

THE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE

The reason why the committee chose the subject, "The Inspiration of the Scriptures" for this study conference may not readily be apparent. To the best of my knowledge ministers of our churches and teachers in our theological institutions in Canada are fully committed to the doctrine of the inspiration of the Scriptures, and consequently to the view that they are totally trustworthy, and the final authority in all matters pertaining to life and faith. Perhaps a pastoral concern prompted the subject, a concern for those who have raised questions about the inspiration and authority of the Bible. Perhaps there is a broader concern, a concern that we have not sufficiently given Christ and his Word the pre-eminent place in our minds and in our lives as is their due. We are to be reminded of the great treasure our Lord has entrusted to us--a reliable and trustworthy witness and testimony to the great redemptive work of God in Christ. Surely, if this conference is to be the beginning of a series of Bible study conferences among us, then we must be stirred up anew to the thought that the inspired Scripture is a very powerful Book, and that God can make its message alive in our midst through his Spirit. Any other approach to the Word is the approach of un-faith!

We want to begin our study in the spirit indicated by Paul when he characterized the Scriptures as writings "which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 3:15). Scriptures have a soteriological purpose; they have been given to make us wise unto salvation. Our Lord chided the Jews because they did not regard Scriptures as a witness to himself (John 5).

Our study of the inspiration of the Scriptures is to confirm us in our faith and trust in him who came to save us from our sins and to build his church unto the ends of the ages. If the Scriptures really speak to us we will not lose nerve in a day when a host of theologians and scholars bombard us with critical theories and unwarranted conclusions about the Word of God. As faithful stewards of the unbounded riches in Christ and his Word we rejoice in the task of proclaiming the Gospel, bringing forth things both old and new. With Luther and many others with him, we say to those who would tamper with God's revelation to man, "Das Wort nur sollen sie lassen stehn!"

It is important that we clarify our method in this study. We want to examine the specific teaching or doctrinal statements made by the biblical writers on the subject of inspiration. We also want to examine some of the phenomena (facts, data) of the biblical record. Both aspects, the teaching of Scripture about itself, as well as the phenomena of Scripture are relevant. The first consideration will be given to the Bible's testimony about itself. Just as the Bible teaches us what we are to believe about the incarnate Son of God, the death and resurrection of our Lord and the work of the church, so it also teaches us what we are to believe about inspiration. If Scripture is reliable when it speaks about Christ, it is reliable when it speaks about inspiration. No group of scholars or the mind of man can set itself up as a court of judgment to determine the reliability or unreliability of the Scriptures, or the nature of its inspiration.

A second consideration will entail some of the phenomena of the Bible, such as, the manner in which the New Testament writers quoted

the Old Testament, and how Gospel writers varied in their accounts of similar incidents and events. A definition of the inspiration of Scripture must do justice to the phenomena of Scripture. Finally we must state that the treatment is highly restrictive and that we do not have all the answers to the questions that can be raised on this complex subject. Our concern is to present views which will be in accord with the testimony of Scripture.

I. THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD WRITTEN

To say that the Bible is the Word of God is not to deny that there are other forms of the Word of God. The Word of God came to the prophets and was present in their oral proclamations (Isaiah 1:1-3). The Word of God came to us in the person of Jesus Christ - the eternal Word. Scripture does not set up any tension between these various forms of the Word of God. Nor is there any indication of a tension between Jesus Christ, as the Word, and his proclamations, as the Word of God--pronouncements which were later recorded in Scripture.

A. The Old Testament

The Old Testament prophets claimed to speak the very Word of God. They were to be a mouth for God (Exod. 4:12-16), and God would put his words into their mouths (Deut. 18:18; Jer. 1:9). All true prophets claimed an identity of their words with God's revelation to them. The word that came to Jeremiah remained the Word of God after it was written in a book by Baruch at the dictation of Jeremiah.

The New Testament writers regarded the Old Testament as the 'oracles of God' (Rom. 3:2). They placed the Scriptures and God into such a conjunction that on the point of authority little distinction was made. What Scripture said - that God said.

Romans 9:7 "For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, 'I have raised you up for the very purpose of showing my power in you, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.'" (cf. Ex. 9:16)

These words, according to the Old Testament, were spoken by God. In the mind of Paul 'what God said' and 'what Scripture said' had by habit become identified (cf. Gal. 3:8).

Matt. 19:4,5 "He answered, 'Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one'?"

In the Old Testament these words are not placed in God's mouth; rather the writer of Genesis records them. But in the mind of our Lord they are attributed to God because the text of Scripture and the Word of God were regarded as identical.

In Hebrews 8:3, the words of Jeremiah are regarded as God's words, and in Hebrews 5:5 David's words are attributed to God.

These and other passages in the New Testament indicate that what is written in the Old Testament Scriptures is to be regarded as the very Word of God.¹

It is this fact which made the Old Testament Scriptures authoritative for our Lord and the apostles.² Jesus fulfilled the Scriptures and confirmed their authority: "Till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law" (Matt. 2:18). The finality of that authority is seen most conspicuously in his disputes with the religious leaders of Israel as he discusses the divine will with regard to marriage (Matt. 19:6,7), the keeping of the sabbath (Matt. 12:4-7), or the testimony of Scripture to himself (Jn. 5:39-47).

Biblical scholars generally recognize that our Lord regarded the Old Testament Scriptures as infallible. F. C. Grant writes that in the New Testament "it is everywhere taken for granted that Scripture is trustworthy, infallible and inerrant No New Testament writer would ever dream of questioning a statement contained in the Old Testament."³

B. The New Testament

The New Testament Scriptures grew out of the divine revelation and redemption in Jesus Christ.⁴ The Son of God saved us through his messianic mission and commissioned his apostles to proclaim and interpret that redemption. These two aspects are related--the redemptive accomplishments of Christ in his life, death and resurrection, and the authoritative interpretation and proclamation of the gospel events. Prior to his ascension Jesus promised that the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth would come to teach them all things and "bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26). The Spirit "will guide you into all truth . . . and show you things to come" (John 16:13-15; cf. John 15:26,27). The Word of God, as spoken by Christ, would be communicated through those entrusted with the continuation of revelation, namely the apostles. The New Testament Scriptures became the written form of the Word of God which had come through Christ and by way of the apostles with the help of the promised Holy Spirit. The oral proclamation of Christ and his commissioned apostles became the Word of God written. The inscripturation of the Word of God was part of the messianic work of Christ.

Sometimes it is flippantly remarked that Paul would be surprised to see his epistles as part of the canon. Associated with this idea is the thought that the books of the New Testament were not originally considered holy or canonical by their author or by their receivers. This is not really the case. The apostolic proclamation, oral or written, was clothed with special authority from the beginning. Paul insisted that his letters be read in the gatherings of the church (1 Thess. 5:27; Col. 4:16), as the writings of the Old Testament were read. Consequently churches exchanged Paul's letters. Paul also claimed divine authority for what he said (2 Cor. 10:7,8); anyone preaching a gospel contrary to the gospel which he had preached to the Galatians was to be damned (Gal. 1:8); the instructions he was giving to the Thessalonians, he claimed was through Christ (1 Thess. 4:2, cf. Thess. 3:6-14). The Word he brought to them was the Word of God (1 Thess. 2:13). In 1 Corinthians 2:13 Paul is quite clear in stating that his words were not taught by human wisdom--but taught by the Holy Spirit. This is the marvel of revelation and inspiration in the Christian faith, that God speaks in history to man's needs in order to redeem him and sanctify him and create a people for himself. Through the letters of his apostles writing to the concrete situations of the life of the church God gives his directives, reveals his will and his gospel. John, the author of Revelation presupposed that his writing would be read in the churches (1:3) and warns of curses on all those who would add or take away from the book (22:18-19).

The New Testament writers also placed each others writings on the same level as the Old Testament. Peter, referring to Paul writes:

"So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, speaking of this as he does in all his letters. There are some things in them hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other scriptures" (2 Peter 2:15-16). Paul's writings are put into the same category as the Old Testament Scriptures. In 2 Peter 3:2, the "commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles" is placed on the same level with the canonical authority of the Old Testament prophets. It is not surprising, therefore, that the early church assembled the writings into a complete canon of the New Testament. The New Testament writings are the Word of God written.

C. Inadequate Formulations

1. It is inadequate to say that the Bible contains the Word of God, implying that some parts are not given by inspiration, or failing to identify the Bible with the Word of God.
2. It is incorrect to say that the Bible is only indirectly the Word of God, and that it may become the Word of God to those who receive it. The Word of God must certainly become your Word and my Word, as it speaks to us. It, however, remains the Word of God whether we accept it or not. The Scripture read by the Ethiopian eunuch was the objective Word of God before he understood it as a witness to Christ.
3. It is incomplete to say that the Bible witnesses to the revelation in Jesus Christ, but is not itself revelation. The Bible indeed witnesses to Christ, but it is

also revelation. It consists of revelational truth.⁵

"In many and various ways God ~~spoke~~ of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son" (Heb. 1:1-2).

The acceptance or rejection of the Bible as the Word of God written basically boils down to the question: "What think you of Christ?" If Jesus accepted the Old Testament Scriptures as the Word of God and constantly appealed to it as final authority, his followers can do no less. To argue that Christ was talking down to the level of a popular ignorance which he himself did not share, when he accepted the historicity of the Old Testament events and the authorship of Old Testament books, is hardly tenable. As Tasker has put it, "Such an explanation, . . . would seem not only to be inconsistent with the note of absolute sincerity which runs so conspicuously throughout his teaching, but also to conflict with the very great care with which he separates, for example, in the Sermon on the Mount, features of the divine law, which were permanently binding, from later misconceptions and false deductions" ⁶ To argue that Christ had so emptied himself of divine qualities in the incarnation that he uncritically accepted the views of his credulous contemporaries, who did not yet have the benefit of the fruits of modern critical scholarship, seems to me a position we can not possibly hold. If we accept as true Christ's interpretation of the Old Testament Scriptures as finding their fulfillment in him, we cannot but trust him in all the views he holds about the Old Testament.⁷

II. THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD BECAUSE IT WAS WRITTEN BY THE INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

A. The Divine Book

The Bible is a human and a divine book. The divine origin of the Bible is clearly spelled out in the following key texts.

2 Timothy 3:16: "All Scripture is inspired by God "

Paul urged upon Timothy the study of the Bible because it was inspired. Because it was inspired it was profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness." The word "inspired"

(theopneustos) occurs only this one time in Scripture.

As Warfield has shown the word means "ex-spired" by

God; it means "God-breathed."⁸ It presents the idea that Scripture is the product of the creative breath of God.

It is because Scripture originates in God that it can make us wise unto salvation.

2 Peter 1:19-21: " . . . no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's private interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." Peter exhorts his readers to pay attention to the prophetic word - the Scriptures. This word is a sure word, which as a lamp shining in a dark place. It does not originate from man's private interpretation; it is not the product of man's mind or his initiative, "but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." The word moved means to be "borne," "conveyed," "taken up" by the Spirit.

From these texts we may define inspiration as the supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit upon the human authors of Scripture, by which these writings were the Word of God.

B. The Human Book

Men wrote the Scriptures. Inspiration involves human language, human literary forms and human personality. The Bible is not a docetic book, bereft of its human characteristics. It is fully divine and fully human. The Bible therefore comes to us in different languages rooted in different cultures. Because human authors retained their individual styles the Bible has a richness of forms including narrative, poetry, dialogue, speeches, parables and letters.⁹

How the divine and the human interlink in the process of revelation and inspiration remains a mystery to us. What Scriptures teaches is that the writings produced can be fully trusted by man. Modern theology assumes that human authors of Scripture writing out of their cultural and religious situation were fallible men subject to error. A statement from Barth indicated such a view: "To the bold postulate, that if their [the Biblical writers'] word is to be the word of God they must be inerrant in every word, we oppose the even bolder assertion, that according to the scriptural witness about man, which applies to them too [the Biblical writers], they can be at fault in every word, and have been at fault in every word, and yet according to the same scriptural witness, being justified and sanctified by grace alone, they have spoken the Word of God in their fallible and erring human word" (Church Dogmatiks I, 2, 529-30).

Such a view is based upon the presupposition that revelation is a crisis encounter, and the Bible a witness to such a revelation, not revelation itself.

C. The Trustworthy and Reliable Book

If what we have stated so far is correct, then the Bible is absolutely trustworthy. Some of the different terms which have been used to express this thought have been: verbal and plenary inspiration, infallibility and inerrancy. These are theological terms not found in Scripture and unless carefully defined have been subject to much misunderstanding and controversy.

1. Verbal and plenary inspiration: Verbal inspiration is a concept which expresses the thought that the reliability of Scripture extends to the very words of Scripture. Plenary inspiration expresses the idea that all of Scripture is inspired of God. Because the concept 'verbal inspiration' has sometimes been linked with a mechanical-dictation theory, there has been a tendency on the part of some theologians to avoid the term. John G. Wenger in his recent book, God's Word Written, has this to say about this term and others, "Perhaps it is wisest not to insist on a human name for an obvious mystery [i.e. inspiration] but simply to assert with the Scriptures that the Bible was written by holy men of God who were borne by the Holy Spirit so effectively that all Scripture is 'God-given'"(p. 52). This writer believes that these terms may have a certain usefulness in setting forth the teaching of Scripture. The Bible insists that what it teaches and communicates is from God; one can hardly dissociate words from the meaning they are meant to convey. Wrong words distort the message of God.

Behind the concept of verbal inspiration is the concept of verbal revelation, a concept much under fire in the modern discussion of revelation.¹⁰ Verbal inspiration does not rule out that God reveals himself in redemptive acts as the Lord of history and in the living Christ;¹¹ nor does it imply that receiving his revelation is a matter of acquiring an intellectual knowledge of the contents of Scripture. Revelation is redemptively directed to bring the recipient into a transforming fellowship with the living Christ. What the concepts of verbal revelation and verbal inspiration are jealous to maintain is the Scriptural teaching that the saving acts of God in history cannot be interpreted by man without the objective interpretative words of God revealed to man. Without verbal revelation the redemptive acts of God remain an enigma to man.¹² While we have no Biblical texts which are wholly uncorrupted in the process of transmission and translation, the New Testament believers did not hesitate to trust the texts as they had them. We must do the same. Receiving with gratitude what textual criticism has to offer to provide us with as pure a text and translation of Scripture as possible, we regard Scripture as trustworthy and reliable.

7. Infallibility and inerrancy: Infallibility expresses the idea of being 'trustworthy' and 'totally reliable'. Inerrancy means 'wholly true'. Because God is infallible and true, and cannot lie, his Word is infallible, true and cannot err (cf. Rom. 9:1; 2 Cor. 11:31; Gal. 1:20; 1 Tim. 2:7).¹³ When we say that the Bible is infallible and inerrant we mean that we believe it to be of divine origin and trustworthy. These terms have frequently been misunderstood. They cannot be properly understood without taking into account the phenomena of Scripture.

3. What Infallibility and Inerrancy do not mean

a) They do not imply that New Testament writers have to be verbally ~~exact~~ in their use of Old Testament quotations. Frequent confluations occur in the New Testament as well as word changes in the texts used. We want to take a look at Stephen's speech in Acts 7 to note his freedom in interpreting the Old Testament.

STEPHEN'S SPEECH

Acts 7:2-4

And Stephen said:
'Brethren and fathers, hear me, The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, and said to him, 'Depart from your land and from your kindred and go into the land which I will show you.

Then he departed from the land of the Chaldeans, and lived in Haran. And after his father died, God removed him from there into this land in which you are now living'.

The call of Abraham:

Stephen says that God appeared to Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia. Two Old Testament passages refer to Abraham being brought out of Ur (Gen. 15:7; Neh. 9:7), but neither mention that God appeared to him there. The Genesis 12 call came when he was in Haran. Philo (a Jewish philosopher from Alexandria of the first century A.D.) and Josephus (a Jewish historian of the first century A.D.) indicate a tradition that God's call came to Abraham in Ur (F.F.Bruce). Bruce writes that Stephen telescopes the call at Haran with an implied call at Ur. It is not an exact verbatim quoting of the Old Testament.

Moving from Haran: Stephen says that Abraham came to Canaan after his father died in Haran. According to the Old Testament we note:

Terah was 70 years when Abraham was born
(Gen. 11:26)

Abraham was 75 when he left Haran
(Gen. 12:4)

Terah lived to the age of 205
(Gen. 11:32)

Therefore, Abraham must have left when Terah was 145.

The Samaritan Pentateuch gives the age of Terah as 145, when he died. It is possible that Stephen assumed the Samaritan tradition.

Acts 7:15-16

And Jacob went down into Egypt. And he died, himself and our fathers, and they were carried back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham had bought for a sum of silver from the sons of Hamor in Shechem.

The burial place of Jacob and the patriarchs:

Genesis 23:16: Abraham bought a site, Machpelah, from Ephron a Hittite.

Genesis 33:19: Jacob bought a piece of land in Shechem from sons of Hamor.

Genesis 50:13: Jacob was buried at Machpelah, not Shechem.

Joshua 24:32: Joseph was buried at Shechem; no mention is made of the other patriarchs.

F. F. Bruce calls this a telescoping of two transactions or a compressed speech. Josephus has the tradition that Jacob's other sons were buried at Hebron. Some of rabbinic sources also have it. Stephen may have accepted this general knowledge.

b) They do not imply a verbal agreement in parallel accounts of the same event recorded in Scripture.

The creation account of Genesis one and two varies from the accounts in Job 38 - 42 and Psalm 104. To view events from different vantage points and to include different details, or highlight certain aspects of an event by different writers, does not detract from the doctrine of infallibility. Different writers had different aims or intents and in their constructions were borne by the Holy Spirit.

Let us take a look at the Jairus story in the synoptic gospels.

THE RETURN AND THE HEALING OF JAIRUS' DAUGHTER
AND OF THE WOMAN WHO ONLY TOUCHED CHRIST'S GARMENT

Mark 5:21-43

21 And when Jesus has crossed over again in the boat unto the other side, a great multitude was gathered unto him: and he was by the sea. And there cometh one of
22 the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and seeing him, he falleth at his feet, and beseecheth
23 him much, saying, My little daughter is at the point of death: I pray thee, that thou come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be made whole, and live.
24 And he went with him; and a great multitude followed him, and they thronged him.
25 And a woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, and had
26 suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered,
27 but rather grew worse, having heard the things concerning Jesus, came in the crowd behind, and
28 touched his garment. For she said, If I touch but his garments, I shall be made whole. And straight-
29 way the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her
30 plague. And straightway Jesus, perceiving in himself that the power proceeding from him had gone forth, turned him about in the crowd, and said, Who touched my
31 garments? And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou,
32 Who touched me? And he looked round about to see her that had
33 done this thing. But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what had been done to her, came and fell
34 down before him and told him all the truth. And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

Matt. 9:18-26

18 While he spake these things unto them, behold there came a ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and
19 she shall live. And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did his disciples.

20 And behold, a woman, who had had an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: for she said within herself, If I do but touch his garment, I shall be made whole.

22 But Jesus turning and seeing her said, Daughter, be of good cheer, thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.

Luke 8:40-56

40 And as Jesus returned, the multitude welcomed him; for they were all waiting for him.
41 And behold there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him to come into
42 his house; for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the multitude thronged him.
43 And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, and could not be healed of
44 any, came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately the issue of her blood stanch'd.

45 And Jesus said, Who is it that touched me? And when all denied, Peter said, and they that were with him, Master, the multitudes press thee and crush thee. But Jesus said,
46 Some one did touch me; for I perceived that power had gone forth from
47 me. And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him declared in the presence of all the people for what cause she touched him.
48 and how she was healed immediately. And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole, go in peace.

35 While he yet spake, they
 come from the ruler of the
 synagogue's house, saying
 Thy daughter is dead: why
 troublest thou the master
 36 any further? But Jesus,
 not heeding the word spoken,
 saith unto the ruler of the
 synagogue, Fear not, only
 37 believe. And he suffered
 no man to follow with him,
 save Peter, and James, and
 John the brother of James.
 38 And they come to the
 house of the ruler of the
 synagogue; and he beholdeth
 a tumult, and many weeping
 and wailing greatly. And
 39 when he was entered in,
 he saith unto them, Why make
 ye a tumult and weep? the
 child is not dead, but sleepeth.
 40 And they laughed him to
 scorn. But he, having put
 them all forth taketh the
 father of the child and her
 mother and them that were
 with him, and goeth in where
 41 the child was. And taking
 the child by the hand, he
 saith unto her, Talitha cumi;
 which is being interpreted,
 Damsel, I say unto thee, Arise.
 42 And straightway the damsel
 rose up, and walked; for she
 was twelve years old. And they
 were amazed straightway with a
 43 great amazement. And he
 charged them much that no man
 should know this; and he
 commanded that something
 should be given her to eat.

23 And when Jesus came
 into the ruler's house,
 and saw the flute
 players, and the crowd
 making a tumult, he said,
 24 Give place: for the
 damsel is not dead, but
 sleepeth. And they
 laughed him to scorn.
 25 But when the crowd
 was put forth, he
 entered in, and took her
 by the hand; and the
 damsel arose, And the
 fame hereof went forth
 into all that land.

49 While he yet spake, the
 cometh one from the ruler
 of the synagogue's house,
 saying, Thy daughter is
 dead; trouble not the
 50 Master. But Jesus hear-
 ing it, answered him, Fear
 not: only believe, and she
 shall be made whole. And
 51 when he came to the
 house, he suffered not any
 man to enter in with him,
 save Peter, and John, and
 James, and the father of
 the maiden and her mother.
 52 And all were weeping,
 and bewailing her: but he
 said, Weep not; for she is
 not dead, but sleepeth.
 53 And they laughed him to
 scorn, knowing that she wa
 dead. But he, taking her
 54 by the hand, called,
 saying, Maiden, arise.
 55 And her spirit returned
 and she rose up immedi-
 ately: and he commanded
 that something be given
 her to eat. And her parent
 56 were amazed but he
 charged them to tell no
 man what had been done.

You will note that the stories vary in their details. It is obvious that in the Mark and Luke accounts an attempt is made to center our thinking on the quality of Christian faith - to believe when things seem impossible for man. Jesus encourages the woman who touched his

garment and Jairus in the exercise of complete faith and trust. Jairus is to believe even after the messenger brings tidings of the death of his daughter; the remarks of this messenger are very important to the story, as are the details about the crowds about Jesus and the one touch of faith. In the Matthew account we have brief descriptions suitable to Matthew's purpose of presenting Jesus Christ as the Son of God with great powers of performing miracles--he is the one who was to come! There is no contradiction - only a difference of emphasis to show the fulness and grandeur of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.¹⁴

c) They do not imply that Biblical writers could not employ popular phrases and expressions of the day, and describe the things of nature without employing scientifically precise language. They described phenomena of nature as they appeared to their senses.¹⁵ In Genesis 1:16 we read that "God made the two great lights, the greater light to rule the night, he made stars also." The sun and moon are described larger than the stars because they present themselves so to the eye. Other poetic expressions are used to describe the world.

We believe the Bible to be trustworthy when it touches upon aspects of its contemporary world. We do not look to archaeology to prove the Bible; no amount of archaeology can do this. But the findings of archaeology have forced critics of Scripture to revise their views repeatedly. While the chief value of these findings lies in helping us to understand the world of the Scriptures and in illuminating incidents and texts of Scripture, they have also corroborated the Biblical accounts.¹⁶

III. SOME IMPLICATIONS OF THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF SCRIPTURE¹⁷

1. Faith in Jesus Christ is not dissociated from trust in the reliability of Scripture as the Word of God. The Christ who has redeemed us and communicates his grace to us till he comes again is the Christ of Scripture! The recognition of the trustworthiness and reliability of Scriptures comes to the unbeliever only through the internal work of the Holy Spirit as the proclamation of the Gospel goes out. This illuminating persuading power must accompany our preaching-- so that the Word of God may enter the hearts of men and unite them to Christ (1 Thess. 1:5: "For our Gospel came to you not only in Word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction").

2. We must constantly bring all our views, our practices and our theology to the touchstone of the Scriptures. To subject to the authority of Jesus Christ is to subject ourselves to the authority of Scriptures. To subject the Scriptures to the minds and judgments of men is disloyalty to our Lord. Christ does not demand the sacrifice of the intellect, but the humility of mind and heart subject to his power and directives.

3. The Call to search the Scriptures is a call to the total brotherhood. Personal convictions and deep commitment to one's understanding of what God is saying is to be respected and honored. It is, however, to be accompanied by an openness to the insights of fellow brethren, and the constant willingness to join with brethren about the Bible. The

Bible is infallible, but not our interpretations. A constant growth in our understanding of God's message to us is an unavoidable and necessary corollary to the doctrine of the inspiration of Scriptures, and love to Christ and our fellowmen an indication of such growth.

Brethren, there are a variety of attitudes and forces within our church today; attitudes of hope and trust, attitudes of bewilderment and unsureness, unloving and critical attitudes right within the ranks of the ministry, attitudes of courage and determination. May he who holds the churches in his right hand sanctify us through his Word, uniting us to himself and give us a fruitful ministry of proclaiming his gospel.

Victor Adrian

NOTES

1. cf. B. B. Warfield, Revelation and Inspiration
2. cf. R. V. C. Tasker, The Old Testament in the New Testament, Chapter 1
3. F. C. Grant, Introduction to the New Testament Thought, p. 75; cf. Alan Richardson, Christian Apologetics
4. Hermann Ridderbos, The Authority of the New Testament Scriptures, p. 13
5. J. I. Packer, Fundamentalism and the Word of God, p. 91
6. Ibid. p. 36
7. Ibid. p. 37
8. Revelation and Inspiration, p. 280
9. Bernard Ramm, Special Revelation and the Word of God, p. 66 and passim
10. John Bailie, The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought
11. E. G. Wright, The God Who Acts
12. J. I. Packer, God Who Speaks to Man, p. 51
13. J. W. Montgomery, "Inspiration and Inerrancy: A New Departure," Bulletin of the Evangelical Society, Vol. 8, #2, 1965
14. E. J. Young, Thy Word is Truth, has some helpful insights into some apparent discrepancies in Scripture.
15. Robert Preus, "Notes on the Inerrancy of Scriptures" (Mimeograph) p. 11
16. See Articles, "Archaeological Confirmation of the New Testament" by F. F. Bruce, "Reversals of Old Testament Criticism" by N. H. Ridderbos, etc. in Revelation and the Bible, Editor, C. F. H. Henry
17. H. D. McDonald, Ideas of Revelation (1700-1860), Theories of Revelation; a historical approach bringing ideas of revelation up to the present time.
18. John Murray, "The attestation of Scripture," in The Infallible Word, Editor, N. B. Stonehouse