

APEITHEO: CURRENT RESISTANCE TO BIBLICAL INERRANCY*

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“The whole Bible?” If such an inquiry into their beliefs were to be directed to today’s theologians, the response of the large majority would be, “Apeitho: I am not persuaded, I disbelieve.” Doubts about Scripture’s veracity, moreover, are no longer limited to convinced doctrinal skeptics, whether of an unreconstructed sort of liberalism or of a more repentant kind of neo-orthodoxy: they are being currently voiced among theologians generally classified as evangelical, among men who would look to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Furthermore, their resistance to the authority of the entire written Word, which the E.T.S. designates as Biblical inerrancy, is producing an effect in conservative institutions, conferences, and denominations, especially among our more advanced students and younger scholars. But why should those who have been reared in Bible-believing environments now experience attraction to the posture of apeitho? It is not too much to conclude that the very future of the E.T.S. and of the Biblical position which it represents lies at stake, as we ask how, and why, some of our former colleagues have turned against us and what the Christian’s approach to Scripture really ought to be.

I. *The Nature of the Present Declension.* Most modern skeptics prefer to cloak their opposition to the Bible beneath words of recognition, or even praise, for its authority. Except for communists and a few atheistic cranks, it is no longer the thing to ridicule Scriptural inspiration. Among the more liberal this may be traced to a war-induced disenchantment with man’s native capabilities and to an existentialistic yearning for a transcendent point of reference. Among the more conservative, whether they be Roman Catholic or ex-fundamental Protestant, vested interests seem to require their continued use of the term “inerrancy,” either to uphold the dogmas of previous popes or to pacify an evangelical constituency that might reduce financial support should the term be discarded. As one of the latter group told me, his institution doesn’t really accept inerrancy, but they keep using the term because otherwise supporters would think they were becoming liberal (!).

But despite this haze in the current theological atmosphere, certain criteria serve as genuine indications of where people stand. (1) Those who resist inerrancy tend to express themselves on the mode of inspiration rather than on its extent. They may protest, for example, that the Bible *is* God’s word as well as man’s, or that its teachings are ultimately authoritative; but so long as these declaimers refuse to indicate which portions constitute “teaching” their protests decide little or nothing. (2) The parties of resistance may tacitly restrict Biblical truth to theological matters. Such delimitation is not infrequently camouflaged, as for example in last June’s statement of the Wenham conference on inspiration, which

*The Presidential address delivered at the annual meeting of The Evangelical Theological Society on December 27, 1966 at the King’s College, Briarcliff Manor, New York.

affirmed: "The Scriptures are completely truthful and are authoritative as the only infallible rule of faith and practice." Splendid as this affirmation appears at first glance, could it be that the omission of a comma after "completely truthful"—so that this assertion likewise was limited by "as the only infallible rule of faith and practice"—provided the necessary restriction for those present at the conference who limit Biblical truthfulness to matters of faith and practice? (3) The resistance likes to remain non-committal at points where disagreements with other sources are likely to appear. To suggest, for example, that the Bible will not duplicate what can be discovered by scientific research becomes but a back-handed way of setting aside its authority at such points.

The persistent question in all such declension, moreover, concerns the total authority of the Bible; this is not a semantic debate over how one defines "inerrant." Several times during the past year I have received critical inquiries as to what the Society means by saying, "The Bible is . . . inerrant," in its doctrinal affirmation; the not so veiled suggestion of the inquirers was that if the E.T.S. would only adopt a more latitudinarian interpretation of inerrancy it could retrieve some of its errant colleagues. But this would only gloss over the real issue. Kenneth Kantzer's simple explanation at last year's meeting that an inerrant document "never wanders into false teaching" is quite clear. Could it be that those who oppose the use of the word "inerrancy" in stating their position on the authority and trustworthiness of the Bible are so keenly aware of its meaning that they purposely avoid it? Redefiners of inerrancy seem to contend for some form of partial inerrancy (sic), as opposed to the E.T.S. affirmation that the Biblical autographs are *never* errant but that they are authoritative at every point. It boils down to this: that there are some who will no longer believe what they admit that the Bible believes but subscribe rather to *apeitheo*, "not persuaded."

II. *The Reason for Disbelief.* When those who resist Biblical inerrancy are asked for reasons why, forthrightness seems to come at even more of a premium; but answers *are* ascertainable. Originally, a rejection of Scripture was concomitant to an antisupernaturalistic opposition against Christianity. Of the disbelieving Pharisees Christ thus asked, "If ye believe not his [Moses'] writings, how shall ye believe My words?" (John 5:47) and to "the father of Old Testament criticism," Johann Gottfried Eichhorn (*Einleitung*, 1780-83), any miracle, including Christ's resurrection, had become absurd. But such is no longer necessarily the case. In the current English speaking world at least, the personal piety of Samuel R. Driver (*Introduction*, 1891) pioneered a widespread adoption of negative criticism by men who were otherwise sincerely Christian. Scripture itself, moreover, distinguishes between church membership—"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10:9)—and church leadership—"For the bishop must . . . hold to the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that he may be able to exhort in the sound doctrine" (Titus 1:9). There may therefore exist

opponents of Biblical inerrancy whom we could never recognize as legitimate church leaders, e.g., by inviting them to share in our class platforms or pulpits, but who could still be brothers, even if inconsistent ones, in Christ.

Yet all resistance to Scripture, whether antisupernaturalistic or not, possesses the common denominator of a subjective authority: an assumption on the part of the critic of his own right to judge, as opposed to the New Testament concept of "bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:5). Irrespective of Christ's actual views on Scripture (see below), current western thought remains irreconcilably antagonistic to the very idea of "captivity." As observed by H. H. Rowley, Britain's most outstanding present-day Old Testament scholar,

There were conservative writers who stood outside the general body of critical scholars and who rejected most of their conclusions, but they did not seriously affect the position. While many of them had considerable learning, they made little secret of the fact that they were employing their learning to defend positions which were dogmatically reached. Their work had little influence, therefore, amongst scientific scholars who were concerned only with the evidence, and the conclusions to which it might naturally lead.¹

"After all," modern man inquires, "does not criticism go awry if subordinated to a presupposition? Do we not live by the scientific method of natural, uninhibited induction and free evaluation? Let the Bible speak for itself: openminded investigation will surely come out vindicating the truth."

In practice, however, an appeal to the scientific analogy seems unjustifiable; for Biblical revelation simply is not amenable to "natural" evaluation. It cannot be placed in a test tube for repeatable experimentation, like the data found in the natural sciences: it can only be appreciated through the testimony of competent witnesses, like the data found in the other historical disciplines; and God Himself, through Christ (John 1:18), thus becomes the only authority who can really tell us about His own writing. Supernaturalism therefore replies to modern man: "A truly openminded scientist must be willing to operate within those methods that are congruous to the object of his criticism, or his conclusions will inevitably go awry." This principle was what made James Orr's inductive attempt to construct a doctrine of inspiration upon the basis of *his own evaluation* of the observable phenomena of Scripture, with all its various difficulties, basically illegitimate; and it is what made B. B. Warfield's approach of deductively deriving Biblical inerrancy from the revealed teaching of Christ and His apostles, sound. Evangelicals, in other words, do not insist upon Warfield as though this latter scholar were immune to criticism, as those who resist inerrancy sometimes insinuate, but simply

1. *The Old Testament and Modern Study* (London: Oxford, 1961), p. xv.

as one whose methodology is consistent with the object of his investigation. Neither do evangelicals wish to minimize the God-given significance of human intelligence or to inhibit those areas of thought that are pertinent to man's Spirit-directed exercise of his own rational responsibility: first, in examining the historical (resurrection) data that lead him to an acceptance of Jesus Christ (I Cor. 15:1-11); then, in seeking an exact understanding of what his Lord taught, specifically concerning Scripture (Lk. 24:45); and, lastly, in interpreting with diligence the truths therein contained (II Tim. 2:15). But evangelicals do deny the right of a man to contradict whatever it is that God may have said that He has said. If I were to do this, I would effectively establish some other criterion over God Himself, which amounts to nothing more nor less than idolatry. I would then also have to go on to accept the consequences of my rational subjectivism, namely, that doctrines such as the survival of my soul after death, or the atonement of my guilt through vicarious sacrifice, or the proofs for the very existence of my God, are apparently *not* supported by open-minded judgment in the light of natural evidence.

Yet have not our own Christian colleges, upon occasion, been guilty of conveying to some of their sharpest and most promising students the fallacy that a liberal arts education connotes an all-inclusive liberation, with a corresponding responsibility on the part of the individual to reserve to himself the final verdict on any given issue and to insist on his right to say, with *Porgie and Bess*, "It ain't necessarily so?" Within this past year there have arisen cases in one of our evangelical denominations in which, when its assembly resolved to include in its statement of faith an affirmation of Biblical inerrancy, some of its leading scholars and pastors indignantly withdrew from fellowship. Such infatuation with academic freedom produces the situation described in Acts 19:9, "Some were hardened and epeithoun, disobedient" (ASV). Now it is true both that, in theory, the classical meaning of *apeitheo* is "to disobey" and that, in practice, a man's skepticism in respect to Scripture leads almost inevitably to overt acts of disobedience; but Arndt and Gingrich have searched more deeply and conclude:

Since, in the view of the early Christians, the supreme disobedience was a refusal to believe their gospel, *apeitheo* may be restricted in some passages to the meaning *disbelieve*, *be an unbeliever*. This sense . . . seems most probable in John 3:36; Acts 14:2; 19:9; Romans 15:31, and only slightly less probable in Romans 2:8 . . . [etc.]²

The heart of the problem is thus an internal one, the primeval sin of pride, the prejudice of rebellious and fallen man, who refuses to go against his own "better judgment" and to take orders, but who insists rather on his right to say, "Apeltho, I am not persuaded, I disbelieve" (cf. Acts 19:9 AV, RSV).

A paradoxical feature in all this is that we who are committed to

2. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Univ. of Chicago: 1959), p. 83.

Biblical inerrancy may have contributed, albeit unwittingly, to the current resistance against the Bible's authority. Certain overly zealous Sunday School materials have invoked a number of subjectively rationalistic *bases for belief* in Scripture, such as vindications from archaeology, or fulfilled prophecies; and, as a result, when our better students uncover similar evidences with the opposite implications they are rendered an easy prey to rationalistic disbelief. Some of our finest Biblical introductions, moreover, contain statements like the following:

If it [the Bible] presents such data as to compel an acknowledgment that it can only be of divine origin—and it does present such data in abundance—then the only reasonable course is to take seriously its own assertions of infallibility . . . Human reason is competent to pass upon these evidences . . . in order to determine whether the texts themselves square with the claims of divine origin.³

The difficulty, however, is that most of today's outstanding Biblical scholars, those who are in the best position, humanly speaking, to know, fail to discover "such data in abundance." On the contrary, they tend toward conclusions like the following:

In the field of the physical sciences we find at once that many mistaken and outmoded conceptions appear in the Bible . . . Much ink has been wasted also, and is still wasted, in the effort to prove the detailed historical accuracy of the biblical narratives. Archaeological research has not, as is often boldly asserted, resolved the difficulties or confirmed the narratives step by step. Actually they abound in errors, including many contradictory statements . . . Even in matters of religious concern the Bible is by no means of uniform value throughout.⁴

Moreover, even though most investigations do end up vindicating the Bible, as far as inerrancy is concerned, one seeming discrepancy outweighs the significance of ninety-nine confirmations.

Others of our introductions have been more guarded about basing belief in Scripture upon inductive evaluations, cautioning, for example, "Unless we first think rightly about God we shall be in basic error about everything else" (cf. I Cor. 2:14 or II Cor. 4:3 on the blindness of the unregenerate mind). Yet this same source goes on to declare:

The Bible itself evidences its divinity so clearly that he is without excuse who disbelieves . . . Its "incomparable excellencies" are without parallel in any other writing and show most convincingly that the Bible is in a unique sense the Word of God.⁵

3. Gleason L. Archer, Jr., *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago: Moody, 1964), pp. 26, 16.
4. Millar Burrows, *An Outline of Biblical Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster, c. 1946), pp. 44-45, 47.
5. Edward J. Young, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Rev. ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960), pp. 7, 28-29.

But had it not been for New Testament evidence on the canon, could even regenerate Christians have perceived that a given verse in Proverbs or Jeremiah was inspired, while similar material from Ecclesiasticus or The Epistle of Jeremy was not? On the other hand, what of Scripture's unexplained difficulties? Are we going too far to say that, on the basis of the evidences presently available, Joshua's asserted capture of Ai or Matthew's apparent attribution (27:9) of verses from Zechariah 11 to Jeremiah favor Biblical errancy rather than inerrancy? Candor compels our admission of other cases too, for which our harmonistic explanations are either weak or non-existent. If therefore we once fall into the snare of subjectivism, whether liberal or evangelical, we also may conclude by saying, "Apeitho, I have had it."

III. *The Application of Christian Authority.* Turning then to God's own, objective testimony in respect to Scripture, what, if anything, do we find? For we must recognize at the outset that we do not *have* to find anything. The syllogism, "God is perfect, and since the Bible stems from God, then the Bible must be perfect," contains a fallacy, as becomes apparent when we substitute the idea of church for Bible. God lay under no antecedent obligation to ordain inspiration along with His decree for revelation: even as the church continues to serve as a medium for men's redemption, despite its obvious imperfections, so too a Bible of purely human origin could, conceivably, have proven adequate for human deliverance. Peter, John, and Paul, for example, might have simply recorded their convictions about God's revealed plan of salvation in Christ, just as modern preachers do, without claiming inspiration (though actually they did, I Cor. 2:13, 14:37; II Cor. 13:3). Herein, moreover lies the answer to one of liberalism's more persuasive arguments, namely, that since we today do not need an inerrant King James Bible, and since the early church did not need an inerrant LXX (Rom. 15:4), therefore the Biblical autographs need not have been inerrant either. For evangelicalism refuses to base its commitment to Biblical autographic inerrancy upon "needs," whether of God or man, except for that general need of maintaining the truthfulness of Jesus Christ. It is from this latter necessity that Christian authority comes historically into the picture. Until a man, that is, places his trust in Christ, there appears to be no impelling reason why he should believe in the Bible, or even in religious supernaturalism for that matter. But once a man does commit himself to the apostolically recorded Person of Jesus, declared to be the Son of God with Messianic power by His resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1:4), then his supreme privilege as well as his obligation devolves into letting that mind be in him which was also in Christ Jesus (Phil. 2:5; cf. Col. 2:6, I John 2:6); and this includes Christ's mind toward Scripture. Specifically, how Christ's authority is to be applied may then be developed through the following two inquiries.

A. *Did Christ Question the Bible?* Affirmative answers at this point seem more common than ever before. It is understandable, moreover, that

professed Christians who have felt compelled, on rationally subjective grounds, to surrender their belief in Biblical inerrancy, should seek support for their skepticism from some analogy discoverable with Jesus, since nobody really enjoys an inconsistent allegiance. Most modern writers seem content to dismiss inerrancy with generalizations about its being a "sub-Christian" doctrine.⁶ Representative of a more straightforward analysis, however, is the Dutch neo-orthodox Biblical theologian, T. C. Vriezen.⁷ While granting that "the Scriptures of the Old Testament were for Him as well as for His disciples the Word of God," he adduces three areas in which Jesus "rises above the Holy Scriptures."

(1) Christ used the traditional text freely, and in doing so He showed Himself superior to all bondage to the letter: [yet the only evidence that Vriezen alleged is that] in Luke iv. 18ff., Isaiah lxi. 2 is quoted without the words "the day of vengeance of our God."

The example is irrelevant. It is one of those not uncommon instances of successive prophecies in one context: the year of Yahweh's favor, 61:2a, received fulfillment during our Lord's first advent (cf. v. 1); but Christ apparently avoided reference to the day of vengeance described in 2b, which was not to achieve fulfillment until His second coming. Real textual freedom, moreover, such as the New Testament's use of the LXX no more necessarily subverts inerrancy than does a modern believer's missionary employment of accepted vernacular versions. In John 10:34-35, however, Jesus seemingly went out of His way to associate genuine inerrancy, not even with copied MSS of the original Hebrew, but rather with the autographs themselves: "He [Yahweh] called them gods [judges (?) contemporary with the psalm writer Asaph] unto whom the word of God came [at that time, egeneto, aorist] . . . and the scripture cannot be broken." For similar associations of God's inspired words with their inscripturation in the original MSS cf. Acts 1:16, II Peter 1:21.⁸

(2) Vriezen next says of Jesus,

Because of His spiritual understanding of the law, He again and again contradicts the Judaic theology of His days derived from it ("them of old time," Matthew v; Mark vii), and even repeatedly contradicts certain words of the law (Matthew v. 38ff.; xix. 1 ff.).

The question, however, revolves in each case about what Christ was really contradicting. In Matthew 19, His opposition was to Pharisaic moral travesty in authorizing a man "to put away his wife for every cause" (v. 2). For while He did go on to contrast Deuteronomic divorce for an *erwath davar*, "something indecent" (KB, 735a), with Genesis' Edenic

6. H. R. Mackintosh; cf. A. J. Ungersma, *Handbook for Christian Believers* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, c. 1953), pp. 80-81.

7. *An Outline of Old Testament Theology* (Newton, Maass.: Charles T. Branford, 1960), pp. 2-5.

8. Cf. J. B. Payne, "The Plank Bridge: Inerrancy and the Biblical Autographs," *United Evangelical Action*, 2:15 (Dec., 1965), 16-18.

situation, He Himself came out in favor of the law, because He too limited any absolute prohibition of divorce through His insertion of the words, "except for fornication" (v. 9; cf. 5:32). Likewise in the Sermon on the mount, Christ's opposition was directed against Pharisaism. While this sect, moreover, *claimed* its derivation from the law, Vriezen's assumption that the words given "to them of old time," which Christ contradicted, must mean the original words of the law appears gratuitous. In the preceding context our Lord specifically affirmed the inviolability of the law (5:17), while singling out for criticism only the latter portions of such syndromes as, "Love they neighbor, and hate thine enemy" (v. 44); and these latter words, far from being drawn from the law, reflected rather those post-Biblical traditions that have been found among the self-righteous Qumran sectaries (1QS i:1-10). In the other alleged passages, our Lord's opposition, for example, was directed against Pharisaic casuistry in the use of oaths (5:33-37; cf. 23:16-22)—He Himself would accept an oath on proper occasion (Mt. 26:63; cf. Heb. 6:16-17)—and against their personally vindictive application of the *lex talionis* (Mt. 5:38-42).

(3) This ties in closely with Vriezen's concluding allegation: "The negative datum that nowhere in the New Testament is mention made of Jesus offering sacrifices may be considered important." Or should it be? For a law to lack particular applicability need not entail its derogation. Vriezen seems, moreover, to have answered his own argument when he states: "In imitation of Christ St. Paul recognized that there were certain commandments of God that were significant only in a certain age and a certain situation."

Ultimately, Vriezen is forthright enough to admit that neither liberals nor conservatives agree with his hypothesis of a Bible-questioning Christ; for he concedes, "This view of Jesus' critical attitude toward the law is contested from both right and left." Apparently only the neo-orthodox, those with strongly vested loyalties toward both Christ and the critics, seem to have persuaded themselves of its validity; and even Vriezen cautions that he must not be understood "to mean that Jesus was 'critical of the Bible' in our sense of the word," or, as far as the present writer has been able to ascertain, in any other negative sense of the word either.

B. Positively then, *Did Jesus Affirm the Bible as Inerrantly Authoritative?* Evangelicals seem at times to have failed to examine with sufficient rigor the exact Biblical affirmations of our Lord, or to consider with sufficient attention the neo-orthodox claim that the Bible does not teach its own inerrancy. Basically, such examination demands an attempt to distinguish, and then to interrelate, two differing types of relevant evidence.

(1) Christ's General Statements. While it seems clear that the prophets and apostles held to an authority of Scripture that was plenary in extent and hence inerrant—cf. II Samuel 23:2; Jeremiah 25:13; or Acts 24:14, "believing all things... which are written in the prophets":

or II Timothy 3:16, "Every Scripture is theopneustos, God-breathed"—it remains possible for our Lord's own categorical statements to be so interpreted as to prove deficient, in themselves, of affirming infallibility for the whole Bible. Though they unmistakably teach its broad doctrinal authority, neo-orthodox writers have been able to produce explanations that keep them from finally establishing its inerrancy. The five following classic proof texts may serve as examples. In Matthew 5:18 (cf. Lk. 16:16-17) the words, "One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished," might be restricted to our Lord's inculcating of total obedience to the law; cf. the next verse. In Luke 18:31 His affirmation that "all the things that are written through the prophets shall be accomplished unto the Son of man" may well be accepted at face value, without thereby promoting the prophets into anything more than uninspired reporters of valid revelations. The text of Luke 24:25 says, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken"; but the ASVmg reads, "...after all that the prophets have spoken." In Luke 24:44 could Christ perhaps insist that "all things must be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning Me," without necessarily including all things concerning other subjects? Finally John 10:35, "And the Scripture cannot be broken," might possibly be understood as an *ad hominem* argument: "If He called them gods... and if Scripture cannot be broken (as you believe, whether it actually be true or not), then..." The force of the above quotations, in other words, regarding inerrancy, remains capable of evasion.

(2) Christ's Specific Statements. It is when our Lord discloses His mind over particular Old Testament incidents and utterances that a recognition of His positive belief in the Bible becomes inescapable. At the outset, however, let it again be cautioned that not all of His citations carry equal weight. Christ's references, for example, to Elijah and Elisha (Lk. 4:24-27), even when one allows for His confirmation of such factual details as the three years and six months of famine, can yet be treated as mere literary allusions to well known Old Testament stories, which He need not have considered as more than fictional, though possessed of inherent theological authority. Likewise, His identifications of "the Book of Moses" (Mk. 12:26; Lk. 16:29, 31, and 24:44) might indicate nothing beyond an awareness of Moses as their central character, much like Samuel in the Books of Samuel, without committing our Lord to fixed views on their Mosaic composition.

Yet on the other hand, Jesus specifically compared down-to-earth marriage problems of His own and of Moses' days with what was to Him the apparently equally real situation of Adam and Eve "from the beginning" (Mt. 19:8, Mk. 10:6); He associated Abel with the undeniably historical Zechariah (Lk. 11:47-51); He described in detail the catastrophic days of Noah and Lot as transpiring "after the same manner" as the day in which the Son of man would be revealed (Lk. 17:26-30); He lumped Sodom and Gomorrah together with certain 1st century Galilean

towns, as subject to equally literal judgments (Mt. 10:15); and He connected the experiences of the Queen of Sheba, Jonah, and the Ninevites with real events in the lives of Himself and His contemporaries (Mt. 12:39-41). He equated the narrative description of Genesis 2:24 with the very spoken word of God the Creator (Mt. 19:5). He said that God had uttered the words of Exodus 3:6 to the man Moses (Mk. 12:26) and that Moses "gave" Israel the law of Leviticus 12 (John 7:22), "commanded" the law of Leviticus 14 (Mt. 8:4), "wrote" of the Messiah (John 5:46), and indeed "gave you the law" (John 7:19). He affirmed that an actual prophet named Daniel had predicted "the abomination of desolation" for a period still future to A.D. 30 (Mt. 25:15) and that David, "in the Holy Spirit," composed the words of Psalm 110:1 (Mk. 12:36, Mt. 22:43-45). Even if one allows, for the sake of argument, that the apostolic writers may not have reproduced Christ's exact phraseology, the impressions that He left about His views on the origin of the Old Testament are still so unmistakable that George Adam Smith felt constrained to confess:

If the use of his [Isaiah's] name [in the NT quotations] . . . were as involved in the arguments . . . as is the case with David's name in the quotation made by our Lord from Psalm cx, then those who deny the unity of the Book of Isaiah would be face to face with a very serious problem indeed.⁹

But this is just the point: suppose a man were to go no farther than to acknowledge, "I will, as a Christian, accept Biblical authority in respect to those specific matters, and to those alone, which are affirmed by Jesus Christ"; he would still find the mind of his Lord so hopelessly opposed to the consensus of modern "scientific" (subjective) criticism that his rationalistic autonomy would suffer automatic forfeit as a principle for Biblical research. He might then just as well accept the verdict of the apostles, whom Christ *did* authorize as His representatives (John 14:26, 16:13), on the unified authenticity of Isaiah as well (12:38-41). Furthermore, in the light of Christ's known attitude toward Adam and Abel, it appears rather pointless to question His belief over the literal truth of Elijah and Elisha, and of all the other Old Testament matters to which He refers.

(3) Interrelationships. In view of Christ's specific statements, His general affirmations (1, above), previously identified as in themselves inconclusive, now assume a more comprehensive significance. John 10:35, for example, no longer remains restricted to its *ad hominem* interpretation; for the unbreakableness of Scripture has been found to correspond to Christ's own beliefs. This Bible reference is therefore depicted on the seal of the Evangelical Theological Society, supported by the cross of Christ, and breaking in two the sword of criticism. Bernard's liberal *International Critical Commentary* on John states further that belief in

9. *The Book of Isaiah (The Expositor's Bible)*; New York: Hodder and Stoughton, [n.d.], II:6.

the verbal inspiration of the sacred books . . . emerges distinctively in the Fourth Gospel, the evangelist ascribing this conviction to Jesus Himself. We may recall here some Synoptic passages which show that the belief that "the Scripture cannot be broken" was shared by Matthew, Mark, and Luke and that all three speak of it as having the authority of their Master (I:clii).

Older critics, such as William Sanday, thus conceded,

When deductions have been made . . . there still remains evidence enough that our Lord while on earth did use the common language of His contemporaries in regard to the Old Testament;¹⁰

and modern liberals, such as F. C. Grant, freely admit that in the New Testament "it is everywhere taken for granted that Scripture is trustworthy, infallible, and inerrant."¹¹

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Two concluding questions remain then to be asked. The first directly parallels that which Pilate addressed to the Jewish leaders of his day, "What then shall I do unto Jesus who is called Christ?" (Mt. 27:22) Are we going to recognize His authority; or are we going to take exception to it and deny His reliability, by some theory of kenosis? Sigmund Mowinckel, a leading advocate of modern Scandinavian Biblical criticism, seems more squarely than most to have faced up to the implications of his views, when he concludes,

Jesus as a man was one of us except that he had no sin (Heb. 4:15) . . . He also shared our imperfect insight into all matters pertaining to the world of sense . . . He knew neither more nor less than most people of his class in Galilee or Jerusalem concerning history . . . geography, or the history of biblical literature.¹²

But can one then really maintain the belief in our Lord's sinlessness? This unreliability cannot be restricted to theoretical matters of incarnate omniscience, which few would wish to assert (cf. Mk. 13:32); but it involves Christ's basic truthfulness in consciously committing Himself to affirmations about Scriptures, which He was under no antecedent obligation even to mention (cf. John 3:34).

In John 15, Jesus Himself divided up His contemporaries between bondslaves and friends, distinguishing the latter on the basis of their participation in His own convictions: "For all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known unto you" (John 15:15). What then is to be said of the man who is apeitheo, unpersuaded, about what Christ has made known? Is the man who rejects Biblical inerrancy simply an inconsistent Christian, perhaps through lack of understanding relative to the mind of Christ? Or having confessed Christ as his Savior is he fail-

10. *Inspiration* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1893), p. 393.

11. *Introduction to New Testament Thought* (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1950), p. 75; cf. John Knox, *Jesus Lord and Christ* (New York: Harper, 1958).

12. *The Old Testament as Word of God* (New York: Abingdon, 1959), p. 74.

ing to integrate his scholarship with the teachings of Christ in a logical manner (cf. Col. 2:6)? God alone must judge. In either event, as J. I. Packer has so rightly observed, "Any view that subjects the written word of God to the opinions and pronouncements of men involves unbelief and disloyalty toward Christ."¹³ It is like Ephraim's worship on the high places after Jehu's removal of Phoenician Baalism: an overt invocation of the name of Yahweh, while persisting in a life opposed to His revealed authority, can result only, as previously suggested, in idolatry. Scripture, moreover, leaves us all with the wonderful and yet terrible pronouncement: "He that believeth, ho pigteuon, in the Son hath eternal life; but he who will not believe, ho pisteuon, the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).

But there is a second concluding question which asks, "What are the implications for those who *are* willing to follow Jesus in His allegiance to Scripture?" Returning to John 15, one finds in verse 15 Christ's words, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Christ's love for us was demonstrated on Calvary; but if we have become "friends" of His, then we too should demonstrate our love as we commit our lives to identification with both Him and His commitments. For example, this last summer the Committee of Fifteen (formerly N.A.E.-Christian Reformed) on Bible Translation adopted a resolution to require affirmations on Biblical inerrancy from all who are to be associated with this major project. Their move took real courage, in the face of current resistance to Scriptural authority. Sacrifice, moreover, is entailed; for in verse 19 our Lord goes on to explain, "Because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." This Committee, as a result of its stand, suffered attack and withdrawal of support; indeed, we should all take to heart Paul's admonition, "Strive together with me in your prayers to God for me, that I may be delivered from ton apelthoun-ton" (Rom. 15:30-31), those who will not be persuaded. Yet in verse 27 Christ finished this discourse by observing, "And ye also bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning." We are persistently to proclaim submission to Christ, even as our Lord "in the spirit. . . went and preached unto them. . . that afore-time were apelthesasin, unpersuaded, when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah" (I Pet. 3:20). Should words themselves fail, we are to bear witness by lives of Christian love, so "that if any apelthousin, refuse to be persuaded, by the word, they may without the word be gained by the behavior of. . ." (3:1) those who have experienced the power of lives yielded to Christ and to His Bible, the inerrant Scriptures.

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13. "Fundamentalism" and the Word of God (London: Inter-Varsity, 1958), p. 21.