible would be on its face a lie or a mistake, if it were not inspired as to its words; for it makes this claim for itself.

(3) The organic *unity* of the Bible. It begins with the preparation of the earth for the service of man. It tells of his origin, of his temptation, of his fall. It then "draws downward a thread of properly personal history of divergent fam-

ilies of men. This thread is enlarged into a web, as from being personal the narrative becomes national from the exodus onwards; and eventually it includes the entire race of man. And the whole is doubly woven into one formation. First, by a chain of divine action, and of human instructors acting under divine authority, which is sustained and represented by national institutions, and is never broken until the time when political servitude, like another Egyptian captivity, has become the appointed destiny of the nation. Secondly, by the Messianic bond, by the light of prophecy shining in a dark place, and directing onwards the minds of devout men to the fulness of time and the birth of the wondrous child, so as to link the older books to the dispensation of the Advent, and to carry forward their office, through one action both of the church and in it, until the final day of doom when the kingdoms of the world shall have become the kingdoms of God and of his Christ." Thus the Bible is one work. It is the history of redemption. The subject was announced in the protevangelium uttered to our first parents, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. Each book adds something to the revelation thus begun. Each book presupposes the others. The Psalms can not be understood without the Pentateuch, and the Pentateuch would be most incomplete without the Psalms. The prophecies rest on and develop both and are set in the histories. Each evangelist writes of our Lord from a different standpoint; and to appreciate him truly, we must read their fourfold Gospel. The Epistles imply the Acts of the Apostles, as it is also based on the Gospels; and it is not too much to say that even the discourses of our Saviour need to be unfolded and applied by Paul in his letters. The theology of the latter must be offset by that of James and Jude and Peter and John, if the proportion of "the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" is to be observed, and the whole must be crowned with the glowing visions of the Revelation. Thus either Testament is an harmonious whole, and, together, they form one book. The New is involved in the Old; the Old is unfolded in the

New. Such is the unity of the Bible. Now remember, that it is made up of sixty-six books; that these were composed by some forty writers—the Higher Critics would help us by multiplying their number; that these writers were of all ranks and conditions, shepherds, fishermen, priests, warriors, statesmen, kings; and that they wrote their books at intervals through sixteen centuries. How, then, can we account for the unity of their result? No collusion between them will explain it; for they were too far separated as to both time and space. Yet explanation is demanded. Those who write independently do not write harmoniously. Hegelian idealism is followed by Spencerian positivism, but they form anything else than one philosophy. Whence, then, this amazing unity? Is any other explanation possible than that the Bible is what it affirms itself to be? that it was written “by men who spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter i. 21)? Its unity involves throughout its composition the superintendence and control of him who “knows the end from the beginning” because he has “foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.”

Now the question is this: Can we conceive of God as thus positively superintending and controlling the composition of the whole Bible, even of those numerous parts that contain no direct revelations from him, and yet not allow what the Bible, as we have seen, both implicitly and explicitly, both frequently and positively, teaches; viz., that God’s superintendence and control extended even to its words, so that, in spite of its human elements, it is throughout inerrant and infallible? What would this be but to admit that God could be party to a lie or a mistake? And what would this be but to allow that there was no *God* at all?

(4) The Bible was written by men, most of whom, and at least those who testify to the inspiration of the whole, as Paul and Peter, were authenticated by God as his special messengers through the miracles which they wrought or the prophecies which they delivered. That is, God has put on them, and so on their message, his own seal of divine power

or of divine knowledge. Now is it conceivable that he should have done this, if the book to which they contributed was quite different from what on its very face it declared itself to be? What would this be but for the God of truth to put his own seal to a lie or a mistake? And what would this signify, if not that there was no truth?

(5) The chief subject or character of the Bible. This is Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God and the Son of man. This admits of no doubt. The New Testament is both the history of his life in the flesh and afterwards of his life in the Spirit through the church "which is his body;" and it is the development of his doctrines, and it is the vision of the coming glory of his kingdom; and it is of him that all the prophets bare witness, so that he could "begin at Moses and all the prophets and expound unto his disciples in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." Now this character of Jesus is incomparably the most wonderful of the many wonderful things in the Bible. View him from any standpoint that you please. For the time being approach him in the spirit of those critics who would strip him of all that makes him most dear to us. Try to regard him simply as "the man Christ Jesus." Endeavor to stand sad and downcast before him and to estimate him only as we do the Parthenon in its *ruins*. Still, the question comes, Whence that character? Though mutilated by all that criticism more destructive as well as more unjust than time can do, that character is yet the most magnificent of mysteries. History centres about it; history has been made by it: but history records nothing like it. Who, then, conceived it? Galilean peasants who, according to their own statements, never understood Christ while he was with them? The idea is preposterous. With the picture before them, the world's best thinkers and scholars have failed utterly even to reproduce it. Indeed, as Theodore Parker said, "It would have taken a Jesus to forge a Jesus."²⁰ We are driven, then, to the alternative. This character must be of divine conception. God must have instituted the types which foreshadowed

²⁰ *The Person of Christ*, p. 267.

him. God must have inspired the prophecies which foretold him. God's personal manifestation must have been the life which expressed him. And this being so, God's, even to its words, must be the book of which he is the subject and the sum, the beginning and the end. Otherwise, the most glorious of God's thoughts, to say no more where infinitely more could be said,—the most glorious of his thoughts God has chosen to enshrine in a book which, if it were not, even as to its words, his Word, would be, as we have seen, on its very face, a lie or a mistake. Who can appreciate this and not say that it is impossible? As well might we think that he who is "the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his substance" would take to himself a *sinful* human nature. Were either supposition possible, the distinction between truth and error would be gone; thought would be vain; and being itself might be a delusion.

Thus these conspicuous and incontestable facts to which attention has just been called: the uniquely powerful and blessed influence of the Bible, the inadequacy of its human authors as the sole authors of its truths and of its effects, its organic unity, the seal of miracle and prophecy impressed on it, and its controlling character, are inconsistent with any other hypothesis than that the Bible is the supernatural work of God. But do you not see, as in each case has been pointed out, that, this being granted, it must also be admitted that, even as to its words, it is the Word of God and so in all respects inerrant? For that even as to its words it is the Word of God,—this is its clear and positive claim for itself; and this being so, how could the God of truth have had any personal share in its production, were this claim untrue? Would he not on any such supposition be himself a party to untruth and so deny himself? But "he can not deny himself" (2 Tim. ii. 13).

IV. THE ALLEGED MISTAKES OF THE BIBLE

What, however, in view of this conclusion are we to think of the alleged *mistakes* of the Bible? Do not these prove that, whatever it may say of itself, it is errant and so not verbally inspired?

A. We should remark :

1. The objection thus raised we ought not to try to evade.

a. We may not say, as some do, especially when conversing with persons of little scholarship, that the apparent mistakes of the Bible are all due to inaccuracies of translation. Every one who reads the Scriptures in the originals knows that this is not so. No translation, and least of all one from the Greek, can bring out the richness of the original; but any really good translation can avoid misstatements and false doctrines, and both our Revised and Authorized Versions of the Scriptures probably stand unsurpassed among translations of every kind.

b. Neither may we say, as many are prone to do, that if we had the original documents of the Bible, for which alone inspiration is claimed, all the difficulties in the Scriptures would disappear. This is not true either. Doubtless, most of them, particularly, as to numbers, are due to the inevitable mistakes of copyists not supernaturally guided. But the fact is that the wonderful progress of Textual Criticism has enabled us to correct most of these errors. Indeed, we can say with certainty that, though we do not have an inspired text, we do have a text which in all respects save the merest unessentials is *already* what the inspired autographs were.

c. Nor may we claim that, because the alleged mistakes in the Bible are comparatively few and trifling, we should ignore them altogether. It is true that, relatively, they are not numerous and that in any other book they would be insignificant. As Prebendary Row well says: "These discrepancies have been exaggerated to an extent that is absurd. A large number of them admit of an easy reconciliation under the guidance of common sense. Others arise from the fragmentary nature of the narrative, and our ignorance of the entire facts. Not a few of the remainder owe their origin to the fact that the events have been grouped in reference to the religious purpose of the author rather than to the order of direct historical sequence. Of a few the reconciliation is difficult"²¹

²¹ *Bampton Lectures*, 1877, p. 472.

These few, however, are enough to demand careful attention. The book which, even as to its words is the "Word of God" is no place for even a few *real* discrepancies.²²

d. Nor, finally, may it be urged that probably every one of these relatively few apparent discrepancies can be removed by resorting to exegesis more or less strained and unnatural. Just because we believe the Bible to be even in its words *the* Word of God must we insist that any but the most honest exegesis of it is absolutely intolerable. It is infinitely better to deny every even the lowest kind of inspiration than to resort to any exegetical trick to maintain our doctrine. In a word, we are bound frankly to admit that there are in the Scriptures some apparent mistakes. What, then, shall we do with them?

2. Two courses are open :

a. We may allow that the mistakes are real, and so deny the verbal inspiration of the Bible. For this course, however, we could advance no other argument than the one from inability. All that we could say would be that we could not solve the problem and that, therefore, it could not be solved. But this is no sufficient argument. Because *you* have no key for a lock it does not follow that it can not be unlocked. Hence, it is not conclusive to show that there are some discrepancies in the Bible. Until you can prove that these are indisputable errors, that they necessarily involve contradictions, they will, in view of the great weight of evidence for the inerrancy of the Scriptures, count for nothing save as adverse *presumptions*. Now discrepancies of this kind are not forthcoming. Not one of the alleged mistakes of the Scriptures is such as requires us to admit that it must be a mistake; is such as forbids the belief that its offence could be removed, did we know enough; is such as may not honestly be kept in abeyance, if there be, as there is, the strongest presumption against it.

b. There is the alternative course. We may regard these apparent mistakes as real difficulties to be frankly admitted and carefully studied, but not at all as objections in consequence of which the doctrine in question must be rejected.

²² So Augustine argues to Jerome. See the former's fortieth epistle.

For the adoption of this course there are numerous and strong and, it would seem, sufficient reasons.

(1) The most serious of the alleged mistakes in Scripture are only unproved errors. In logical phrase, with reference to other Biblical statements, they may be contraries, but they have not been shown to be contradictories.

(2) The existence of such difficulties is only what was, from analogy, to be expected. Indeed, it would be a greater difficulty, if we did not find them. The case of the doctrine of inspiration would then be unlike that of all the other doctrines of the Bible. Which one of them does not encounter difficulties in the facts to which it has to be applied? Do not some of them, for example, the resurrection of the body, election, meet difficulties yet more serious when they come to be worked out in physical and human nature? Moreover, is it not on grounds such as these that science is built up? Outside of the sphere of necessary truth, it is accepted, not because it has been demonstrated, not because all difficulties in the way of it have been removed, but solely because the weight of evidence is in its favor.

(3) The apparent mistakes of the Bible are a vanishing as well as an uncertain quantity. As Dr. Warfield has said, "Every critical student knows that the progress of investigation has been a continuous process of removing difficulties, until scarcely a shred of the old list of 'Biblical Errors' remains."²³

(4) In addition to all this, as what is decisive, there is the immense presumption in favor of the doctrine of verbal inspiration which we have seen to be the Scriptural doctrine of inspiration. This presumption is no less than that which arises from the vast mass of evidence, that the Bible is credible in its doctrinal statements; that our Lord and his Apostles are trustworthy in their teaching of doctrine; and that the book which, in view of its influence so unique, its authors so inadequate in themselves, its unity, its miraculous attestation, and its controlling character, is evidently supernatural,

²³ *Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, Vol. IV, p. 220.

can not but be so in the sense and to the extent which it itself affirms, that is, even as to its words.

CONCLUSION

Such being the weight of evidence for this alternative, can we hesitate which to take? Must it not be unreasonable, for the sake of a few to be expected and diminishing difficulties, a few to be anticipated and decreasing unproved errors, to set aside a doctrine which rests on the credibility of the New Testament in general, on the trustworthiness of Christ and his Apostles in particular, and on the moral impossibility of the Bible being supernatural as it is and not being inspired as it says?

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