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What the Liberal Theologian Thinks of Verbal Inspiration

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plete, is the proper relation established with the unseen God through His Son, Jesus Christ, the only Mediator between God and man, and by the reconciliation made by Him *between God and man*, also the angels have been made our friends and protectors, but they are only creatures, whom we should not worship. And by the same work of redemption by which peace has been restored in the "family of God," the evil spirits, who also are only creatures, but fallen and rejected, our enemies to be sure, have been vanquished and therefore need not be feared any longer if we but remain steadfast in faith in the great Conqueror. Finally, there is only one avenue to complete Christian knowledge and true freedom, namely: "If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," John 8, 31. 32. That spells complete knowledge and complete freedom. Just as surely there is only one way to the Father, namely, His Son, who tells us: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me," John 14, 6. In the final analysis all error is directed against Him, the Mediator of reconciliation and creation. Men will depreciate and reject Him, the "sign spoken against," while the world stands, but let us cling to Him and reject all error and nip it in the bud, as St. Paul does in this epistle.

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(Conclusion)

This is what J. S. Whale thinks: "The modern man is not impressed by the mere citation of texts; he rightly wants to understand them, in their context. His very certainty that the Scriptures are the fount of divine wisdom — that it is indeed the Word of God which is spoken to him in the words of the Bible — has set him free from the bondage of the letter, the prison-house of verbal infallibility. It is no use shilly-shallying here; loyalty to truth in the shape of literary and historical criticism forbids it. A Christian knows that he has to serve God with the mind as well as with heart and will and that the obligation to be intelligent is itself a moral obligation. The Bible is abused when it is used merely as an armory of proof-texts for defending some theological scheme (a game at which more than one can play, notoriously enough). We use the Bible rightly only when, to quote Luther, we see that it is the cradle wherein Christ is laid; that is, when we worship the holy Child and not His crib. These letters" [written to the

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author by "earnest people who would solve and dismiss the immemorial problem of evil by quoting texts from Holy Scripture"] "have renewed my conviction that blind bibliolatry can be as pathetically wrong as what is called blind unbelief and that the way of obscurantism is the way of disaster." (*The Christian Answer to the Problem of Evil*, p. 77 f.) The liberal theologian thinks 1. that verbal inspiration is an obnoxious thing. 2. He thinks he is justified in rejecting verbal inspiration. 3. He does not think much of proof-texts.

4. *The liberal theologian thinks he is losing nothing as a consequence of the repudiation of verbal inspiration.* He no longer takes the words of the Bible to be God's own words, but he has been able to find the important thing in Scripture—he still has that which counts, and that is the Word of God. He has cast aside the rubbish and found the one precious treasure: the Word of God. He says: "His very certainty that the Scriptures are the fount of divine wisdom—that it is indeed the Word of God which is spoken to him in the words of the Bible—has set him free from the bondage of the letter, the prison-house of verbal infallibility." It is not as clear as it might be how the certainty that the Scriptures are the fount of divine wisdom will set one free from the bondage of the letter. It does not strike us as a self-evident truth that God could not give all Scripture by inspiration if He wanted it to be the fount of divine wisdom. But let that go. We are primarily interested in the statement "It is indeed the Word of God which is spoken to him in the words of the Bible." Let us examine it more closely.

First, the liberal theologians think that they have the right and the duty to distinguish between the words of Scripture and the Word of God. They are telling us that the words of the Bible are not the very words of God, but that in these words of the Bible you may be able to find the Word of God. The Unitarians have been telling us that these many years. In *Scriptural Belief of Unitarian Christians* we are told: "Unitarians believe that the Bible contains the Word of God; they do not believe that every word which it contains is the Word of God." (See Guenther, *Populaere Symbolik*, p. 97.) "According to the Unitarian the Bible contains error as well as truth, and 'no statement can be accepted as true because it is in the Bible. All its teachings must be subjected to the authority of reason and conscience,' says Emerson, *Unitarian Thought*, 2. 27." (*Popular Symbolics*, p. 402.) *Great Christian Teachings* by Prof. Edwin Lewis of Drew University, denies that the Bible "is" the Word of God, but insists that it "brings us" the Word of God (p. 12). If you say that Jesus actually rose from the dead because the Bible "says so," you believe that

the Bible is the Word of God. But if you read the Bible "the right way," taking the resurrection story "not as literal statement of fact, but as a more or less pictorial effort on the part of the early Christian community to account for their experience of Christ" (if, as Whale puts it, you have broken the bondage of the letter and broken out of the prison-house of verbal infallibility), then you have a Bible that "brings us" the Word of God, p. 109, 62. (See CONC. THEOL. MTHLY., IV, p. 756 ff.) William Adams Brown puts it this way: "But if the Bible records such widely different stages of spiritual development, how are we to discriminate between them? How can we tell what part of the Bible is revelation and what is setting? There is one very simple and effective way to do this. It is to bring everything the book contains into touch with the central personality in whom the story culminates — the Lord Jesus Christ." (*Beliefs that Matter*, p. 226.) There is the Christian Bible—be careful! Do not accept everything as true and helpful! Unless you want to read it to your soul's harm, you must be able to pick out what is God's "revelation," God's Word, and the rest, which is mere "setting," you must leave alone. Prof. H. L. Willett of the University of Chicago considers it a crime to identify Scripture with the Word of God. "It is unfortunate that the Bible has been called the Word of God. It implies far more than the Bible is prepared to guarantee. For even a casual reading of the documents that make up this unique collection shows that they were not written by God nor even by men who were speaking with supernatural and inerrant knowledge of God's will. No error has ever resulted in greater discredit to the Scriptures or injury to Christianity than that of attributing to the Bible such a miraculous origin and nature as to make it an infallible standard of morals and religion. That it contains the Word of God in a sense in which that expression can be used of no other book is true. But its finality and authority do not reside in all of its utterances, but in those great characters and messages which are easily discerned as the mountain peaks of its contents. Such portions are worthy to be called the Word of God to man." (*The Bible through the Centuries*, p. 289.) You must not equate the Bible and God's Word! "The words of the Scriptures are human; that is, God makes use of human and therefore frail and fallible words of men who are liable to err. He who identifies the letters and words of the Scriptures with the Word of God has never truly understood the Word of God," says E. Brunner (*The Theology of Crisis*, p. 19), and K. Barth declares that there are places in the Bible "wo die Bibel aufhoert, Bibel zu sein." (*Das Wort Gottes und die Theologie*, p. 77.) And we heard P. Althaus say (see page 352) that you find the Word of God in the Biblical word, but the Biblical

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word as such is only the word of man. These men cannot bring themselves to say that the Bible is the Word of God, for that would mean acceptance of the monstrous article of verbal inspiration. At a conference in which Lutherans and Episcopalians were discussing our question, "the Episcopalians expressed preference for the statement that the Bible 'contained the Word of God' in order to avoid the pitfalls of a possible theory of literal, verbal inspiration." (*Luth. Companion*, Jan. 11, 1936. See *CONC. THEOL. MTHLY.*, 1936, p. 302.) The liberal theologian reads his Bible with these thoughts: There must be a clear distinction kept in mind between the Word of God and the Bible; I must go no farther than to say that the Bible contains the Word of God; in *this* passage I can detect God's Word; that *other* passage expresses the thought of a fallible man.

Secondly, we shall have to find out what the liberal theologians mean by the Word of God contained in the Bible. It is rather hard to find out just what they mean. We on our part have no difficulty in making our meaning clear to them. We tell them that every word written by the prophets and apostles is God's Word in the same sense as the words of the Decalog written by God's own hand on the two tablets were God's words. We tell them—and they understand us perfectly—that the Holy Ghost is the Author of the Bible. We tell them: "Holy Scripture is God's Word, written and lettered and cast into letters. . . . It is the written Word of God." (Luther, IX, p. 1770.) We tell them: "We steadfastly maintain that the Bible is God's own Word. When we open our Bibles, we are sure that God is there speaking to us; when the Bible is read in our churches, we rise because we are listening to the voice of God. . . . Gerhard, one of the most noted Lutheran dogmaticians, asserts: 'There is no essential difference between the Word of God and Holy Scripture.' (*Locus de Scriptura Sacra*, § 7.) Whether we say, 'The Bible says,' or, 'God says,' is essentially the same; thus the difference is verbal only and not factual." (F. Pieper, *What Is Christianity?* Pp. 220. 226. Cp. *Chr. Dog.*, I, 261.) We tell them: "Our English translation of the Bible is a human explanation of a certain humanly transcribed, humanly printed text, of the *original*; which *original* alone, just as the sacred penmen left it, is absolutely in every jot and tittle God's Word." (C. P. Krauth, *The Conservative Reformation*, p. 185.) They know that we mean to say that, when Luke wrote: "The angel said unto them, . . . Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord," these words "The angel said unto them," etc., are the *ipsissima verba* of God. When Moses wrote: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," a human mind formed the words, and a human hand drew the letters; but it was

God who put these words into the mind of that writer, these very words and no others, so that, when we read these words, we hear God saying: In the beginning I created the heaven and the earth. That is what we mean when we say that the Bible is God's Word. And that is what the liberal theologians repudiate with all their heart: You cannot call these words "In the beginning," etc., God's own Word, absolutely and infallibly true.

This one thing is very clear respecting the position of the liberal theologians: they will not accept every word, jot, and tittle of the Bible as God's Word. But when they tell us that in these human words God's Word may be found, they cannot tell us distinctly and definitely what this Word of God is. They are not agreed on the definition of the term *Word of God*; some of the definitions are extremely hazy; and in every case the application of the defined term to the matter in hand is shrouded in a fog of doubt and uncertainty. Some define the "Word of God" contained in the Bible as Jesus Christ. A writer in the *Christian Century* of July 15, 1936, declares that, though "liberal Protestants cannot use the Bible as a whole book because it does not give one, and only one, systematic theology,—we have, for example, Machenism and Seventh-day Adventism both deriving from the same book and on the same premise of literal dictation of every word,—they still have something to stand on: they are driven back to Jesus—God's only clear word to men—as their foundation." It is hard to conceive of Jesus, the *personal* Word, as being contained in the Bible. Others say that the "Word" which the Bible contains is what God has done and is doing for our salvation. "Scripture knows of no other 'Word of God' save that which has been given, and given in the form of an event. . . . The Word of God must be a free gift, through which God imparts Himself in saving power to the soul." (E. Brunner, *The Mediator*, p. 214.) "The one and only Word of God has once for all been uttered, for all men to heed, in the fact of the Incarnation." (K. Barth, *The Church and the Churches*.)¹⁾ Others use more exact language and define the "Word of God in the Bible" as the great teachings of the Bible or, more specifically, as the teachings of Christ or, still more specifically, as the Gospel. "The authority of the Bible resides in those

1) These men should use more exact language. In the first place, an event cannot be called the Word of God. When God *makes known* the nature and purpose of an event, e. g., of the Incarnation, we have God's Word. In the second place, Brunner should not say: "The Bible is the Word of God" (*The Mediator*, p. 326), since he has said that the Word of God is given only in the form of an event. The Bible is not an event. Nor should these men say, in the third place, that the Bible contains the Word of God. The Bible does not contain the Incarnation. There is too much loose thinking about this matter.

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great characters and messages which are easily discerned as the mountain peaks of its contents. Such portions are worthy to be called the Word of God to man." (H. L. Willett, quoted a few pages back.) V. Ferm's definition: "The term *Word of God* should be used with discrimination. It is no longer tenable to use it as a synonym for the entire Bible, in spite of the reformers. . . . To us the 'Word of God' is the validly spiritual content which rises unmistakably in Scriptural utterances and in the pronouncement of Christlike seers." (*What Is Lutheranism?* P. 294.) If you want to know what portions of the Bible partake of the nature of God's revelation, are really God's Word, you must, according to William Adams Brown, as quoted a few pages back, "bring everything the Book contains into touch with the central personality in whom the story culminates—the Lord Jesus Christ." According to the *Presbyterian* of November 26, 1936, a youthful adherent of liberal theology (graduate of Union Theological Seminary) gave this definition: "In the first chapter of John we read: 'In the beginning was the Word, . . . and the Word was made flesh.' I believe that Jesus is the Word of God, and that anything in the Holy Scriptures which is consistent with the Spirit of Jesus is the Word of God. . . . Those men who wrote our Scriptures were inspired by God, but they mixed some of their own errors in with God's truth. Jesus said: 'It hath been said of old, . . . but I say unto you.' There were some parts of the Scripture which Jesus Himself did not accept as God's truth, at least not as the whole truth of God. The Holy Scriptures are to me a progressive revelation of God's Word." Dr. E. E. Flack's definition: "Primarily and fundamentally the Word of God is the Gospel of Christ, the supreme personal revelation of God, who is set forth in the Scriptures." (*The Lutheran*, Sept. 24, 1936.) Dr. Amos J. Traver's definition: "When we speak of the Bible as God's Word, we mean that it reveals to us what God is thinking. . . . Inspiration includes only the knowledge essential for knowing God and His plan for man. . . . The writers of the Bible give us a saving knowledge of God's grace." (*The Lutheran*, Jan. 23, 1936.) Dr. J. A. W. Haas's definition: "What the theologians call the Word of God, namely, the *spiritual content of the Bible*, is an authority of freedom. It is not dependent upon a prior acceptance of an infallible record or any doctrine of inspiration." (*What Ought I to Believe?* P. 30.) Erich Schaefer gives the same definition: "The Spirit-wrought faith applies a sifting process to the Bible word. Through this sifting process it gets the *Word of God*, the *Word of Christ*, to which it pneumatically adheres." (*Theozentrische Theologie*, II, p. 69.) One more utterance: "Die evangelische Kirche betrachtet die Bibel als Wort Gottes, nicht im Sinne einer mechanischen Verbalinspiration,

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sondern als das in Menschenwort gekleidete Zeugnis Gottes von seinem Wesen und Walten, insbesondere als Zeugnis von seinem eingebornen Sohne Jesus Christus, in dem das Wort Fleisch geworden ist." (Ev. Oberkirchenrat in Stuttgart. See *Allg. Ev.-Luth. Kirchenzeitung*, Dec. 18, 1936.)

Now, these latter definitions are clear enough. We can easily understand, for instance, the statements "The Word of God is the Gospel"; the Word of God provides the "knowledge essential for knowing God and His plan for man." But as soon as we attempt to determine what portions of the Bible, then, are God's Word, we get befogged. Is the knowledge of the Law essential for the knowledge of God's plan for man? Are the historical portions of the Bible, those, say, which tell of the birth of Christ and of His resurrection, essential? Again, and speaking of the Gospel alone, who or what is to determine just which passages contain Gospel? And how much of the Gospel must a particular passage contain in order to be "easily discerned as one of the mountain peaks of the contents of the Bible worthy to be called the Word of God to man"? Once more, when we have determined that a particular passage carries God's Word, the Gospel, just how much of that passage is reliable? Denying verbal inspiration, these men tell us that the words that make up, say, John 3, 16, are not inspired; they are merely John's words; the Holy Spirit did not inspire these words. But God's Word is in there, they say. Look for it! Sift out the Word from the words. "Die Heilige Schrift enthaelt ja unter den aeusseren sinnlichen Zeichen und Bildern der Buchstaben, Woerter, Saetze, Schriften und Buecher einen solchen hohen Sinn, dass es wahrhaftig der Muehe wert, ja einfach Pflicht ist, darauf zu merken als auf ein helles Licht, das nichts anderes, nichts Hoeheres ist als das lebendige Wort Gottes." (Lic. Dr. T. Poehlmann, in *Allg. Ev.-Luth. Kirchenzeitung*, Jan. 24, 1936.) Well, we wonder just how much of these words must be discarded in the sifting process or just when the thought conveyed by these human words turn into God's Word. There is no difficulty about the Swedenborgian method. Swedenborg tells us that the letter of Scripture does not mean anything. An ordinary man cannot know just where the Word of God in these words of Scripture is. "It has not hitherto been known where in the Word the divine is. For in the letter the Word appears like an ordinary writing." (*The True Christian Religion*, p. 321, chap. IV.) But the Lord took care of this difficulty. He sent Swedenborg to point out the Word of God in the words of Scripture. "It has pleased the Lord now to reveal its spiritual sense in order that it may be known where in the Word the divine holiness is concealed." (P. 333.) "He has disclosed to me the spiritual sense of His Word." (P. 1041, chap. XIV.) The Sweden-

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borgians are never at a loss: Swedenborg can tell them exactly which is the true Word. "So Divine Truth came into the world. He prepared Swedenborg to be the human recipient, seer and scribe, by means of whose labors he could give to this world a true understanding of the Holy Word." (J. J. Thornton, quoted in *The Confusion of Tongues*, p. 355.) Thomas Muenzer's method is still simpler. He received the Word of God directly from God. He told his dupes exactly, in so many words, what the new revelation was. His dupes did not have to search for it in a cryptogram. But the liberal theologians tell us that hidden somewhere in certain passages there is God's real Word, and they leave us to find out exactly what it is.

The matter becomes still more complicated when they tell us: "Obedience to Scripture should be required of no man as regards those passages in which he personally does not hear God speak to him." (W. Herrmann, *Syst. Theology*, p. 72.) "Only then when the words of Scripture have found a living echo in our conscience and heart, can they be considered by us as the expression of truth. The letter of Scripture is God's Word only then when it has become a living thing in its effect upon us." (C. Stange, *Dogmatik*, I, p. 193.) This "Word of God," hidden in the Bible, is a most elusive thing. And when, finally, some of these men tell us that there is a Word of God continuously coming to men which is of equal value and authority with the Word of God to be found in the Bible, we give up the search.²⁾

Fourthly, we shall have to tell the liberal theologians, who think that they can find the Word of God by separating God's Word from the Bible word, what we think of their theological method. (A) The distinction between the words of Scripture and Word of God is an arbitrary distinction. It is not sanctioned by Scripture. It is a wicked distinction. The attempt to stamp a number of statements inspired by God as human, fallible statements is denounced by the Bible as wickedness. We are well aware that this appeal to the authority of the Bible does not impress the liberal theologian. But we shall keep on appealing to

2) Let us clarify the situation at one point. We who say that the words set down by the prophets and apostles are God's words, God's Word, and those liberal theologians who say that the Bible contains God's Word, viz., the Gospel, are speaking of different things. Let us try to understand each other. Here is our proposal: We are ready to say that the Bible contains the Gospel and this Gospel is the most important part of the Bible; it contains much that is not Gospel, for instance, the Law. If we admit that,—all the world knows that we have been emphasizing that at all times,—are you ready to say that also those parts of the Bible which are not Gospel were written by inspiration of God, are the very words of God? Their answer is an emphatic no.

the Bible's own statements concerning the nature of its statements. Isaiah made a certain statement in chapter 7, 14, and Matt. 1, 22 declares that that "was spoken of the Lord (ὑπὸ κυρίου) by the prophet." There is also Rom. 3, 2: "Unto them were committed the oracles of God." And τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ certainly means "the words, or utterances, of God."³) Then there is 2 Tim. 3, 16: "all Scripture." That word covers every bit of the Bible. If "all" is not clear enough, take Rom. 15, 4: "Whatsoever things were written aforetime." And so Paul "believed all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets," Acts 24, 14. The liberal theologian will, of course, not listen to this argument. He repudiates this proof-text method. (See page 353 ff.) He may say with Richard Rothe that the apostles certainly taught verbal inspiration, but that his "exegetical conscience forbids him to be bound by the teaching of the apostles on this point." (See Pieper, *Chr. Dog.*, I, 320. Meusel, *Handlexikon*, III, 459.) He will call us—*horribile dictu*—Biblicists. None the less we shall continue to tell him that as often as he, in his sifting process, throws aside a statement of the Bible as a mere human word or separates the letter as the base hull from the Word as the precious kernel, he is slapping the Bible in the face. Need we adduce passages that say that this is a wicked thing to do?

(B) The liberal theologian thinks he is losing nothing by repudiating verbal inspiration; he is able to find the Word of God in these fallible, human words of the Bible. But he is mistaken, and those who consistently apply his method are making a *fatal* mistake. They can never have the assurance that they have found God's Word. The certainty of God's Word is here at stake and the certainty of faith. Right from the start the sinner who is seeking salvation and is told that the Holy Bible shows the way of salvation is filled with doubt and suspicion of the Bible. For he is told that this Book is shot through with mistakes and errors. "These rationalists," says L. Keyser, tell him "that God gave to mankind a religious revelation and embroidered and inlaid it with multitudinous errors." (See P. E. Kretzmann, *The Foundations*, p. 59.) That does not inspire the seeker after truth, absolute, certain truth, with confidence in the Bible. And when he has found a passage that looks to him like saving truth, how shall he verify it? For the liberal theologian, yes, and every theologian who denies verbal inspiration, tells him that the words that make up John 3, 16 are purely human words and that it is the sinners' business to discover the Word of God hidden therein. V. Ferm tells him he can safely

3) It will not do to make λόγια mean only Gospel utterances of God. Acts 7, 38 forbids that. The λόγια there mentioned were given on Mount Sinai. And it will not do to restrict the meaning of λόγια to statements that deal with spiritual matters exclusively. Read on, above.

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rely on the validly spiritual content which rises *unmistakably* in Scriptural utterances. "Unmistakably" — what criterion must the sinner apply? Who or what will assure the sinner, since the words themselves are not absolutely trustworthy, that he is reading them right? The Unitarian, the rationalist, will tell him to apply his reason. We know, and the moderate liberals know, that that is not a safe test. The extreme liberal, the Modernist, tells us that the unmistakable test is the agreement with modern thought. D.F. Forrester says: "All of them [the writers of the epistles] struggled with evident limitations of temperament, environment, and vocation. In their case it is necessary not only to find out what they said, but also what they were trying to say, what the eternal Word of God was saying in them to all men everywhere. . . . The wheat must be sifted from the chaff, the 'Word' taken from the worn-out wrappings. And then that 'Word' shall be made plain. All must be fitted to our modern thought. . . . What is warped and ill balanced must be corrected." (*The Living Church*, Feb. 11, 1933.) "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son," fitted to modern thought, means that God did not give us one who is God of God, the very God Himself. Is there no better way of finding the "Word of God" in the words of the Bible? Yes, says C.H. Dodd: "Not God, but Paul is the author of the Epistle to the Romans, though in a transferred sense we may describe the Epistle to the Romans as a 'Word of God,' meaning that in some way it mediates to the reader the truth which is the thought of God. . . . From what the New Testament shows us of the manner in which Jesus revealed God to men we may learn something about the way in which the Bible as a whole may become the 'Word of God' to us. . . . The criterion lies within ourselves, in the response of our own spirit to the Spirit that utters itself in the Scriptures." (*The Authority of the Bible*, pp. 16. 294. 297.) "Response of our own spirit" sounds better than "agreement with reason and modern thought." — Erich Schaefer's language sounds still better: "The Spirit-wrought faith applies a sifting process to the Bible word. Through this sifting process it gets the Word of God." But the criterion devised by the moderate liberal — faith, response of our spirit, experience, etc. — is no better than the criterion applied by the radical liberal. All of them place the criterion within man himself. Man is made the judge of what is eternal truth. Man's reason or man's faith decides how much of the Bible can and must be believed. The deniers of verbal inspiration are in effect advising the sinner to base the certainty of God's Word on the judgment of his faith or reason, etc. They are destroying the objectivity, the objective validity, of Scripture and thrusting us into the uncertainties of subjectivism. They are telling

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us to leave *terra firma* and walk on the sea of human judgments. There can be no certainty of having "God's Word" when men no longer believe that a thing is true because the Bible says so.

Look at the matter from another angle. President Whale says that "there are different levels of spiritual vision." (See page 351.) Does the "Word of God" remain the same in the different periods of history, or do men who are on a higher level of spiritual vision see a different "Word of God"? Was the "Word of God" which the apostles found and on which the early Church relied a saving Word? They relied on the salvation gained through the substitutionary death of the Son of God. The modern man, on a higher level of spiritual vision, finds this to be the "Word of God" that salvation is obtained by obeying the precepts of the lowly Nazarene. Does the "Word of God" change as man's environment, temperament, and outlook change?

Another consideration. These men believe that God gave lost mankind a book to instruct it on the way of salvation, but that God so arranged matters that this Book of Life is a mixture of truth and error, so that we have to pass this mixture through a crucible in order to get the life-giving substance. The lost and corrupt sinner must employ what faculties he has in order to determine how much of this book is God's Word. And the converted sinner, too, must consult whatever faculties he has, his experience, faith, spiritual vision, in order to identify God's Word. Now, these men do not think highly of God when they say that God takes this all-important matter so lightly as to give us a guide-book to eternal life which is full of errors. Or else they imagine that God thinks so highly of their mental, moral, and spiritual capacities as to expect an infallible judgment from them. For unless there is an infallible judgment, doubt and despair are man's lot. So what are they thinking and saying? This, that the prophets and apostles could not write an infallible book, not even by inspiration, but that we can infallibly, "unmistakably," detect the truth.

5. *President Whale thinks he has Luther on his side.* He says: "We use the Bible rightly only when, to quote Luther, we see that it is the cradle wherein Christ is laid; that is, when we worship the holy Child and not His crib." He thinks that Luther is warning men against placing too high an estimate on the Bible; that Luther did not look upon the words of the Bible as divine words; that he repudiated verbal infallibility; that he took a "liberal view" of the Bible. And there are a lot of theologians who like to quote these words of Luther in support of their liberal view. There is, for instance, E. Brunner: "The words of the Scriptures are human; that is, God makes use of human and therefore frail and fallible

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words of men who are liable to err. . . . He who identifies the letters and words of the Scriptures with the Word of God has never truly understood the Word of God. A better witness than Martin Luther we can scarcely call up. And Martin Luther, with full appreciation of what he was saying, placed side by side these two statements: 'The Scriptures alone are God's Word,' and: 'they are the cradle in which Christ is laid.' Need it be mentioned that he busied himself with Biblical criticism?" (*The Theology of Crisis*, p. 19.) "Luther, perhaps the most congenial interpreter of Scripture the Church has ever had, explicitly asserted the subordination of the Scripture to Christ, in such well-known utterances as these: 'The Scriptures are the crib, wherein Christ is laid.' . . ." "The orthodox teachers could never have repeated Luther's words that 'the Scriptures are the crib wherein Christ is laid'; and Luther would never have approved the opinion of later orthodoxy that everything in the Scriptures, just because it is in the Scriptures, is equally inspired by the Holy Spirit. . . . Biblical criticism is nothing but the act by which we recognize that the crib is not Christ, that the ground is not gold, that God's Word is only indirectly identical with the Bible word, although we have the one only through the other." (*The Word and the World*, pp. 84, 94, 101.) There is also the Lutheran Dr. C. E. Wendell: "A stilted veneration for the Word betrays an inward weakness rather than a virile faith, and out of it proceeds a nervous anxiety to prove the 'complete inerrancy' of the Bible 'from cover to cover.' This may be good fundamentalism, but hardly good Lutheranism; for Luther was not of that type. He did not fret and fuss to prove its alleged 'inerrancy from cover to cover.' . . . Of the Scriptures as a whole, so far as the external or human side is concerned, Luther uses expressions that seem nothing short of irreverent. He calls them '*schlecht und gering*.' Evidently he was not given to indiscriminate bibliolatry. . . . The Bible may be externally rough and rude, but 'here you find the swaddling-cloth and the manger in which Christ lies and to which the angel directed the shepherds. Rude and unpretentious (*schlecht und gering*) is the swaddling-cloth, but precious is the treasure, Christ, which lies therein.' That is what made the Bible so precious to Luther—not its literary beauty, not its philosophical insight, not its historical or scientific value, not its alleged 'inerrancy from cover to cover,' but Christ, who dwells therein." (*What Is Lutheranism?* Pp. 235–238.) Dr. J. A. W. Haas reads the words the same way. (See the *Lutheran*, Dec. 8, 1932.) And there are others.

These men are not, of course, quoting Luther's statement for the purpose of proving their teaching that the Bible is not verbally and plenarily inspired. Just as we would not discard our teaching

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on this point if they could adduce ten or a hundred statements of Luther to the effect that "not every word of the Bible is God-breathed and infallible." But they derive some degree of comfort from what they believe is a fact, that Luther, too, the Reformer, "perhaps the most congenial interpreter of Scripture the Church has ever had," took a liberal attitude with regard to the inspiration of Scripture. They are glad to hear Luther say that the Bible is the cradle wherein Christ is laid. They think Luther is contrasting the Bible and Christ. They think Luther is saying that Christ is worthy of all honor, the Bible, however, made up of "human, frail, and fallible words," must be kept in its place. They think Luther is telling those who accept every word of the Bible as infallibly true that they are not using the Bible rightly, are worshipping the crib, are committing bibliolatry.

Luther said nothing of the kind. He does not say that those who accept every word of the Bible as divine are committing bibliolatry, are unduly exalting the "crib." He does not say that the Bible, the crib, wherein Jesus lies, is *schlecht und gering* because it consists of human, frail, and fallible words. He is not warning us against exalting the Bible. On the contrary, he is highly exalting the Bible. He wrote those words for the very purpose of magnifying the majesty of the Bible. We wonder whether President Whale ever read those words in their context. We wonder whether Dr. Brunner did. If they did, we cannot understand how they could misunderstand Luther so completely. We think that a list of Luther's utterances, allegedly containing liberal views, is circulating among the liberal theologians and that some of them blindly accept the list and quote from it as the need arises without looking up the quotation and examining the context. Let us look up the passage in question. It will not be difficult to demonstrate that they are misquoting Luther. We know, of course, that this demonstration will not kill the myth concerning Luther's "liberal attitude." The charge that Luther warns against exalting the Bible has been conclusively answered long before now. But it keeps on cropping out. The list keeps on circulating. And so we have to keep on asking the liberal theologian to compare their list of misquotations with Luther's own words. Here they are, as found in Volume XIV, columns 3 and 4, St. Louis edition; Erl. ed., 63, 8; Walch ed., XIV, 4: *Vorrede auf das Alte Testament*: "... I beg and faithfully warn every pious Christian not to shy at the homely speech and story he will often find there [in the Old Testament], but to know for sure that, though it all looks so plain and ordinary (*schlecht*), it is altogether and throughout (*eitel*) words, works, judgments, and history of the exalted divine majesty, power, and wisdom. For this is the Scripture which makes

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fools of the wise and prudent and is open only to babes and the simple, as Christ says Matt. 11, 25. Have done therefore with your conceit and feeling and esteem this Book as the highest and noblest sanctuary, as a mine containing untold wealth, never to be exhausted, so that you may find the divine wisdom which God presents here so plainly and simply in order to cast down all pride. Here you will find the swaddling-clothes and the manger in which Christ lies and to which also the angel directed the shepherds, Luke 2, 12. Plain and mean (*schlecht und gering*, 'rude and unpretentious') are the swaddling-clothes, but precious is the treasure, Christ, that lies therein."

One thing is clear: the Bible is so precious because it is the manger which contains Christ. The Bible was given to us for no other purpose than to bring us the blessings of Christ. But another thing is equally clear: there is not a single word in this passage which warns us against overestimating the Bible; not one single word which says that the human words of the Bible are fallible. "*Schlecht und gering*"—yes, but that does not mean fallible or worthless. The Bible is the manger, the swaddling-clothes—these are not derogatory, but laudatory words. And how dare Whale and Brunner and the others quote this utterance of Luther as proving that he was in favor of rejecting portions of Scripture as worthless after the fashion of the higher critics, when Luther distinctly declares that all these words are *eitel* words of the divine majesty and wisdom?⁴⁾ Whale and Brunner and the rest are foisting their own ideas upon Luther's words. To quote Luther as Whale does constitutes a case of flagrant garbling. Dr. Pieper does not think much of this sort of theological work. "Examining these statements of Luther, we find that they demonstrate, not Luther's 'liberal' attitude towards Scripture, but the unscientific and slovenly methods employed by modern theologians in quoting Luther." (*Chr. Dog.*, I, p. 346.)

4) We wonder whether President Whale, whose book was published in October, 1936, found his reference to Luther in the March number of the *Journal of the American Lutheran Conference* of last year. The article, "The Principles of Biblical Interpretation of M. Luther," contains that list of allegedly liberal statements of Luther; a pretty comprehensive list. Concerning the statement under discussion it says: "Luther compares the Bible to the swaddling-clothes and the manger in which Christ is found. 'Simple and little are the swaddling-clothes, but dear is the treasure, Christ, that lies in them.' That which is valuable in the Bible and gives it its unique character is its relation to Christ. The nature of the Bible is, then, that it is a witness to the revelation of the redemption of God in Christ." (P. 15.) We fully agree with the writer when he says that that which gives the Bible its unique character is its relation to Christ. We prize the Bible so highly because we find Christ there. Unfortunately, however, the context shows that the writer does not think

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It might be well to compare the voluminous compilations of statements of Luther which identify the words of the Bible with God's words, declare for the verbal, plenary inspiration of Scripture, and insist on the absolute authority of the Bible in every matter which it presents, with the list circulating among the liberal theologians. They say they can match our list of one hundred quotations with a list containing another hundred of "liberal" pronouncements of Luther. They are going to find it difficult to quote one hundred. But they have found some, of the nature of the Christ-and-crib statement. However, when we compare the two lists, we find a remarkable difference. We have no difficulty in reconciling the seemingly contradictory statements of Luther, for the simple reason that the examination of the text shows that there is no contradiction. You can find sentences in Luther which seem to say that not all of Scripture is inspired and authoritative. But if you read the passages in their context, you will see that Luther does not say anything of the kind. They are all like the Christ-and-crib quotation which Whale and Brunner and Wendell bring forward so confidently. Take time to read the section in *Christliche Dogmatik* which treats of this matter (I, p. 346 ff.). But the liberal theologians encounter untold difficulties when our list confronts them. If Luther really said: "Holy Scripture is God's Word" (IX, 1770); "You are so to deal with Scripture that you think that God Himself is saying this. But since God is saying it . . ." (III, p. 21); "The Creed [Nicene] thus speaks of the Holy Ghost 'who spake by the prophets.' The Holy Ghost is thus recognized as the Author of Scripture, of the entire Scriptures" (III, 1890); "I believe that in Scripture the God of Truth is speaking" (XIV, 491); "Sts. Peter and Paul . . . were men; when you hear such people as are so completely blinded and hardened as to deny that this is the Word of God what Christ and the apostles spoke and wrote, then you keep silence," etc. (IX, 1238), he certainly equated Scripture and the Word of God. These statements are so clear that there

highly of everything that the Bible contains. He states that "the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of Scripture consists in this, that it bears witness to the great facts of salvation and redemption" (p. 14). And after stating "that it is undeniable that many passages might be cited which tend to show that Luther accepted the theory that the authority of the Bible extends not only to matters of faith, but to the realms of history and science as well," he remarks (p. 13): "Some of these statements may be due to a certain hangover from his earlier development of opinions and views which did not really harmonize with his later ideas." So he, too, is employing the *schlecht-und-gering* statement to prove Luther's liberal attitude. His list contains the usual misquotations from Luther, such as "Was Christum treibet," "Johannes macht hier eine Verwirrung," etc. These matters have been discussed in Pieper, *Christliche Dogmatik*, I, 346 ff.; W. Rohnert, *Die Dogm. d. ev.-luth. Kirche*, p. 89 f.; *Conc. THEOL. MTHLY.*, I, 868 f.; III, 306 ff.

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is only one hope left for the liberal theologians. They will have to hope that some day somebody will discover a writing of Luther which unequivocally retracts these statements. Again, a man who believes in his heart that the words of the Bible are not inspired, that not *all the words* are inspired, that not every word is absolutely true, could not in good faith pen these words: "*Also gibt man nun dem Heiligen Geist die ganze Heilige Schrift. . .* He who can boast that the Spirit of the Lord is speaking through him and that his tongue is speaking the Word of the Holy Ghost must truly be very sure of his position. . . . David will not suffer it to have the words ascribed to himself" (III, 1890. 1894); "Not only the words, but also the form of speech which the Holy Ghost and the Scriptures use is of God" (IV, 1960); "The Holy Scriptures are the Word of God, written and (let me express it thus) lettered and cast into letters, just as Christ is the eternal Word of God, veiled in the human nature. . . . The Scriptures are written by the Holy Ghost" (IX, 1770); "*The Holy Ghost* has purposely contrived to have none of the evangelists agree with the others *verbatim*" (XIX, 1104); "This is certain that Scripture does not lie" (I, 714); "Scripture cannot err" (XIX, 1073); "Scripture has never erred. . . . 'None of the Scripture-writers has ever erred' (Augustine)" (XV, 1481). Once more, it is beyond human skill and ingenuity to take up these declarations of Luther: "It is impossible, absolutely impossible, that there is a single letter in Paul which the entire Church should not follow and observe" (XIX, 20); "I follow them [the chronologists] no longer when they would have me contradict Scripture. For I believe that in Scripture the God of Truth is speaking" (XIV, 491); "When Moses writes that God made heaven and earth and all that is in them in six days, you are to accept that it was six days and are not to find an explanation that six days were one day. If you cannot understand how it could have been six days, then accord to the Holy Spirit the honor that He is more learned than you. For you are so to deal with the Scriptures that you think that God Himself is saying this" (III, 21), it is impossible to so manipulate and stretch these words that they leave room for the idea, that Luther did not consider Scripture an authority on every single matter that it presents.—We thank God for Luther. He has taught us to take up our Bible with holy fear and joy, to accept every word of it as infallibly true, and boldly to confess, despite the doubts of our own hearts and the sneers of the scientist: "Thus saith the Lord!"⁵⁾

5) Find time to read the article published in *Theologische Quartalschrift*, October, 1936, and April, 1937: "Luthers Stellung zur Lehre von der Verbalinspiration." The writer examined volumes 1–9 and 14 of the St. Louis edition of Luther's works and found "considerably more

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6. There are many Lutheran theologians who think of verbal inspiration just as President Whale thinks of it. The liberal theologians cannot appeal to Luther, but they find support among Lutherans. There are Lutheran theologians who will not side with the Liberals in the matter of the deity of Christ, etc., but in the matter of inspiration they make common cause with them.⁶⁾ In this matter the Neo-Lutherans of Europe speak the language of Whale and Willett. Here are a few more typical pronouncements. W. Gussmann: "The day of verbal inspiration has passed, and we will have to tell our American brethren: we cannot turn the course of history backwards." (*Luth. Zeitblatt*, Jan., 1924.) Ad. Deissmann: "This dogma of the verbal inspiration of every letter of the New Testament, which rightly can be called mechanical inspiration, is now abandoned in all scientific theology." (*The New Testament in the Light of Modern Research*, 1929, p. 12.) The liberal Karl Thieme of Leipzig asks: "An welchen Universitaeten, so muss man neugierig fragen, gilt die Schrift als Wort goettlicher Offenbarung im Sinne von Laibles massiver Bibelvergoetterung?" and the conservative *Freimund* (Neuendettelsau), which had taken Thieme to task for his sneering utterance (see *Ev.-Luth. Freikirche*, Aug. 2, 1931), itself uttered this thought in the issue of June 24, 1932: "The Bible does not set itself up as an authority in questions of science, astronomy, history, ethnology, but it is the authority in questions concerning salvation. He that knows this will escape the danger *der Vergoetzung*⁷⁾ *des einzelnen Worts* and of mistaking the hull for the kernel." Danger? Yes, indeed. Years ago Prof. A. W. Dieckhoff of Rostock insisted that the Church could not stand before negative criticism unless she yielded up her old doctrine of the inspiration and infallibility of Scripture as untenable. (See W. Rohnert, *Dogmatik*, VIII.) And today E. Schaefer deplors that "people, cultured in other respects, are under the spell of monstrous ideas regarding the Bible, still look upon it as a sacred codex," because this view "exposes the Bible

than one thousand" utterances of Luther showing that Luther stood for verbal inspiration. "One thousand"—not a paltry one hundred. It will do you good to study the list there submitted. On page 243 the writer says: "Ich erschrak ueber die Frivolitaet der Leute, die Luther zu ihrem Gewaehrsmanne fuer die Leugnung der Verbalinspiration machen wollen. Ich erschrak ueber die Frivolitaet, mit der sie Luther zitieren." The writer is Pastor W. Bodamer, Lodz, Poland.

6) "Verbalinspiration!" Jeder Theolog schaudert bei dem Wort ordentlich zusammen; es wirkt wie das rote Tuch auf den Stier; und wenn man sonst nicht sehr einig ist in der Theologie, links und rechts, darin ist man einig: nur keine Verbalinspiration!" (Moeller, *Um die Inspiration der Bibel*, p. 63.)

7) *Vergoetzung* seems to be a stronger term than Thieme's *Vergoetterung*.

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to ridicule." (*Glaubenslehre fuer Gebildete*, p. 18 f.) Laible's *Allg. Ev.-Luth. Kirchenzeitung* publishes an essay by the Silesian *Landesbischof*, Dr. Zaenker, who sets out to exorcize "the spook of verbal inspiration" and calls upon his pastors to eradicate the theory of verbal inspiration (1935, pp. 987. 1042), and an address by the *Landesbischof* of Wuerttemberg, Dr. Wurm, who exclaims over "the fatal effects of the old-orthodox doctrine of verbal inspiration, the ruin and decay that it produces." (See *Ev.-Luth. Freikirche*, Sept. 13, 1936.) A typical pronouncement from Sweden: "It was a fatality that the study of the Bible and the theory of verbal inspiration have been hitched together (*zusammengekoppelt*)." "Biblicism, the application of the theory of verbal inspiration, has laid a heavy bond on Christian theology." "The disastrous consequences of this theory!" "Luther's slavish dependence on proof-texts!" (G. Aulén, *Das christliche Gottesbild*, pp. 251. 346.) In short, "the liberal and the 'positive' modern theologians, Ihmels representing the second group, are agreed that the ancient Church, Luther, and the old dogmaticians made a mistake in identifying Scripture and the Word of God." (Pieper, *Chr. Dog.*, I, p. 257.)

There are leaders of the Lutheran Church in America, too, who side with the Liberals on the Bible question. They will tell Gussmann that *they* do not need to be told that the day of verbal inspiration has passed. They have been telling their people that right along. In 1927 Dr. E. H. Delk said at the installation of Professors Stamm, Hoover, and Aberly at Gettysburg: "When I came to the seminary years ago, I fully believed in the verbal inspiration of every book of the Bible. The Bible was to me an infallible authority in its statements concerning astronomy, geology, anthropology, history, ethics, and religion. . . . I fancy I had plenty of company in my jejune conception and belief that the Bible in all its statements was inerrant. . . . What a change has been wrought in the sphere of New Testament scholarship during the last fifty years!" (*Theol. Monthly*, VII p. 172.) And last year he wrote: "This idea of a verbal inspiration of Holy Scripture is more likely to close the ears of informed students of the Bible to Dr. Maier's message than to win them to its revelation of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (*Luth. Church Quart.*, 1936, p. 426.) Dr. H. C. Alleman: "The Bible has carried with it the husk as well as the kernel. There are many things in the Old Testament and some in the New Testament which are temporal and even provincial. When we read Old Testament stories of doubtful ethics and *lex talionis* reprisals, with their cruelty and vengefulness, their polygamy and adultery, it is difficult for us to sympathize with the theory of verbal inspiration." (*Luth. Church Quart.*, 1936, p. 240 f.) Dr. M. G. G.

Sherer: "Christian liberty knows how to distinguish between Scripture and Scripture, between the shell and the content, between the chaff and the wheat, between the letter and the spirit. . . . Christian liberty does not fall into the sin of bibliolatry." (*Chr. Liberty and Church Unity*, p. 81.) Dr. J. A. W. Haas: "We have been too much misled, even in the Lutheran Church, by the non-Lutheran conceptions of the Bible, which often tend to bibliolatry." (*The Lutheran*, Dec. 8, 1932.) Dr. C. A. Wendell: "Bibliolatry is perhaps the finest and most exalted form of idolatry, but idolatry it is nevertheless. . . . A stilted veneration for the Word betrays an inward weakness rather than a virile faith, and out of it proceeds a nervous anxiety to prove the 'complete inerrancy' of the Bible 'from cover to cover.'" (*What Is Lutheranism?* P. 235.) J. Huebner in the *Luth. Church Quarterly* of 1931: "This view, which makes the sacred writers mere amanuenses, is still adhered to by some, even within the Lutheran Church, who stress the literal inerrancy of the Bible in all particulars. Not without justification Bowne calls it a heathen theory." (See *CONC. THEOL. MTHLY.*, 1931, p. 191.) V. Ferm: "The doctrine of the complete inerrancy of the Bible, upon which historic Lutheranism has built up a system of orthodoxy, can hardly, without a loss of intellectual integrity and vitality, be today maintained in the light of the historical method of understanding the Scriptures." (*What Is Lutheranism?* P. 293.)

If President Whale should ask: Do you Lutherans identify Scripture with the Word of God? there are those who answer: What do you mean? Are you asking us whether we look upon every word, every statement, of the Bible as God's own statement, the very Word of God? Then we say, No; the Bible is not verbally inspired. But we do believe that the Bible brings us the Word of God, the message of salvation, and so we are ready to call the Bible the Word of God. In an address delivered at Gettysburg Seminary, published in the *Lutheran Church Quarterly*, 1935, pp. 258, 260, H. F. Baughman declared: "An individual brooding upon some condition of life . . . became convinced of a great truth. He felt that the truth thus communicated was the will of God for him for a people. 'The word of God came to him.' It was the word of God in the soul of a man. He announced it, and his declaration of it was committed to writing. . . . Seekers for authority in Scripture cannot therefore find it in isolated portions and texts of the Bible. The idea of verbal inspiration and the practise of literal interpretation may destroy the reality of the Bible's message. Its authority is not to be identified with the form of the language which announces the truth of God, but must be found in the light of the experience through which the word of God came to the soul of a man." Dr. J. A. W. Haas: "There must

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be a clear distinction kept in mind between the Word of God and the Bible. The Bible is the Word of God because it contains the Word of God." (*What Is Lutheranism?* P. 176.) And this is the method by which you can detect the Word of God in the word of the Bible: "Note that the only true inspiration and the only true authority which is claimed for the Scripture is spiritual; and it is the spirit of man alone which can discern God's Spirit and thereby recognize this inspiration: 'The best test of the inspiration of any writing is its serviceableness for the moral and spiritual needs of men.'" (*The New Testament Commentary*, on 2 Tim. 3, 16.)

Are you Lutherans ready to maintain the truth of every statement made by the sacred writers? No, says a writer in the *Lutheran Church Quarterly*, 1936, p. 184 ff.; not, e. g., the story of the "cursing" of the fig-tree. "Some day, some brother with gift of insight, as he would probably put it, and with singular zeal for the authority of the Christ" edited the original story into the form in which we now have it. "In consideration of the fact that Mark's version could hardly have been used evangelistically at all without a drastic bit of editing, it is a fair question whether we may not infer that it was precisely Mark himself who first detected the 'curse' in the kindly words of Jesus. . . ." And there are a lot of other Biblical statements which cannot be maintained. Dr. A. E. Deitz: "Taking the Bible as we have it today and recognizing whatever doubt or uncertainty there may be about any of its statements, we may liken the teaching of the Bible to a large circle at the center of which we place Christ and the cross. Then, around that center there is a large region of certainty, which includes all the great teachings of the Bible about religion and morality. Out at the circumference we may place those unessential matters about which for any reason there may be some doubt, such as historical inaccuracies, numerical errors, etc. . . . Thus the realm of certainty gradually fades out into the uncertain and unknown, just as it does in every other department of human knowledge." (Our italics. — *Luth. Church Quart.*, 1935, p. 131 f.) Dr. J. Aberly is ready to give up even more: "I found I could not meet these [men of a different *Weltanschauung*, or philosophical outlook] by falling back on the claim that this Bible was the literal Word of God by quoting passages of Scripture that are supposed to support this view. I found that other faiths make even stronger claims for their own sacred writings. . . . It compels one to do what Dr. E. Stanley Jones found himself compelled to do, to shorten his line of defense. He states that, when he went to India, he felt called on to defend the Bible from Genesis to Revelation; but he soon found it necessary to retire into the citadel and limit himself to Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." (*Luth. Church Quart.*, 1935,

p. 116 f.) And in the *Lutheran* of January 14, 1937, Dr. H. C. Alleman labels certain portions of Scripture "dregs and filth," which must be separated from the pure portions. "The Bible is not a sacred oracle, speaking infallibly in every book on everything that is contained in it; yet it is infallible when it speaks of the object of our faith and the way of life. . . . We must do what Luther said in a homely, but penetrating sentence: 'The pure Scriptures must be separated from their dregs and filth, which it has ever been my aim to do, that the divine truths may be looked upon in one light and trifles of men in another.'"

The Neo-Lutherans have identified themselves with the liberal movement to do away with verbal inspiration. TH. ENGELDER

Sermon Study on 1 John 4, 12—14

Part Two of the Eisenach Epistle-Lesson for the Third Sunday after Easter, Jubilate

The apostle had pleaded with his readers that they love one another, v. 7a. In order to make them the more willing to obey this admonition, he had added a threefold motivation, v. 7b. Only he that loves, knows God, who is Love and who has manifested His love in sending His Son into the world, vv. 8. 9. Love itself is of God, whose sending of His Son into the world to be the propitiation for our sins is the very life and being of our love, vv. 10. 11. In the passage before us he elaborates the remaining motive that "every one that loveth is born of God." What a privilege to be born of God, to be God's own child! What an inducement for us to love one another! Such mutual love is proof positive of one's regeneration, that one indeed is born of God, by whom alone this love can be created in the heart of man. This argument is developed by the apostle, v. 12 ff. He calls the attention of his readers to three blessed effects of their rebirth,—each one in itself a powerful motive for Christian love of the brethren,—skilfully weaving them together into an irrefutable argument for the necessity of heeding his admonition. If Christians do not love the brethren, they lose their blessed privileges. Where there is no loving heart, there can be no regenerated heart, and consequently there can be no fruits of regeneration; for only in a regenerated heart does God dwell; only in a regenerated heart is God's love perfected; only a regenerated heart partakes of God's gift of His Spirit. The possession of these glorious rights and privileges must be a constant and powerful incentive to fervent, unceasing brotherly love.