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THE IDEA OF REVELATION.

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(The following article was one of eight lectures delivered by Dr. Mackintosh in March, 1928, on the James Sprunt Foundation, at Union Seminary, Richmond, Va. Of this particular lecture Dr. Edward Mack remarked that it was one of the ablest and most satisfactory treatments of the subject of revelation he had ever heard or read. The eight lectures will appear in book form under the title, "The Christian Apprehension of God", and will prove a notable addition to the volumes which have already been published on the Sprunt Lectureship.—Editor.)

In my last lecture I endeavored to set forth what seem to me sound positions regarding the nature of religious knowledge, the way in which we come to be possessed of it, and the methods of proof or verification which are appropriate to the case. To-day I wish to speak of the correlative subject—not, this time, our knowing as believing men, but the reality which we know, or Revelation. And let us never forget, at any stage of our discussion, that Revelation, which in itself is only an abstract noun, really stands for the most concrete and personal object with which we can have to do: it stands for God, as He makes Himself known savingly to man. If this be overlooked, the debate over Revelation may become as cold and lifeless as a treatise on symbolic logic.

clean in thought and purpose and life, he was an inspiration to all who knew him. He lived a life full of meekness and gentleness, full of sweetness and dignity and beauty. He was greatly loved by everyone.

When it is said of him "No better man ever lived in this city", there is no one to gainsay it.

In the "Robert Critz Chair of Religious Education" at Union Theological Seminary the name and influence of this splendid man will live on through the coming centuries.

SHOULD THE CHRISTIAN ANY LONGER TEACH THAT THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD?*

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In considering this question we should, *first remind ourselves of the Bible doctrine as to it*, as we find that doctrine in the recorded words of our Lord Jesus Christ, as we find it in the plain teaching of the Apostles, and as we find it in the unmistakable phenomena of the Bible as a whole.

(1) In the teaching of our Lord Jesus the Bible so far as written in his day was the word of God, and of final and absolute authority. The first of his recorded words, after his manifestation to Israel, were an appeal to this authority of Scripture. To Satan's temptations, he replied: "It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." *It is written*, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve. (Matt. 4:7, 10, Luke 4:4, 8.) Among his last words were some of rebuke to his disciples for not holding that all that the Scriptures of the Old Testament taught of

**Revelation and Inspiration, by Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology in the Theological Seminary of Princeton, New Jersey, 1887-1921, New York. Oxford University Press—American Branch.*

him, had to be fulfilled. "O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." (Luke 24:25.) "Beginning at Moses and the Prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." (Luke 24:27.) A little later, he said unto them, "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me." (Luke 24:44.)

The necessity of the fulfilment of things written in the Old Testament is frequently stressed by our Lord. Many things had come to pass "That the scriptures might be fulfilled". (Mark 14:49, "Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and with staves, to take me? I was daily with you in the temple teaching and ye took me not; but the Scriptures must be fulfilled". John 17:12, "Those whom Thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled".) On the ground of Scripture declarations he announces that given events will certainly occur. "All ye shall be offended in me this night: for it is written," * * * (Matt. 26:31; Mark 14:27; Luke 20:17.) He bows to the sufferings about to come upon him, that the Scriptures may be fulfilled." (Matt. 26:54.) He commends the Jews for searching the Scriptures, or commands them to search the Scriptures, "for," he says, "they testify of me". He expresses wonder that the Scriptures have been read to so little effect. "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." He teaches here that if they had read the Scriptures with adequate insight, they would have seen that the Scriptures spoke of him with clarity.

In John 10:35 he says in an all inclusive way, "and the Scripture can not be broken". The context shows that by the term, "the Scripture", he meant the whole Bible of his time.

He was not meaning *this particular* Scripture alone, else what he says is empty tautology, he was meaning all Scripture. Since the people to whom he was talking believed that their Scriptures were all inspired, and since he held the same

view, he could argue as he does: "Jesus answered them. Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are Gods? If he called them Gods unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture can not be broken, say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God?" This argument is from what is true of all Scripture to what must be true of a verse in one of the Psalms, therefore.* It is of force if all Scripture is inspired, is the word of God. Jesus represented it universally as God's word. According to him, "not a jot or tittle shall pass away from the law till all be fulfilled". Mr. Robert Watts writes in "*Faith and Inspiration*", The Carey Lectures for 1884, page 183, "What according to the language employed by Him, was his estimate of the Old Testament Scriptures? It will be observed that he does not single out the passage on which He bases His argument and testify of it that it is unbreakable, making its infallibility depend on His authority. Stated formally, His argument is as follows: Major—The Scripture can not be broken. Minor—I said, ye are Gods," is written in your law which is Scripture. Conclusion: I said ye are Gods can not be broken. * * * He argues the infallibility of the clause on which He founds His argument from the infallibility of the record in which it occurs. According to his infallible estimate, it was sufficient proof of the infallibility of any sentence or phrase of a clause, to show that it constituted a portion of what the Jews called "The Scripture".

(2) In the teaching of the Apostles and the Authors who wrote under apostolic guidance we see the same estimate of the Scripture. Paul (II Tim. 3:16) represents it all—or

*So great a commentator as B. F. Westcott, D. D., says that "The Scripture" always "means the particular sentence which has been quoted," but this position can not be maintained without violence to the contexts in which "the Scripture" is found. In nineteen out of thirty instances in which "the Scripture" is found, namely, John 2:22, 7:38; 10:35; 17:12; 19:28; 20:9; Acts 8:32; Romans 4:3; 9:17; 10:11; 11:2; Galatians 3:8, 22; 4:30; 1 Timothy 5:18; James 4:5; First Peter 2:6; Second Peter 1:20; the reference is to the entire Scripture.

every part of it—as God-breathed—God-created; and therefore as of supreme value for every holy use. Peter writes (II Peter 1:19-21.) “We have a more sure word of prophecy whereunto you do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place. * * * Knowing that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation (of providential movements). For prophecy came not of old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved (borne) by the Holy Ghost.” Peter had been assuring his readers that what had been told them of the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ rested on a solid basis—the trustworthy testimony of eye-witnesses. In the words just quoted he is saying that they have a better testimony than that of eye-witness—the prophetic word, borne of the Holy Ghost. He thus teaches that the human authors speak in this prophecy of Scripture, not of themselves but as borne of God; that they speak only as God moves them to speak; that while in a sense they are the authors of Scripture, it is only as they are moved to think and speak by the Holy Ghost.

(3) In the complementary teaching of Christ and of his apostles about the New Testament. Our Lord Jesus Christ, as recorded in the first three gospels promised to his disciples grants of revealed truth and guidance in declaring it that they might be enabled to witness in a variety of circumstances for him and his cause. After the last passover, these promises, according to John chapters 14-16, greatly enlarged and enriched, were made to them again. He promised that the Holy Spirit should “teach them all things and bring all things to their remembrance whatsoever he had said unto them”. “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.” “Howbeit when he the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you unto all truth, for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you.”

The Apostles claimed that these promises had been fulfilled

in them. They claimed in virtue of the fulfilment of the promise to speak infallibly, to exercise plenary authority in Church affairs, and to have miraculous attestation to the truth of their teaching. Hear Paul, I Cor. 2:12, 13, "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God, which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; combining spiritual with spiritual", (i. e. spiritual truths with spiritual words). According to Paul, the thoughts of Scripture and the words of Scripture are taught by the Holy Ghost. It is a fact conceded by all Schools that to Paul the Old Testament and his own writings, and probably Luke's writings, and perhaps such other New Testament writings as had come into circulation when he wrote were the words of God. He warns against perversions of the Gospel of Christ. He says, "Though we, or an angel from Heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again; If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." * * * "I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Gal. 1:8-12.) To Paul the Scriptures of the Old Testament and of the New Testament so far as known to him were the word of God.

It has already appeared (II Peter 1:19-21) that Peter regarded the Old Testament Scriptures as produced by men under the energizing and direction of the Holy Spirit. He places the epistles of Paul in the same class of writings, in II Peter 3:15, "Account that the long suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul, also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to be understood which they that are unlearned and unstable do wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures unto their own destruction." In these words Peter

canonizes these epistles of Paul. He places them above eye-witness in value as witnesses.

Taking the promises of Christ of the Holy Spirit's guidance, made to the Apostles, and their claims of the fulfillment of the promises, and of their speaking actually as guided by the Holy Spirit, it can not be doubted that they taught that the Old Testament and the New are the words of God. It has been observed indeed that "the Biblical writers do not conceive of the Scriptures as a human product breathed into by the Divine Spirit, and thus heightened in their qualities or endowed with new qualities; but as a divine product produced through the instrumentality of men. They do not conceive of these men by whose instrumentality Scriptures are produced, as working upon their own initiative though energized by God to greater effort and higher achievement, but as moved by the divine initiative and borne by the irresistible power of the Spirit of God along ways of His choosing to ends of His appointment. The difference between the two conceptions may not appear great when the mind is fixed exclusively upon the nature of the resulting product. But they are differing conceptions, and look at the production of Scripture from distinct points of view—the human and the Divine; and the involved mental attitudes toward the Scripture are very diverse."

The Biblical writers look at the Scriptures as somewhat breathed out—created by God. Representatives of all parties hold that the New Testament writers held that the Old Testament was God's word, and that their own writings were also God's word.

(4) Other unmistakable Bible phenomena support the position that the Bible is the word of God. Both conservative and "Progressive" scholars observe that the Bible constitutes one system of truth, though composed by a great variety of human authors on a great variety of occasions and subjects, in two different languages and at intervals through sixteen centuries. "Now that these forty writers in different ages, with different qualifications; for different purposes, and primarily for different readers and on the most difficult subjects

the human mind has ever attempted to treat—on God, on law, on sin, on salvation, on the future state, on the destiny of the righteous and the wicked”, yet that they should always “agree in what they teach”, “say the same things on all these great subjects—the only instance of such teaching in all literature” is a wonderful thing. Must not we say with Dr. G. B. Strickler, “Take this number of books half as old on any subject whatever, on philosophy, on science, on art, or religion, and is such unity of teaching found in them? Take an equal number of books at the present day on any important subject and do the authors agree in all their teachings as the authors of Scripture do? How then, is this unity of teaching to be accounted for? Is there any way to account for it satisfactorily except that way the Scriptures themselves present? Must not the unity of the book be traced to the unity of that Divine intelligence out of which the book has come?”

Other inevitably observed phenomena which support the doctrine that the Scriptures as originally given were the word of God, are the Character which they give as God’s, the character which they give as Christ’s and history they give of him, so perfectly consonant with the character, the law of absolute righteousness, the influence which the truth of the Bible has exerted over individuals, families, communities, nations and races.

These phenomena of Scripture consist with those other outstanding phenomena of Scripture—its high claims as to its origin.

2nd. The Christian Should not only Teach That the Bible is the Word of God, when its original *ipsissima verba* have been ascertained. *He should teach that there is no error in it.*

(1) No error of a philosophical sort; that when the Bible teaches that the universe was created *ex nihilo*, that the very stuff of it was called into the void immense, having been non-existent before, the Christian should hold it; against the doctrine of the eternity of matter, and against the doctrine of eternal spiritual existences other than God’s own existence; against the atomism of Leucippus and Democritus; against the Godless evolutionary philosophy of followers of Darwin;

against the eternal metaphysical dualism of the Parsee, or of Plato; against modern monism of Spinoza's scheme of identity; against pure idealism. The Scriptures teach that God *was* and that He called into being, *de nihilo*, the universe of finite spirit and matter.

(2) No error really discovered by rationalistic criticism, which has denied the genuineness of many of the books of the Bible, only to suffer overthrow of their positions and the supervindication of the books which they would have discarded from the Bible on the alleged ground that they were forgeries, and by the restoration to the canon, of these books by critics of equal learning and greater breadth and sanity of judgment.

(3) No error in the shape of inaccuracies in details such as even Tholuck and Neander and Lange, and Stier and Orr and F. W. Farrar and Rothe too hastily admitted. The supposed mistakes which critics claimed to find in matters of history and geography, a few decades ago, have been shown with the passing years not to have been mistakes at all. The accuracy of the New Testament writers in their historic and geographical references has been shown to be extraordinarily great. Luke for example appears to have been more accurate than any secular historian of his period. Even Tacitus failed to attain any such accuracy as that which characterizes Luke. This is a simple matter of fact admitted by critics of the most diverse schools; yet he wrote of a period of rapid changes when it was peculiarly difficult to be accurate.

The internal harmony in the Scriptures themselves is just as marked for the intelligent reader who does not read with eyes blinded by prejudices born of prepossession against their divine authorship.

Hostile critics have made much of what they allege to be incorrect uses of the Old Testament in the New Testament. Their allegations seem to be due to their failure to apprehend the laws of quotation.

(4) The error that the Bible teaches an erroneous physics. We are to remember that the Bible uses phenomenal language about the motions of the heavenly bodies, and yet no more

implies that it is to be understood as scientific than the astronomer of today anticipates that his language will be taken as expressive of his scientific view, when he speaks of the sun's "rising" and "setting". We are to remember that the writers of Scriptures do not teach that the Ptolemaic astronomy is the true view of the solar system, as they do teach that the Scriptures give the absolutely true view of the way of salvation.

(5) The error that the Bible inculcates ethics of an inferior kind—that this is true of the Old Testament in particular, but also of the New Testament.

Critics—amongst them some very good men—condemn such commanded actions as the spoiling of the Egyptians by the Israelites, the extermination of the Canaanites under Joshua, Samuel's slaying of Agag and other such acts. These critics forget that all property is God's; and that if men who claim to be its owners, but who are only entrusted with it for a time, are unfaithful stewards of the Most High, He may with propriety, take it away. They forget that all men who live, live by the grace of God, since they are sinners and deserve death. If these critics saw sinful man's true relation to God and if they recognized that these commands were supernaturally given by God to spoil in the one case and to slay in the other case, they would see that their criticism is worthless. They would see that God has as much right to command the execution of the death penalty on a nation of sinners as to command it on an individual. The trouble with these critics is that the poison of anti-supernaturalism has taken possession of their minds. There are not a few other errors concerning Holy Scripture which the people of God may fall into because of the miasmatic influence of anti-supernaturalism which is in the air of our times.

We ought not hold such errors, and, much more, we ought not teach them, and so lead the unwary, eventually to make shipwreck of faith.

A radical change in our conception of the Scriptures as the word of God is now being advocated by some of whom better things had been hoped. They tell us that positive teachings of the Bible are defective, condemn its moral ideas, say that

the exegesis of the Old Testament by New Testament writers is often to be repudiated. They thus, sometimes, unconsciously it is believed, undermine confidence in the authority of apostles and the Lord Jesus Christ as teachers of doctrine; and prepare the way for the subordination of the mere Bible teaching to "Christian consciousness"—to that which the civilization of this age "approbates". They unite in the clamor that Scriptural teaching must be accommodated to the "science and the philosophy of the age". In effect they give away that which more than anything else makes the gospel eminently worthwhile, in order to give to the gospel "currency"—strip it of the supernatural element that men may receive the fragments remaining more readily. But those fragments left are not the everlasting gospel—not the gospel preached by Paul and taught in life and word by our Lord. Meanwhile they have, as much as their limited power allowed, knifed the gospel which has been the power of God unto salvation unto every one who has believed; and will continue to be used of God for the salvation of wayfaring men—scholars and cotton-pickers who may read as they run.

If the positions above taken be approximately correct it follows that the preacher, teacher and the private Christian should cast no reflection on Holy Scripture. Adverse criticism of the Scriptures interferes with the ready perception of its truth by minds affected by the bias of the rationalistic critics. A multitude of men can not carefully examine that criticism and reject its errors. Some because they are unable; others because they are unwilling to undergo the labor necessary to make the examination. Let, however, the day laborer know that the Bible is the word of God, and he, if he has hard sense, and has been quickened by the Spirit of the Lord, may see in God's book the way of life. Those who deny that the Bible is the word of God are doing much to cover the light which God has been gracious enough to give. Bring the world to believe that we have no trustworthy gospel—no certain saving truth to preach to lost sinners, it will also believe that it need not hear you. If you, in effect, teach that Christ and his apostles were wrong in their views of the Old Testament Scripture

you teach that they were probably wrong in the rest of their teaching. Why then pose as preachers of "the everlasting Gospel", which is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth? It is a reprehensible thing for a man—preacher, teacher or whatever he be—who really is but repeating what he does not know to be true—borrowed reflections on the ideals taught in the Old Testament, on specific acts commanded in the Old Testament, on the untrustworthiness of the Old Testament taken in the large, or on similar allegations about the New Testament—it is a reprehensible thing for him to scatter such borrowed reflections. He is doing much to obscure the way of salvation—to besmirch the character of the Saviour in the eyes of the people at large.

There are difficulties to be met in the Scriptures, but they do not disprove the claims of Scripture to be the word of God. More and more of these difficulties are solved with the passing years and the rationalistic critics shown to have proceeded on shallow grounds. The Bible comes increasingly to look like an impregnable rock. It wears out the weapons brought to bear against it and stands in increasing majesty.

What should we teach of the Scriptures? That, when we have gotten back to them as they left the hands of the original writers, they were without error of teaching on any matter on which they spoke.

Dr. Warfield's discussion of Revelation and Inspiration is one of the ablest to be found. Of Revelation, he says, pp. 44, 45: "According to the Biblical representations, the fundamental element in revelation is not the objective process of redemptive acts, but the revealing operations of the Spirit of God, which run through the whole series of modes of communication proper to Spirit, culminating in communications by the objective word. The characteristic element in the Bible idea of revelation in its highest sense is that the organs of revelation are not creatively concerned in the revelations made through them, but occupy a receptive attitude. The contents of their messages are not something thought out, inferred, hoped, or feared by them, but something conveyed to them, often forced upon them by the irresistible might of the reveal-

ing Spirit. No conception can do justice to the Bible idea of revelation which neglects these facts. Nor is justice done even to the rational idea of Revelation when they are neglected. Here, too, we must interpret by the highest category in our reach. 'Can man commune with man,' it is eloquently asked, 'through the high gift of language, and is the infinite mind not to express itself, or is it to do so but faintly, or uncertainly, through dumb material symbols, never by blessed speech?' (W. Morrison, 'Footprints of the Revealer', p. 52.)" Pp. 44-45.

The Minister of Christ and the Student for the ministry should by all means read and study Warfield on "*Revelation and Inspiration*". He is as scholarly as he is sound in the faith. He was a man internationally respected for his learning and ability. This volume is made up of some of his most convincing papers.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY 1928.

BY REV. WALTER L. LINGLE, D. D., LL. D.,
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The sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States was held in Atlanta, Ga., May 17-23, 1928. This article is not intended to be a chronological account of all that was done at this session of the General Assembly, but rather a discussion of some of the most interesting actions of the Assembly.

The Moderator.

Rev. Harris E. Kirk, D. D., Pastor of the Franklin Street Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, Maryland, was elected Moderator on the first ballot. Dr. Kirk is probably more widely known than any other minister in our Church. He seems to be as much at home in London as he is in Baltimore. For years he has stood in a great pulpit in Baltimore, at the very northern