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Verbal Inspiration — a Stumbling-Block to the Jews and Foolishness to the Greeks

(Continued)

"The vast majority of the difficulties and objections arise from erroneous preconceptions and false presuppositions, untenable assumptions and unfounded assertions, strange misconceptions and persistent misrepresentations, by mistakes and misstatements of the questions — with all the fallacious inferences therefrom. . . . The prevalence of errors in Scripture is proclaimed *ad nauseam* in many of our current reviews, both theological and general; in periodicals, both religious and secular; and in many of the recent books bearing on the question." (H. M'Intosh, *Is Christ Infallible and the Bible True?* Pp. 473, 621.) At the risk of nauseating the reader we shall discuss a few more of the sophistries and absurdities with which the moderns assail the verbal inspiration and the infallibility of the Bible.

Assertion No. 9: The production of an absolutely infallible book by human writers, through divine inspiration, would constitute a miracle, and, as we have just told you, miracles do not occur. — We have here a special application of the principle responsible for Assertion No. 8. An ax-head cannot swim; the laws of physics forbid that. And the holy writers, being fallible men, cannot be made to produce an infallible book; the laws of psychology forbid that. We are not surprised when men who reject the plenary inspiration, the infallibility, of the Bible because of the many miracles it records, will become the more vehement in their protest when they are told that the Bible is itself a miracle, of miraculous origin, the result of a direct, immediate, unique operation of God. Consistency and logic is on their side, to that extent. But their premise is false. Assertions 8 and 9 are produced by the same logical fallacy, the same *μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος*.

The liberals among the moderns assert that God could not have given us through fallible men an infallible book. That would constitute a miracle. The conservatives among them do not deny that God performs miracles. They aim to remove the offense which the "errors" in the Bible present to carnal reason by claiming that God *did not* perform the miracle of giving to mankind an infallible Bible.¹⁰⁶ What we said under Assertion No. 2 takes care of that. What we are now dealing with is the assertion that "a human book divine" is an impossible concept.

Just that is asserted. Kahnis (Lutheran) said: "The presupposition that the gospels contain no erroneous statements and contradictions flouts the eternal laws to which the Creator subjected the human mind." (See *Proceedings, Syn. Conference, 1902, p. 24.*) True, the knowledge of any man is limited and his reasoning subject to error. But when Kahnis uses the term "eternal laws" to describe this situation, he is asserting that it is not possible for the power of God to intervene and change the situation. J. M. Gibson agrees with Kahnis, emphasizing the thought that, if a man were given the power to utter the eternal wisdom of God and write down absolute truth, he would be unmanned, dehumanized. "The defenders of the authoritative inspiration of the Scriptures have postulated as a necessity of the case the emancipation of all the writers of Scripture from the effects of human weakness and limitation. They have said that, if we cannot have the guarantee that every word these holy men of old have written expresses accurately and only the mind of God, the whole thing is useless, because, if these people who are the vehicles of revelation cannot be trusted in everything, they can be trusted in nothing. . . . According to this theory it was supposed that men inspired of God must be so completely unmanned, as it were, so thoroughly deified, that they could speak, like supermen, with absolute scientific precision on every subject they touched. . . . The treasure is in earthen vessels. . . . We cannot claim perfection for any of the organs or vehicles of inspiration. . . . We see no grounds for believing that God has wrought a continual miracle for the purpose of preserving from all possible error every line and word of the Bible." (*The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture, pp. 32, 90, 123, 144.*) Gibson cannot conceive the thought that God could endow

106) Superintendent Kier: "It has not pleased God to perform the miracle of having His witnesses speak and write inerrantly." (See *Proceedings, Iowa District, 1897, p. 36.*) S. Goebel (Reformed): "Our Bible nowhere and nowise makes the claim that it was produced by a miraculous, immediate act of God. The Bible records miracles. But it does not assert that it owes its origin to a special miracle by which the Bible-text was supernaturally produced" (*Allg. Ev.-Luth. Kztg., 1926, No. 40*).

the prophets and apostles, while writing under inspiration, with immunity against all error — a quality which no other mortals ever possessed or will possess. That would be making *supermen* of them! It would *unman* them! Psychology vetoes such ideas. So says Dr. T. A. Kantonen. Writing in *The Lutheran* on "The Canned Goods of Past Theology," he asserts that we must "abandon once and for all the *unpsychological* and mechanical theories of inspiration and unhistorical views of verbal inerrancy which the application of scientific and historical methods to the study of the Bible has rendered obsolete." (See CONC. THEOL. MTHLY., VII, p. 223.) That means: To ascribe inerrancy to anything written by men flouts the laws of psychology. Could God do that? And would He do it sixty-six times?¹⁰⁷ Summing up, we quote J. De Witt's declaration that the miraculous element must be removed from inspiration. "The conception of those who believe in the inerrancy of all the contents of the Bible implies a divine energy that so completely absorbs and controls the human composer as to insure absolute truth in the least important details, rendering the slightest inaccuracy impossible. . . . All personal deficiency in the prophet must have been *miraculously supplied*. Must this beautiful conception be abandoned or even modified? We answer, however reluctantly, that it must surely be put aside." (*What Is Inspiration?* Pp. 9, 12.) L. Gaussen is surely right in stating: "The plenary inspiration of the Scriptures is, in spite of the Scriptures, denied (as the Sadducees denied the resurrection) because the miracle is thought *inexplicable*." (*Theopneustia*, p. 37.)¹⁰⁸

107) N. R. Best puts that question. He repudiates "the thought of a Bible planned and composed as a unique religious unity under influences that have affected no other writing of men," "the belief that in a way altogether unparalleled by any human experience elsewhere the Holy Spirit presided over the mind of each writer until he had finished the stint of authorship assigned him." That would imply "sixty-six separate miracles of supernatural control wrought for the production of the Bible's sixty-six documents." (*Inspiration*, p. 36.)

108) The argument that God could not give us an infallible Bible through men who are by nature fallible is sometimes extended in this way: "Some people suppose that with His limitless resources God would surely have found it easy to give a perfect revelation to the most imperfect people. But have these friends ever in seriousness raised the question how it could have been done? Let us suppose it possible that a document could have been constructed in heaven which would have been a perfect revelation of the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth desirable for man to know on all the subjects which concern him here and hereafter. What mortal could have read it? For it must have been in a perfect language; and there never has been any such language upon earth; so it must have been in an unknown language. And even if that difficulty had been overcome, which of the sons of men would have been capable of seeing and understanding and appreciating the authentic product of heaven's high literature? There would need to have been not only a miraculously constructed book, but a miraculously

Gausson continues: "But we must recollect the answer made by Jesus Christ: 'Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God?' (Mark 12:24)." The believer has no difficulty here. He accepts the miracle of inspiration as all the other miracles God graciously performed. The laws of psychology do not bother him in this connection. He does not fear that the holy writers were dehumanized by being kept free from error, as little as the friends of Daniel were unmanned by being made immune to the scorching flame. "Wenn nun diese Ansicht mit irgendwelcher Psychologie nicht stimmt, so ist zu antworten, dass die Inspiration eben ein Wunder ist." (A. Hoenecke, *Ev.-Luth. Dogmatik*, I, p. 344.)¹⁰⁹ But the critics are in a bad way. They will not take their stand on Scripture. They appeal to reason and science. But reason forbids them to deny the miracle of inspiration on scientific grounds. Reason tells them that they are committing the fallacy of the *metabasis* when they do so. The laws of natural science are not applicable to the domain of the supernatural. If the Bible were a human product, you would be justified in applying the laws of psychology. But "Holy Scripture did not grow on earth. Die Heilige Schrift ist nicht auf Erden gewachsen." (Luther, VII: 2095.) The liberal critic, of course, will deny that; but when he denies it on scientific, psychological grounds, he becomes guilty of committing a gross fallacy.

reconstructed humanity to take it in; and wherein would that have been different from the annihilation of the human race as it is and the creating of another? Etc., etc." (J. M. Gibson, *op. cit.*, p. 147.) Prof. R. W. Nelson repeats the human-language argument: "Of the earth earthly, human language simply cannot be a literal vehicle for conveying God's infallible will and wisdom to men," and he extends it still farther: "How can divine absoluteness come to men through any medium so long as it is a fact that, even if God Himself, in all His sublimity and glory, should appear in my study at this moment, I should be able to see and hear Him by no means other than my most fallible powers of perceiving and understanding? Confronting God thus immediately, I should still be human. In a word, we have now discovered that an infallible revelation, by whatever means it might come through an authority however absolute, presupposes and requires infallible readers in order to render its own infallibility any more than a deceiving fiction. . . . We have found that, if God should supernaturally reveal Himself and His teaching to men, this revelation could not be absolute or infallible to any finite man." (*Christendom*, IV, p. 400 ff. See *CONC. THEOL. MONTHLY*, XI, p. 308.) — We shall make some remarks on these notions under No. 14.

109) "Die Heilige Schrift ist nicht durch Entwicklung des Geisteslebens in den vom Geiste Gottes erleuchteten Menschen entstanden, sondern sie ist diesen durch ein Wunder gegeben; das heisst mit andern Worten: der Ursprung der Heiligen Schrift ist ein Geheimnis. . . . Dabei ist es aber auch wahr, dass Gott durch diese Maenner geredet hat und dass sie, solange sie inspiriert waren, nur Gottes Wort redeten, frei von allem Irrtum und aller Truebung. Dass dies bei suendigen Menschen moeglich war und geschehen ist, das ist eben das Wunder der goettlichen Eingebung." (*Kirchenblatt* [A. L. C.], Sept. 10, 1932.)

The scientist has no right to speak on the question of the miracle. He has no instrument for measuring creative, miraculous powers. "Mit Wunders weiss die Wissenschaft nichts zu machen." We are repeating ourselves. Yes, but it seems to be necessary. So we shall repeat Dr. Einstein's statement that there are "domains in which scientific knowledge has not yet been able to set foot." And for good measure we call the attention of the critics to the statement of the scientist Dr. Pank: "Die Wissenschaft forsche in Freiheit, wissenschaftlich und exakt, aber so exakt, dass sie Dinge, die ueber ihre Grenze gehen, *ex actu* laesst, und so wissenschaftlich, dass sie nicht durch subjektive Beimischungen sich selbst unwissenschaftlich macht." (See *Lehre und Wehre*, 1908, p.125.) And to the article in the liberal *Christian Century*, Sept. 14, 1938, on "The Pretensions of Science": "Furthermore, science is limited to a secondary role in human destiny because it can deal only with quantities, with things which can be measured. . . . Man lives in terms of good and evil, beauty and ugliness, right and wrong. These things evade the tools and technique of science as air passes through the meshes of a net. This has been said several times before, but it will stand having a riveting-machine applied to it."¹¹⁰) When the critics rise to speak on the question whether God could perform the miracle of inspiration, they are called out of order.

N. R. Best raises the objection: "At all events, not one Bible-writer furnishes the least clue to let us know how it felt to be writing under God's inspiration works sacred to later ages. . . . They did not analyze their own psychology." (*Op. cit.*, p. 19.) All right; let us go over the same ground again. The Bible-writers did not attempt to explain the act of inspiration in terms of human psychology. Of course not. They knew better than to commit the *μετάβασις εις άλλο γένος*. It is impossible to describe a miracle in scientific terms. The holy writers themselves, who experienced the miracle, were unable to explain it. And if they could not describe and explain it, why should the critics waste their time in telling us that, since they cannot understand this miracle and reduce it to psychological formulae, we must give up our belief in Verbal Inspiration? We shall not do so. The psychological difficulties do not bother us. "How this was possible is indeed beyond our intellectual cognition, just as the *unio personalis* of

110) "This has been said several times before." Dr. W. Dau, for instance, said it before: "Science does not operate with such concepts as infinity, eternity, omnipotence, omnipresence, which are current terms in theology. The Deity and its divine attributes are unknown quantities in science; but science cannot rule them out of existence." (*The Testimony of Science*, p. 38.) And now the liberal *Christian Century* wants a riveting machine applied to this statement of a Bible theologian.

God and man, and particularly *that fact that the Son of God condescended to die on the cross without merely laying aside or reducing His deity, remains an impenetrable mystery for us.*" (Dr. Pieper, *Chr. Dog.*, I, p. 282.) We do not know the manner of inspiration, but we know the blessed fact. With that our faith is satisfied.¹¹¹ The critics will not accept the fact until they have satisfied reason and science as to the process. The result is that they deprive themselves of the blessing of the fact — and are doing it in the service of unreason and pseudoscience.

Assertion No. 10: It is the part of wisdom to apply science as

111) "What is inspiration? Inspiration is a *miracle*, or a miraculous process; and like all miracles, there is much about it which we cannot fully understand. . . . The exact manner in which the minds of the inspired writers of Scripture worked when they wrote we do not pretend to know. Very likely they could not have explained it themselves. . . . We know the result, the effect, but we do not understand the process. The result is that the Bible is the written Word of God; but we can no more explain the process than we can explain how the water became wine at Cana or how five loaves fed five thousand men or how a word raised Lazarus from the dead." (*Proceedings, Southeastern Dist.*, 1939, p. 12.) Let us hear a few more refreshing statements of this kind. B. Manly: "So, too, the inspiration is not explicable by us any more than the condition of the withered hand at the instant that it was healed and restored to activity by supernatural power. If the change in the hand or arm was properly supernatural, no explanation as to how it was done can make it more intelligible, no lack of explanation more incredible. Just so as to the inspiration. We have no reason to suppose that it was understood as to the nature or mode of operation even by those who enjoyed it; much less can it be intelligible to others who never experienced it; and certainly those who had it never undertook to explain its nature for our enlightenment." (*The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration*, p. 62.) *Watchman-Examiner*: "It is also evident that inspiration describes a result rather than a process. How God could control a man so that what he wrote would be the very Word of God is an inscrutable mystery, and I venture to say it will remain so. But why should such a question concern us? What we need to know is not, 'How did God breathe forth the Scripture?' but, 'Did He do it?' When we are hungry, the thing that interests us most is that there is food on the table. . . . So to the Christian it is enough to know that Scripture is God-breathed. We will feed upon it as the living Word of the living God, and let the doctors wrangle over how it came to be so. . . ." (*Theol. Mthly.*, 1923, p. 361 f.) G. Stoeckhardt: "This matter presents an incomprehensible mystery which human reason cannot clear up. That the Holy Ghost is the real author of Scripture and spoke through the prophets and apostles we believe and confess according to Scripture. The *How*, however, is hidden. The process of inspiration, the manner in which the Holy Ghost transmitted His thoughts and words to the holy men, is beyond our research. No man has ever looked into this workshop of the Holy Ghost. All we need to care about is the final result: we are satisfied to know that the word of the prophets and apostles is indeed God's Word. That is essential for our faith, our salvation. Our faith does not need to trace step by step the way leading to this result; that has nothing to do with our salvation. Men think they must find a 'scientific' explanation of inspiration; and losing themselves in bootless speculations, they lose the fact of inspiration." (*Lehre und Wehre*, 1886, p. 283.)

a corrective to the Bible. — No greater folly could be committed. Christian wisdom vetoes such a procedure. See preceding articles. And common human wisdom protests against such folly. It is foolish — to elaborate just one point — because what goes by the name of science is seldom sure of its findings. Its systems are changing continually. The science of today is the corrective of the science of yesterday. Much of what is held to be absolutely true today will be discarded by the scientists of tomorrow.¹¹²⁾ The article: Day-To-Day Philosophy in the *Reader's Digest* of July, 1932, contains this statement: "Physics, mathematics, and especially the most advanced and exact of sciences, are being fundamentally revised. Chemistry is just becoming a science; psychology, economics, and sociology are awaiting a Darwin, whose work in turn is awaiting an Einstein."¹¹³⁾ Einstein — the name has become

112) C. E. Macartney, in the *Princeton Theological Review*: "What we are so sure is experimental and established fact today, may assume a different aspect tomorrow, and the last word will be God's." (See *Theol. Mthly.*, V, p. 296.) The statement "The last word will be God's" belongs in one of the preceding articles, but it will do no harm to keep harping on it. — "The science of one epoch is to a large extent a help which the science of the next uses and abandons." (Dr. Smith of the University of Virginia; quoted in W. E. Gladstone, *The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*, p. 49.)

113) A few examples. "A third great fact emerges when we inquire into the origin of all these forms of power that are familiar to us upon the earth. Till recently the scientific answer to this question was in the one word 'sun.' . . . But to this answer, that we owe all our powers of doing work to the sun, we must add another, which dates from Becquerel's discovery of radioactivity in 1896. . . . We have spoken of the source of our earth's energy in the parent sun, and of the newly discovered fountain of power which was unknown till the twentieth century, namely, the liberation of the energy locked up in the nucleus of the atom." (J. A. Thomson, *Science and Religion*, p. 83 ff.) — The scientific idea for years has been, as Dr. Richard C. Tolman, of the California Institute of Technology, lately told the National Academy of Sciences at Yale University, that inevitably creation is bound some day to freeze up, a form of universal death not only for earthly life but for all forms of energy. But — under the new thermodynamic principles the old law of conservation of energy, which seems to require that the universe shall ultimately freeze up, works differently." (*Associated Press*. Caption of the article: "New Mathematics Indicates Earth May Last Forever.") — "The science of physics is also studying the composition of matter. The *Encyclopedia Britannica*, in the article on 'Matter,' relates the history of this investigation: 'First came the molecular theory of matter. Matter was made of molecules. Then came Dalton's theory that molecules were made of atoms. Finally, in atoms particles have been found that are called corpuscles, or electrons.' I was taught the atomic theory in my boyhood days, even in such a succinct formula as this: Two atoms make one molecule. This is now antiquated gibberish. . . . J. M. Macfarlane: 'No one can predict what the ultimate views as to the constitution and relation of matter and energy may be.'" (Dr. W. Dau, *op. cit.*, p. 17 f.) From an article in *Allg. Ev.-Luth. Kztg.*, Nov. 15, 1940: "Wir wollen im folgenden versuchen, in ein paar grossen Zuegen die Wandlung im Weltbild der Physik zur Darstellung zu bringen. . . . Es ergibt sich die merkwuerdige Situation, dass die Physik

the symbol for Science in Revolution against Itself! Discussing Einstein's Theory of Relativity, J. A. Thomson writes: "Some of the consequences of the theory are nevertheless understandable enough. At a stroke it gets rid of the mysterious old hocus-pocus of 'action at a distance' which gravity was supposed to exert. As Professor Eddington has said, we need no longer speak of the earth as being attracted by the sun, but rather of the earth as trying to find a way through a time and space *tangled up* by the presence of the sun." (*Op. cit.*, p. 253.) The next great man will of course upset Einstein's theory. And how much upsetting has gone on in the field of historical science! The historians have to spend a great deal of their time in correcting the mistakes of their teachers. Need we cite instances?

We shall let Professor T. V. Smith of the Philosophy Department of the University of Chicago sum up: "For science is today and always has been — and always will be — 'in flux,' in a condition of incessant change. Science has never yet settled anything by probing into the origin of things. Witness the contradictory theories of contemporary scientists in *every field of knowledge*. The essence of science is theory and hypothesis. But who can live by such uncertain speculations? Who can continue to live on the

in den letzten Jahrzehnten zu Erkenntnissen gefuehrt wurde, die alles das, worauf sich die Naturforschung als selbstverstaendliche Voraussetzungen stuetzte, in Frage stellen. . . . Man kann also mit von Weizsaecker sagen: 'Der Begriff des unveraenderlichen Elementarteilchens beschreibt die Erfahrungen nicht mehr adaequat.' Oder mit andern Worten: Der alte Substanzbegriff, das staerkste Bollwerk der materialistischen Natur- und Weltauffassung, laesst sich in der neuen Physik nicht laenger aufrechterhalten." — Astronomy: "Noch stand fuer Kopernikus und Kepler die Sonne fest. Und noch fuer zwei Jahrhunderte die 'Fixsterne.' Heute ist auch unser Milchstrassensystem nur einer unter den Sternennebeln, die alle im 'Werden' sind — und alle dem zweiten thermodynamischen Hauptsatz unterliegen: Sie geben bestaendig Waerme an den eiskalten Weltraum ab." (W. Elert, *Morphologie des Luthertums*, I, p. 379.) — Geology: Let it be repeated: "Of the eighty theories which the French Institute counted in 1806 as hostile to the Bible, not one now stands." (*Fundamentals*, VII, p. 63.) — Anthropology: "Die Anthropologie hat nach mancherlei Umwegen zu fruheren Auffassungen zurueckgefunden. Bald nach der Jahrhundertwende hat der Breslauer Professor Klaatsch schwerwiegende Einwaende gegen Darwin und Haeckel erhoben und nachgewiesen, dass sowohl die fuehffingrige Hand des Menschen als auch sein ueberaus urtuemliches harmonisches Gebiss Bildungen sind, die den entsprechenden der Menschenaffen gegenueber nicht als Abkoemmlingsformen gedeutet werden duerfen. . . . Dr. Herbert Fritsche, der in der 'Wache' ueber den heutigen Stand der Wissenschaft berichtet, schliesst: 'Der Mensch als Eigenlinie und, recht verstanden, als sein eigener Vorfahr steht heute als der grosse Universalist vor uns. Er steht der Tierheit gegenueber. Er ist wieder zur Mitte der Schoepfung geworden und damit auch zum zentralen Sinn alles lebendigen Werdens. Weder ist er der enthaarte Schimpanse noch der 'geschlechtstreu' gewordene Affenembryo' der Darwinischen Aera, sondern er ist ein Eigener, ein dem Herzen der Schoepfung nahe gebliebenes Kind.'" (*Allg. Ev.-Luth. Kztg.*, Feb. 21, 1941.)

'dry dust' of conjectures?" (Quoted in *The Sovereignty of God*, p. 109.) Professor Smith is not a Christian theologian. He has no use for the "religious way of life." He is a pure hedonist. The moderns cannot charge him with partiality. And his unbiased judgment is that science is "in flux." At no period can men absolutely rely on its findings. The young scientists are kept busy weeding out the "wild oats" (Bishop Gore's phrase) which the old scientists sowed.

Common science is "in flux." Is higher science, "inductive science," particularly higher criticism and the philosophy of evolution, in a better way? "The essence of it is theory and hypothesis." All the world knows that there is nothing so evanescent and unreliable as the findings of the higher critics and the evolutionists. Their systems and hypotheses go with the wind.¹¹⁴

114) "The criticism of the beginning of the twentieth century will be an anachronism before the next century opens." (Dr. H. E. Jacobs, *A Summary of the Christian Faith*, p. 274.) "The older document hypothesis. Fragment hypothesis. Myth hypothesis. Supplement hypothesis. New document hypothesis. . . . One hypothesis tears down the other." (Dr. L. Fuerbringer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 27 ff.) "They talked of 'Elohists,' 'Jehovists,' and 'Priest's Code' and caused cabalistic capitals, E, J, P, to dance across their pages, in token of mysterious literary wisdom. They fashioned a 'polychrome Bible,' wherein the words of differing documents were printed in different colors. It was a weird book, dazzling the eyes like Joseph's coat. But its rainbow flash was too much for the Christian world, and the 'documentary theory' sank into oblivion. It was a wild orgy while it lasted, but most of its living devotees are busy hoping that it is forgotten." (*The Presbyterian*, Oct. 17, 1940.) See "the autopsy, or post-mortem examination of the mortal weaknesses of that school of 'higher criticism' which dominated theological thinking nearly fifty years (Wellhausen's system)" in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Jan. 1941, p. 99. Page 406 above gave Edwin Lewis's autopsy: "Other theories now have their day — and it will be a short day." These theories could not live; they contained too many extravagances and absurdities. Absurdities? The term is used in the foreword to Dr. Fosdick's *A Guide to Understanding the Bible*. In the introduction to this book Paul Elmer More writes: "There are heavy sins of commission to be charged against the so-called higher criticism, that, from its lair in Germany, raged over the world in the nineteenth century — many extravagances of conjecture and not a few absurdities." (See *Journal of the Am. Luth. Conf.*, June, 1939, p. 76.) "Extravagances of conjecture" — are you acquainted with the system called Form Criticism and the one called *Schallanalyse*? Concerning a book advocating this ultra-modern theory of New Testament criticism Dr. W. Arndt says: "Wenn man dieses Werk liest, wird einem zunaechst fast unheimlich zumute. Gibt es tatsaechlich Leute, die das Gras wachsen hoeren koennen?" (*Conc. Theol. Mtbl.*, III, p. 713.) — As to biological evolution, which theory is correct, Darwin's or the theory of 1941? Or are those scientists right, who cannot find any true relationship between man and the beast? And what has become of evolution as the way of life with its proud claim of the innate power of man to achieve high and higher levels of moral excellence? The horrors of the present era have given it the lie, and it is reaching the stage of disintegration. "At a conference in the fall of 1937, President Mackay of Princeton Seminary spoke on the 'terrifying fact of disintegration.' He spoke of disintegration in the

Now, we are not reproaching science for always being "in flux." We honor it for that. We would have little respect and little use for it if it remained static. Science could not achieve its high and noble purpose if its servants were not constantly at work in eliminating the mistakes of former generations. It takes honesty and requires much labor and intelligence to get rid of erroneous systems and to construct better systems. We admire these honest, painstaking scientists. (We are speaking of *real* science, the common kind.) The world owes much to them. We would be in a bad shape if the scientists refused to acknowledge the mistakes of the older science and kept on cultivating the wild oats their fathers sowed. It is the part of wisdom for science to change its position.¹¹⁵⁾

realm of thought: the international public had believed in evolution, which was felt to guarantee a flowering, developing progress, with much better days ahead; but now conflict and tension are the great words. . . . Disintegration in both individual and universal ethics, in the social realm, etc., etc." (W. T. Riviere, *A Pastor Looks at Kirkegaard*, p. 56.) Let us repeat it: "The evolutionary hypothesis today stands discredited not only as a means of comprehending origins in the field of natural history and biology, but also in its more modern re-creations of philosophy, ethics, and religion. The Christian element that followed evolutionary religion is exhausted by world facts and is now returning to revelation and to faith. The vapid, incomprehensible philosophy that evolutionists fed to the world twenty years ago is discounted, and philosophy is now being rewritten." (*The Watchman-Examiner*, June 19, 1941.) *The Lutheran* of Aug. 6, 1941, makes a similar statement. In an article captioned "A Scientist's Confession" Prof. G. G. Peery, biologist, states: "During most of the second half of the nineteenth century, science was almost entirely under the influence of materialism. As scientists delved more deeply into the secrets of the molecule, the atom, the electron, they came rather generally to the conclusion that there were sufficient forces in matter itself to account for all life. Thus scientists, as philosophers, accepted the doctrine of materialism and denied the existence of God. Life was fully explainable, in its origin and in its continuity, in terms of chemistry and physics. The beginning of the twentieth century found the pendulum of thought swinging in the opposite direction. Today one may say that the philosophy of materialism has almost completely broken down. The beginning of the end came when scientists realized that blind force, inherent in matter, could never possibly account for consciousness, intelligence, and design in nature." And whatever new philosophy is emerging will also go with the wind, unless it is absolutely oriented in God's Word. The true philosopher must be a Christian philosopher, and he cannot be a Christian philosopher who denies all or some of the truth of the Bible.

115) By the way: theology, too, derives *some* benefit from this ability of science to discover new truths—new to science. We are not now referring to the fact that science—physics, astronomy, medicine, history, etc.—is day by day confirming, or rather bearing witness to, the truth of various Bible statements. (At one time the Bible statement that the stars cannot be numbered was thought to be an unscientific statement. Had not Hipparchus, the Greek astronomer, found the number of stars to be exactly 1,022? Now that science has advanced and procured modern telescopes, it tells us that the stars truly cannot be numbered.) What we have in mind is a certain benefit accruing to us

But it is the height of unwisdom to make fallible, shifting science the corrective of God's Word and to base the Christian faith on "the narrow, fragmentary phases of ephemeral human opinion." It is not reasonable to ask a man to evaluate spiritual things according to changing standards and to base his hope of eternal life on teachings which admittedly may be found false tomorrow. The liberals, indeed, find nothing unreasonable in this. They *want* their theology and religion to be "in flux." They call that progressiveness. They are perfectly satisfied to preach that life came to the earth from some distant planet and after a few years to reverse themselves and preach that life originated on this earth from non-living materials.¹¹⁶⁾ They are not ashamed to say that last year they taught (with the Bible) that this earth will come to an end but that now they must preach that this earth will last forever. They are proud of the fact that they no longer believe with their fathers in

through the revolutionary findings of Prof. A. Einstein. Whether his theory is fully true or not, "the results which have been elaborated from the Einstein theory of relativity must be called staggering. These results mean nothing less than that from the standpoint of the latest philosophical thought the Ptolemaic system (which makes the sun move around the earth) is as valid as the Copernican (which makes the earth move around the sun)! A. Sommerfeldt writes in *Sueddeutsche Monatshefte* (Vol. 18, 1921, No. 2) concerning the effect of Einstein's theory on astronomy as follows: 'Hereafter none must be prohibited from saying: The earth is stationary, and the firmament revolves around the earth, or: The sun moves, and the earth stands in a focus of its orbit. According to Einstein's theory a firmament revolving around a stationary earth develops the same centrifugal forces in the earth that according to Newton are developing in a revolving earth, and this has been demonstrated mathematically by Thirring. It will always be more convenient, and for the purpose of astronomical computation more practical, to work from the basis of the Copernican system. But it is not unreasonable to accept the Ptolemaic. Indeed, the theory of relativity has been able to make its conquest just because it has shifted its standpoint regarding this question.' In *Unsere Welt* (1920, No. 3) Doctor H. Remy discusses 'The Physical Principle of Relativity' and says: 'From this point of view the usual conflict between the Copernican and Ptolemaic systems finds its definite solution. We cannot deny that it is senseless to call one of these systems the only correct one and to designate the other as being false.' It seems as if the world do move." (Dr. Th. Graebner, in *The Lutheran Witness*, 1924, p. 149.) See *Christliche Dogmatik*, I, p. 578 (1924): "By the way, the newspaper-men threatened about a year ago that Einstein's theory of relativity would knock Copernicanism on the head."

116) "It has been suggested by some distinguished men of science that minute and simple forms of life may have come to the earth from elsewhere. They may have traveled in the crevices of a meteorite, sufficiently well wrapped up to withstand extreme cold in the journey through space and great heat as they approached the earth. . . . The hypothesis most in accord with evolutionary thinking is that of the occurrence of abiogenesis in the dim and distant past. That is to say, simple living creatures may have arisen long ago by a process of natural synthesis from non-living materials — from some colloidal carbonaceous slime activated by ferments." (J. A. Thomson, *op. cit.*, p. 106.)

the resurrection of the body, proud of it that science has destroyed that monstrous conception. They tell us: In the prescientific age, theologians taught the resurrection of Jesus and His deity; such teachings have, thank God and science, gone by the board. The liberals see nothing wrong in correcting the teachings of the Bible according to the findings of what they call inductive and we call speculative science. They are satisfied to have their spiritual wealth affected by the fluctuations of secular values.

The conservatives among the moderns do not care to go so far. They do not want to make science the *ultima ratio* of faith. But they do demand that large portions of the Bible be rewritten, adjusted to the latest findings of science. What they, then, are asking for is, first, that in every generation, or perhaps in every decade, Christendom be presented with a new, revised edition of Holy Scripture. The first edition made Cyrenius governor of Syria at the birth of Christ. The second edition eliminated that portion. The third edition has now restored it. Who knows, some historian may appear on the scene tomorrow whose great renown will cause the semiliberals to get out a fourth edition to correspond with the second one. (Among the ultraliberals a Bible may then be circulating which omits the main fact of the first edition — the birth of Christ.) The ants of Prov. 6:8 must go or can stay, all depending on which entomologist has the greatest following. How often will Josh. 10:12 ff. have to be revised? Einstein tells the conservatives it may stay as originally written. But these semiliberals may choose to follow some other authorities and retain their revised Holy Scripture.

However, this contemptuous treatment of Holy Scripture has, in the second place, fatal consequences. No, it does not concern our salvation directly whether Cyrenius was governor at the time fixed by Luke. But it does concern our salvation directly whether the Bible is trustworthy or not. These men who are assailing Verbal Plenary Inspiration on scientific grounds are destroying the foundation of faith. Casting doubt on portions of Holy Writ, they are causing men to doubt all of Holy Writ. And, as to our present particular point, under their ministration men will never know whether to accept Plenary Inspiration; men will not be permitted to accept it till science has spoken the final word on every passage. Today men will be inclined to believe that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God because some great scientist endorsed a particular passage; tomorrow's developments in the field of science may shatter their trust. These conservatives, too, are making science the *ultima ratio* of faith. They give science an authoritative voice in the Holy of Holies. And we say again: It

is insane folly to measure spiritual, eternal values by secular standards, fluctuating, fallible secular standards.

Speaking of "theologians who believe that they may retain their self-respect only by reconstructing their universe according to the shifting vogue of speculation," Dr. Theodore Graebner says: "Could theology make another new departure and come safely to terms once and for all with these new teachings of the other sciences? Not so, because these have just gone into the melting-pot again. The author of a recent scientific work writes: 'Since I began writing this essay, there has been a striking increase in critical activity, inspired by the new quantum mechanics. . . . The change in ideas is now so rapid that a number of statements of this essay are already antiquated, as expressions of the best current opinion. How mistaken, therefore, to base theology on the shifting foundation of natural science, which, for all its merits and marvels, is temporary and imperfect in its conclusions.'" (*God and the Cosmos*, p. VIII f.) That applies not only to the liberals but also to the conservative critics. And both classes should ponder the question of the ultraliberal philosopher T. V. Smith: "But who can live by such uncertain speculations? Who can live on the 'dry dust' of conjectures?"¹¹⁷⁾

Now, having answered ten assertions, let us on our part make a few assertions and await the answer of the moderns. Statement No. 11: The Bible critics lack the scientific mind and spirit. — They

117) Miles H. Krumbine (a semiliberal or liberal himself) contributes the following to the present chapter of the gullibility of our moderns: "The current passion of the pulpit for a word from Eddington and a line from Jesus has conferred on scientists an authority out of all proportion to the inherent importance of their utterances. . . . Rather than religion being endangered because it makes too much of pre-scientific assumptions as to the nature of the universe and of man, it is actually threatened with contempt for accepting too uncritically the latest word of science as final. Obscurantism may have been religion's ancient vice; *gullibility* is rapidly supplanting it, at least among the so-called liberals." (*Ways of Believing*, p. 39.) On the same subject Prof. C. C. Rasmussen (Gettysburg) says: "Of two ministerial friends of mine, one twitted the other for the assiduity with which he repeatedly hurried back to consult the savants, 'He is going back this year to find out that what he learned last year is not so.' The thrust was good-natured; but it was unforgettable, because it was uncomfortably close to the truth. . . . There is room to question the prophet, the 'speaker for God,' if that speaker's message is conspicuous for its 'variableness and shadow of turning.' The Master has said: 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Word shall not pass away.'" (*Luth. Church Quarterly*, Jan., 1941, p. 45.) C. A. Lindberg uses the term "childish simplicity": "Some who reject the plenary inspiration of the Bible have never attempted to investigate any contradiction, but nevertheless have greater demands on Scripture than on science itself, whose results they are ever ready to accept with childish simplicity, even though science is frequently compelled to change its dogmatic assertions." (*Christian Dogmatics*, p. 395.)

have been telling us that "Protestant scholars of the present day, imbued with the scientific spirit," are forced to reject the verbal inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible (Hastings, *Encyclopedia*); the authors of the Bible were "living in a prescientific era" (see *CONC. THEOL. MONTHLY*, XII, p. 395 f.); they would not have spoken of miracles if they had known anything about "inductive science" (Fosdick); they lived in a pre-Kantian age and this same "pre-Kantian conception of truth" (Kantonen) molded the old theology; one who "knows the processes and technique of science" must reject the Bible account and cast away Verbal Inspiration (Delk). The moderns are obsessed with the idea that they cannot accept every teaching and every word of the Bible because their scientific sense is so highly developed.

Let us lay this ghost. The moderns are laboring under a delusion. They cannot qualify as scientists. For the true scientist is — to mention only a few characteristics — humble, honest, and unprejudiced.

The true scientist has a very humble mind. As he studies scientific matters, he becomes increasingly aware of the great limitations of science. He is ever compelled to make confession of his ignorance. The pursuit of science does not engender a boastful spirit. "*Ignoramus, ignorabimus*," said Du Bois Raymond at a congress held in 1872 and listed seven world-mysteries: the nature of matter and force, the origin of motion, of life, of consciousness, of rational thought and speech, the question of design and purpose in nature, and the nature and origin of free will. (See *Lehre und Wehre*, 1900, p. 237.) Eddington concludes a survey of the latest theories in physics thus: "We have turned a corner in the path of progress, and our ignorance stands before us, appalling and insistent." (See *God and the Cosmos*, p. VII.)¹¹⁸ The result is that

118) Let a few more scientists speak on this subject. Laplace: "What we know is but little; what we do not know is immeasurable." (See *Lehre und Wehre*, 1913, p. 24.) Huxley: "The mysteries of the Church are child's play compared with the mysteries of nature." (*Loc. cit.*) J. A. Thomson: "We have to take for granted a certain number of irreducibles, such as electrons and protons. We are not sure that we know more than a few of the real laws of nature. There are large questions concerning human destiny, large questions as to the beginning and ending of the world, on which science sheds no light. . . . The limitations and ignorances of science. . . ." (*Op. cit.*, p. 199 f.) Sergius P. Grace, himself a scientist, inventor, and research specialist, told his audience in St. Louis: "The scientist will keep pressing forward, but he will never find the ultimate meanings of his world, energy, space, matter, life. That will remain locked forever in the mind of the Creator." (*Globe-Democrat*, March 4, 1931.) W. Dau: "Honorable scientists have favored the world with confessions of ignorance and hopeless inability that were wrung from them by nothing else than their own studies and researches. The confessions are valuable, not only for their contents, but also for their candor and sincerity." *The Testimony of Science*,

"the average scientist is humble in his attitude and cautious in his claims. In such measure as he shows humility and caution, he will be impatient of the cock-sureness and arrogance of the scientific propagandist" (*loc. cit.*). Men who look deep into science learn modesty.

And when they look beyond science, their humility grows a hundredfold. When they deal with supernatural matters, their knowledge of the limitations of man keeps them from passing any judgment. They declare themselves incompetent to discuss miracles and infinity and omnipotence. Hear once more the statement of Edwin Lewis, liberal: "A scientific knowledge of the Creator is an utter contradiction in terms; indeed, it savors of sheer *intellectual arrogance*, to say nothing worse." It is not only Luther and Walther who realize that "the Holy Spirit is more learned" than they are and humbly "doff their little doctor's hats" to Him. The great scientists — the humble scientists — do the same. Pascal, the great mathematician and philosopher, declared: "The last step of reason is to acknowledge that there are many things which transcend reason. Reason is weak as long as it does not take this step. . . . If there are natural things which reason cannot comprehend, what shall we say concerning supernatural things?" (*Pensées*, II, p. 248.) Even the *Christian Century* said: "Science is limited to a secondary role in human destiny, because it can deal only with quantities, with things that can be measured. . . ." There are values "which evade the tools and technique of science." Realizing that the mysteries of science are child's play compared with the mysteries of faith, science is willing to play a secondary role, yes, play no role at all in establishing spiritual values. The mature scientist is modest. The late Dr. Adolph Lorenz, the world-renowned Austrian surgeon, said: "Does medical science, or any other science, tend to destroy belief in God? My friend, you are young. I am old. Science, truly pursued, does not tend to destroy belief in God. *The pursuit of scientific knowledge makes an honest man humble.* It makes him realize how little he knows. It makes him believe in God." (See *The Lutheran*, Sept. 3, 1931.) In his treatise "Die Denkweise der Physik und ihr Einfluss auf die geistige Einstellung des

which contains this statement (p. 10), fills twenty-six pages with such confessions. Two samples. The Marquis of Salisbury: "If we are not able to see far into the causes and origin of life in our own day, it is not probable that we shall deal more successfully with the problem as to how it arose many million years ago." (*Evolution*, p. 37.) In *European Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 399, there is a deserved rebuke of sciolists who pose as scientists by Merz, who says: "There is a popular philosophy founded upon the *unknown principle of matter* and the *equally unknown principle of force* by second-rate scientists in Germany."

heutigen Menschen" (1937) the physicist Prof. Gustav Mie shows that the choice is not between being "a man scientifically trained" and "a believing Christian," but that "one must choose to be either a prideful man who places himself beside God or a truthful man who realizes that he is infinitely beneath God." (See *Allg. Ev.-Luth. Kztg.*, Nov. 29, 1940.) Science trains its pupils in modesty.

Science warns its pupils against appraising science too highly and appealing to its findings as the *ultima ratio*. *Science for the Elementary-School Teacher*, by G. S. Craig, says in the preface: "Too frequently we assume that we are living in an age of science, when in reality science has been applied to only a small fringe of society's problems." Again: "In a very real sense the scientific method may never be fully mastered by the individual." Why, it takes a man a lifetime to master only one of the many branches of science, and such a man will not use the term "master." And we have been told that Prof. Edwin E. Aubrey (liberal) told his class in this year's summer course at the University of Chicago: "The purpose of this course is to destroy your faith in the omniscience of science."

Furthermore, the fact that science has made so many mistakes keeps its true disciples in a modest frame of mind. Reread the preceding section. How often has science been compelled to reverse itself! The "Mistakes of Science" is an important *locus* in the Prolegomena of General Science, and the teacher makes us of this *locus* to instil modesty into the pupils. The class is asked to write a paper on "The Confession of a Scientist" and this Confession embraces two parts: He confesses his great ignorance in many matters of science, and he confesses his many mistakes. He declares in the name of science both: "*Ignoramus, ignorabimus,*" and: "*Erravimus, errabimus.*" The pupil who has mastered this *locus* continues his study of science in a very chastened spirit. If he is minded to continue his work in science in the spirit of presumptuous dogmatism and arrogant cock-sureness, he will not be permitted to graduate. Modesty is one of the outstanding characteristics of a scientist.

Next, the true scientist is honest. He is always ready to acknowledge and to correct the mistakes of science, his own mistakes and the mistakes the fathers of science made. His scientific conscience will not permit him to perpetuate theories which have been proved false. We admire science for this quality of honesty and candidness. And without it science would never have made its great advances.

Furthermore, the honest scientist is extremely cautious. He is not hasty in his judgments. He will not utter a final judgment until all the facts in the case are assembled and closely examined. Science deals with facts, with facts alone; and when a man enters

the order of scientists, he takes the solemn obligation to gather all the facts relating to his particular province, even if it takes his lifetime to complete what his predecessors began, and, if he dies before that is completed, to leave the judgment to his successors. We admire these patient, plodding scientists; and we admire the scientific restraint they exercise: no judgment except on the basis of established facts. They may put out certain hypotheses as possible explanations of certain observed facts. But their scientific conscience will not permit them to label these hypotheses as facts, as established truths.

Do the Bible-critics, as a class, measure up to the humility and honesty that characterizes the scientists as a class? It is not an indication of modesty when Dr. Fosdick declares that "no *well-instructed mind*" can believe in Verbal Inspiration. And it is not only the liberals but also the conservatives who make the monstrous assertion — and believe it! — that the Bible theologians are ignoramuses. Scientific moderation and broad-mindedness should have kept the critics from indulging in such supercilious self-conceit. Mature scientists do not assume a superior attitude towards those who cannot agree with them.¹¹⁹⁾ What is worse, the critics assume a superior attitude towards the Biblical writers. It is agreed by most men that these writers were men of no mean attainments. But our critics do not hesitate to stigmatize their books as a catch-all of all manner of puerilities, imbecilities, contradictory statements, and silly anecdotes. Why, one of them even says: "We who have attained *higher forms* in the world-wide schoolroom of the great Instructor of men" than the Old Testament writers. (De Witt, *What Is Inspiration?* P. 182.) Worse than that, they have the arrogance to pass judgment on matters of which they know absolutely nothing. The scientist does not presume to draw the supernatural into the realm of his investigation; he is too modest for that; but the critics deny miracles, deny the *creatio ex nihilo*, deny the resurrection, because their smattering of science knows nothing of these things. We are not speaking of Christian humility. We are speaking of scientific humility, and that keeps men from sitting in judgment on God.

119) "There is a class of men, of no mean intellectual caliber, who say that 'the Bible is not the inerrant Word of God,' and they are cocksure that it is not, and they have a very supercilious contempt, or, at least, a great patronizing pity, for the preachers and other people, whom they characterize as 'reactionaries' or 'obscurantists' or 'medieval' or 'archaic' or 'antediluvian,' who still hold to the belief that 'the Bible is the inerrant Word of God.'" (R. A. Torrey, *Is the Bible the Inerrant Word of God?* p. 39.) Torrey adds: "The fundamental trouble with these men is set forth by God Himself in a remarkable sentence in Rom. 1:22: 'Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.'"

Again, it does not reveal humility when men reject certain teachings because of certain unsolvable difficulties connected therewith. It is a mark of self-conceit when men imagine that, because *they* cannot solve the problem, nobody else can. It is the height of arrogance and vanity when men ask to have their ignorance made the deciding factor on the question at issue. That is not the scientific spirit. "The prime truth of science — universal gravitation — is not yet free of difficulty. . . . But reasonable men are not by these" (difficulties) "kept from believing in gravitation." (H. M'Intosh, *Is Christ Infallible and the Bible True?* P. 651.) It is unreasonable to doubt a truth because of certain difficulties connected therewith, and it is contrary to scientific modesty.¹²⁰ Oh, yes, there are a few Bible difficulties, in connection with seeming contradictions and certain historical and scientific statements, which have not yet been solved. But only the conceited critic will say: There is no solution possible; else I would have found the solution; therefore the Bible is full of errors. Yes, miracles transcend the puny minds of Harnack and Fosdick; but the scientist will tell them: Withhold your judgment! And will they reject Inspiration because "the processes and technique of science" cannot explain it? Are they really asking us to take our cue from their ignorance?¹²¹

Then, there is such a thing as scientific honesty. The scientists, as a class, are ever ready to admit the mistakes of science. Are the Biblical critics ready to admit the many mistakes of Biblical criticism, apologize for them, and openly declare that the charges of the errancy of the Bible are unfounded? The fourth article of this series has demonstrated that these charges are unfounded. Science, the most painstaking investigation, pursued on scientific lines, and

120) Torrey's words will bear repeating: "Let us deal with any difficulty we meet in the Bible with that humility that becomes all persons of such limited understanding as we all are. Recognize the limitations of your own mind and knowledge and do not for a moment imagine that there is no solution just because you found none. . . . It would seem as if any really normal man would have a sufficient amount of that modesty that is becoming in beings so limited in knowledge as we all undeniably are to say: "Though I see no possible solution to this difficulty, some one a little wiser than I might easily find one." . . . A man is not a philosopher but a fool who gives up a thoroughly established theorem because there are certain difficulties that he cannot explain. No reputable scientist in any department of science ever does that." (*Op. cit.*, pp. 22, 61, 69.)

121) M'Intosh: "If we were not to believe anything till it was entirely free of difficulty, or plausible objections, then we should believe nothing. The prime truth of science — universal gravitation — is not yet free of difficulty. And the first truth in religion — God is Love — is by no means free of difficulty; and plausible objections have been urged against it from terrible and staggering things in nature, providence, and life. But reasonable men are not by these kept from believing in gravitation or in God; and why, then, should they in believing the Bible claim when, like these, it is established on its own proper evidence?"

all the advances of science have not overthrown a single teaching of Christianity or discredited a single statement of Scripture.¹²²⁾ But they are still harping on the charge that the Cyrenius passage contains a glaring blunder and that the story of the healing of the blind men at Jericho contains an outright contradiction. In spite of the fact that reputable scientists have agreed that the Ptolemaic theory might be true, they are still filling the land with the cry that only the Copernican theory can be true and that therefore Joshua was weak in science. The least that we can ask of the moderns is the candid confession that many, most, of the counts in their indictment of the Bible have been disproved. When will they issue a manifesto to that effect?

Science is honest. It shows no partiality. The moderns who are pleased to attach greater weight to the statements of the secular historian Josephus than to those of the Biblical historian Luke have not the scientific mind.

The honest scientist refuses to judge before he has assembled and studied *all* the facts in the case. Many of the statements of the Bible are ruled out by critics who are bound to confess that many of the circumstances that would shed light on these statements are unknown to them.

Occasionally even such dishonesty is practised as Lindberg stigmatizes in the words quoted above: "Some who reject the plenary inspiration of the Bible have never attempted to *investigate* any contradiction." A. W. Pink speaks in a similar strain: "There are no real discrepancies. The harmony existing between

122) Edwin Lewis: "Christianity contradicts no *known* facts. Its falsity can at no point be logically demonstrated." (*The Faith We Declare*, p. 126.) *America* (Roman-Catholic) recently wrote: "Between the years 1749 and 1941 the progress of scientific research was phenomenal. Voluminous information was gathered concerning the times of Christ, the contemporaries of Christ; and enemies of the Savior strove to use the fresh knowledge to weaken the historicity of the Gospel-story. Each attempt not merely failed to shake that story but actually ended up by adding additional confirmation to it. Knowledge of the complex forces of nature experienced an enormous increase during the 1749—1941 period, and foes of the God-man sought to employ this accumulated learning to assail the miracles and other features of the Gospel. Every attack petered out in failure. In this year of 1941, when mankind knows more about the science of history and the laws of nature than it ever knew before, the Gospel-story is still going strong. If such multitudes of big-name leaders of science, of history, of 'liberal theology,' had hurled the concentrated and persistent attack at any other book that they hurled at the gospels, that book would have been discredited long ago. . . ." (See *CONC. THEOL. MTHLY.*, XII, p. 630.) And that applies not only to the doctrines and the outstanding facts of the Bible but also to the least details. Of the geographical statements of the Bible "not one has been proved false" (*Proc., Western Dist.*, 1865, p. 31). "A real contradiction, precluding any solution as unthinkable and impossible, has not yet been discovered." (*Lehre und Wehre*, 1898, p. 107.) Etc.

them does not appear on the surface, but often is only discovered by protracted study." (*The Divine Inspiration of the Bible*, p. 60.) Most discrepancies vanish when honest, thorough scientific investigation is applied to them, such as is evidenced, for instance, in the articles: "The Chronology of the Two Covenants" (Gal. 3:17 cp. with Ex. 12:40) and "The Alleged Contradiction between Gen. 1: 24-27 and 2:19" in *CONC. THEOL. MONTHLY*, XII, p. 606 ff., 652 ff. We are not, of course, speaking of all moderns, but of that class of glib critics who do not find the time for scientific study of the case, but fill their time with denouncing the Bible for its contradictions and mistakes.

Again, will an honest scientist undertake to speak with authority in a matter of which he is absolutely ignorant? Here are the Bible-critics who deny the truth of the Creation in the interest of evolution and consequently charge the Bible with a grave mistake, and this in spite of the fact that "the ultimate nature of matter not only remains unknown, but also unknowable" (*Theological Forum*, Jan., 1931, p. 40). And still they pretend to know all about the origin of matter! (See the entire article: "Creation of Matter.") Recall the statement of the Marquis of Salisbury: What do you know about the origin of life in our day? And do you presume to tell us all about how life originated in the dim ages of the past? The evolutionary critics of the Bible are not scientists; they are charlatans.

And when a preacher tells his congregation that the account of Gen. 1 must be rejected because science has established that evolution produced the plants and the animals and man, he is saying what is not true. A scientist loses caste when he falsifies the record in order to prove his point. But the evolutionary critics of the Bible are operating with manufactured evidence.

What is the explanation of these unscientific tactics? The Bible-critics are, as a rule, swayed by prejudice. And such an attitude does violence to another principle of pure science. Science is unprejudiced. Its disciples are not permitted to carry any preconceived opinions into their investigations. But our moderns are constantly doing this very thing. Here are those who are so thoroughly convinced of the truth of the assumptions of higher criticism, including the hypothesis of evolution, that they will not listen to any contrary statement, the contrary statements of the Bible. "These presuppositions and assumptions are the determining element in the entire movement. . . . Their minds seem to be in abject slavery to their theory. . . . They feel instinctively that to accept the Bible statements would be the ruin of their hypothesis." (See p. 350 above.) "Dr. Fosdick," says the *Journal of the Am. Luth. Conf.* (June, 1939, p. 76), "is also in the grip of the evolution

fixation." These men cannot read the Bible with a scientific, impartial, objective mind.

Here are those who are obsessed with the idea that the finding of a scientist carries more weight than any statement of Scripture, that Scripture must yield to science. In the case of a conflict between a secular writer and a Biblical writer the secular writer is always right. These men are unable to investigate the matter with scientific calm and objectivity.

Here are those who have a horror of the supernatural. They have the *idée fixe* that science has ruled out the miracle. It is impossible to convince these men of the truth of the Bible teaching on this point. It is useless to argue with "criticism that is inspired by a dogmatic denial of the supernatural" (Bishop Gore's phrase; see *The Doctrine of the Infallible Book*, p. 28), with those who dispose of the reality of the miracles by the "simple denial of them from a-priori philosophical prejudice" (Ph. Schaff's phrase).¹²³⁾

And here are those who hate the Bible. The sole object of their Bible-study is to discredit the Bible. The more items they can add to the black-list, the better pleased they are. Can you believe that B. Bauer, for instance, who finds a contradiction between Luke 7:2 and Matt. 8:6 (Luke speaking of the "servant" and Matthew, allegedly, of the "son") and has Luke invent the ruler "Lysanias," is not actuated by prejudice, that he is able to treat the Bible fairly?

The fact of the matter is that, as long as a man cannot accept the Bible as the Word of God and as the supreme and only authority, he cannot treat the Bible fairly. A man who in these matters is guided, entirely or in part, by his natural mind and reason will be prejudiced against the Bible as God's Word. "There is no such thing as a neutral reason" (*The Sovereignty of God*, p. 16), for "the carnal mind is enmity against God," Rom. 8:7. The unbelieving critic cannot but take an antagonistic position towards God's Word. And unless the believer is constantly on his guard, his flesh will ever and again influence him in the same direction. There is much prejudice and animosity evident where men discuss the authority and inerrancy of the Bible. A candid discussion is a rare thing.¹²⁴⁾

123) And what can you expect of those whose attitude is thus described by Dr. Wm. Robinson: "Then, we also have in American universities an unmistakable tendency to deny the supernatural. For a man really to believe the miracles of the New Testament is tantamount to surrendering his academic standing." (See *The Sovereignty of God*, p. 159.)

124) Here is an extreme case of bigoted prejudice. "Some will then ask, Well, why don't more men believe in the resurrection, especially some of our outstanding scholars? I think the reason they do not believe

Prof. G. L. Raymond declares: "The science of the day trains the mind to be candid and logical; and theology is inclined to be neither." (*The Psychology of Inspiration*, p. VI.) If he is speaking of common science as being candid, we fully agree with him. If he is speaking of the science pretended by the critics of the Bible, he will be hard put to it to make good his claim.¹²⁵

No. 12: The moderns deal largely in hypotheses. — We have already touched upon this subject. We shall now, partly by way of recapitulation and partly by way of supplement, add a few more remarks.

1) Hypotheses are guessés. The handbooks say: "The hypothesis is a tentative theory or supposition provisionally adopted to explain certain facts and to guide in the investigation of others; frequently called a *working hypothesis*." The hypothesis — unless it be one of the wild kind which has no scientific justification whatever — serves a good purpose. But all men are agreed that, as long as it remains a hypothesis, it is not an established truth; it remains, in unscientific language, a guess. "Science, as the term is mostly used, is made up largely of learned guesses, but it is seldom that scientists have a concrete thing like the comet to try their guesses on." (*Detroit News*.)

2) Copernicanism, the various theories with which higher criticism has been and is operating, and the doctrine of evolution are hypotheses. (We are specifying these theories because the moderns are fully convinced that these teachings have given the death-blow to the plenary inspiration and the inerrancy of the Bible.) All the world knows, the scientists know, and the moderns dare not gainsay it, that they are pure hypotheses. T. H. Huxley designates evolution, for instance, as a hypothesis; he calls it that four times in seven lines of a page in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. E. Haeckel says: "It is self-evident that our genealogical history is and ever will be a fabric of hypotheses." (See *God and the Cosmos*,

is because they do not want to believe, that they have determined not to believe. . . . Prof. C. E. M. Joad of the University of London declared as late as 1933 that he will not believe in such an event, no matter what the evidence. These are his own words: 'Even if the evidence were far more impressive than the tatter of inconsistencies, divergencies, and contradictions which is in fact available, I should probably still refuse to credit the fact which it purported to establish.' No matter what the evidence is, because of his own convictions regarding what ought to be in the universe, Professor Joad frankly states that he will never believe, 'no matter what the evidence.' (*The Supernaturalness of Christ. Can We Still Believe in It?* p. 221 f. See *CONC. THEOL. MONTHLY*, XII, p. 235.)

125) And science trains the mind "to be logical." Absolutely. But the moderns do not show that they have been sufficiently trained in this particular technique of science. Other sections of this essay have demonstrated that.

p. 306.) J. A. Thomson: "The *hypothesis* most in accord with evolutionary thinking is that of the occurrence of abiogenesis in the dim and distant past." (*Op. cit.*, p. 106.) And the moderns, as a rule, unhesitatingly use the same designation. F. Baumgaertel: "The hypotheses which natural science today sets up regarding the origin of the world *are indeed hypotheses*, but one thing is absolutely sure: Creation did not take place as the Old Testament describes it." (See W. Moeller, *Um die Inspiration der Bibel*, p. 31.) E. Brunner: "It is a well-grounded hypothesis that a more or less continuous pedigree traces the origin of humanity far back into the animal sphere." (*The Word and the World*, p. 99.) H. E. Fosdick: "It may be that the *evolutionary hypothesis* is dangerous to the religious faith of many folk who welcome it today, as some conservatives think, but, for all that, the more facts we know, the better founded does the hypothesis appear." (*The Modern Use of the Bible*, p. 51.) Well-grounded¹²⁶⁾ or not, a hypothesis it is, and a hypothesis it remains, by their own admission. Since the days when Huxley and Fosdick used the term hypothesis, nothing has occurred in the world of science to justify men to speak of evolution as an established truth. We have not heard of the jubilations which would have been held, we have not seen the bonfires which would have been blazing on the campuses of the universities and the liberal seminaries, if those long-hoped-for facts had been finally discovered. The teachings which are relied upon to demolish the Bible are mere guesses; in military slang, duds.

3) The pathetic thing is that the moderns believe in these hypotheses with a heroic faith. They accept them as established truths and as precious truths. In one breath they speak of evolution as a hypothesis and as a fact: "well-grounded hypothesis." H. Spencer and Huxley said: "This hypothesis may be expected to survive and become established." (See *Lehre und Wehre*, 1913, p. 71.) And when you hear the high-school teacher and the university professor talk on this subject, when you hear the liberal preacher base his rejection of Gen. 1 on the assured results of science, on the teaching of evolution, you notice that they are convinced that they are living in the day of the fulfilment of Huxley's prophecy. Though no conclusive facts have been adduced, they believe in the fact of evolution.

We cannot understand how Dr. Delk could pen the following: "It is true that this theory was once a hypothesis. Every scientific truth was once held as a mere hypothesis. The belief in organic evolution, including the appearance of man, for the overwhelming majority of scientists has passed out of the stage of hypothesis and

126) "It is a *well-grounded hypothesis*."

become the working theory of science." (See *Lehre und Wehre*, 1913, p. 149.) More than this; it is certainly a strange psychosis that could induce Haeckel to declare that evolution is indeed a hypothesis, but one that has been elevated to the rank of a fact. The situation has been adequately described by the statement: "Dr. Fosdick is in the grip of the evolution fixation." The human mind has the faculty of persuading itself of the truth of a thing which in its sane moments it refuses to accept as proved. "Unable to prove the theory, the scientists decided to declare it a certainty anyway."¹²⁷ And it has become a veritable article of faith to them. They feel aggrieved if you presume to doubt it. They claim the right to cherish it and fight for it. A man once told us indignantly: "We let you believe what the Bible teaches; you ought to let us believe what science teaches." It is a fixation.

Science does not teach evolution. It admits that evolution cannot be proved. And there is irrefutable proof that man did not descend from the ape or from any other animal or from dead matter. Speaking of the hypothesis of abiogenesis, J. A. Thomson writes: "A we have said, there is no evidence in support of this view." (*Op. cit.*, p. 107.) See the quotation above from the *Allg. Ev.-Luth. Kztg.*, Feb. 21, 1941. Oswald Spengler writes in *Der Unter-*

127) Statement by *America*, April 19, 1941. The entire paragraph reads: "The theory of evolution is still only a theory. Despite the worldwide efforts of untold millions of scientists, it has never been proved. Unable to prove the theory, the scientists decided to declare it a certainty anyway, somewhat after the fashion in which printing-press money is declared to be real money when it is not. And thus into the textbooks, into the lecture-halls, into the anthropological sessions, stepped the theory disguised as a fact. This modern age, which regards itself as so enlightened, ridicules the theories which passed for facts in former epochs. For example, the Ptolemaic theory, which assumed that the earth was the central body around which the sun and planets revolved is today the butt of countless witticisms. It is quite possible that some future epoch will pour on the theory of evolution the same stream of sarcasm that this age pours on the theory of the Alexandrian astronomer. We may imagine a gathering of scientists three centuries hence and the newspaper dispatches describing the proceedings." We may as well give the next paragraph, too: "Dispatch. April 12, 2341 A. D. The American Association of Super Scientists opened their annual convention yesterday. In the afternoon session, Prof. B. A. Stufchert read a scholarly paper entitled: 'The Gullibility, Self-Deception, Stupidity, and Fatuity of Former Ages.' Professor Stufchert blasted the unscientific methods of pre-modern eras. 'In the period between 1850 and 1975 A. D., the unscientific orgy reached its peak,' Professor Stufchert stated. 'In these years, instead of following the facts wherever they led, it became the custom to make the facts fit in with preconceived ideas. For example, consider the now forgotten monkey-descent theory. A world-wide build-up and conspiracy favored this theory, and when the proof for it was not forthcoming, the so-called scientific circles felt, if it wasn't true, it ought to be and taught it anyway. As a consequence, several generations believed they were descended from monkeys and acted accordingly.'"

gang des Abendlandes, II, p. 35: "Not the slightest trace of a development of the race towards higher structure has been found. Man has come as the result of a sudden change, of which the whence, how, and why will be an unfathomable mystery. . . . The origin of the earth, the beginning of life, the introduction of animated beings, are mysteries which we must accept as such." *The Lutheran Witness*, which quotes this and more, comments: "The statements quoted from Spengler, a philosopher whom the entire world acclaims as one of the greatest thinkers of the day, are a blow to the pseudoscientific cock-sureness of the evolutionists." (1924, p. 149.) But cock-sure they, as a class, remain. They will not, they cannot give up their faith.

It is too precious. What is back of this faith? No doubt, with many it is the misguided scientific conscience. They honestly believe that science has established evolution. But there are also those whose thoughts are motivated by their abhorrence of miracles, by the pride which will not submit to God as the Creator and Lord of all, and the resulting antagonism to His Word, the Bible. E. Muehe says: "Dem christgläubigen, frommen Kopernikus ist es nie eingefallen, an der Wahrheit der biblischen Erzählungen zu zweifeln. Aber viele der heutigen Naturforscher sind nicht Nachfolger seines Christenglaubens, sondern Anbeter seiner Wissenschaft geworden. Wenn das kopernikanische Weltsystem in der Bibel stünde, so würden sie es sicherlich nicht annehmen; nun es aber nach ihrer Meinung gegen die Bibel zu sprechen scheint, machen sie es zu ihrem ewigen Evangelium und glauben, der persönlichen Gott und seine Bibel sei dadurch ueber den Haufen geworfen." (*Biblische Merkwürdigkeiten*, p. 91.) Yes, there are those who accept certain hypotheses as truth because they are determined not to accept God's Bible as the truth. E. Haeckel was one of them. He was brazen enough to confess: "Gentlemen, if you refuse to accept the hypothesis of spontaneous generation, you are thrown back on the miracle of a supernatural creation." (*Lehre und Wehre*, 1913, p. 359.) A. Harnack had to be told by W. Walther that he took the very same position. (See *Lehre und Wehre*, 1902, p. 30.)

4) This, too, happens that some men parade these hypotheses without a real acquaintance with them. They will even trot out dead hypotheses against the Bible. W. T. Riviere writes: "In 1920 . . . evolution was popularly understood, even by the learned, to be a scientifically proved doctrine of inevitable progress. This misunderstanding was so general and so serious that I worked out a standard treatment for my young University of Texas freshmen when they returned to Cleburne for the Christmas holidays. It was based on student reaction to a certain lecture about evolution which impressed all my freshmen. During a drive in my little coupé it

was easy to start the student into a speech on evolution; and without fail the well-taught lecture came point by point from the eager youth." Pastor Riviere goes on to tell how he would take the student into the manse, open the text-book on evolution, show the student where he and his instructor were mistaken, and adds: "of course I had little concern about apes or about anything more than a general awareness of current changes in Darwinian theory; but perhaps it was healthy for young and growing minds to remember, from this bookish correction, that small-town pastors are bachelors and masters of art who may happen to know some of the faculty's lore, and that a preacher may have the right to speak with authority in his own field." (*Op. cit.*, p. 53 f.) It does happen that some do not know exactly what Darwin's hypothesis was and do not know that this particular hypothesis is dead. Another case of dealing with counterfeit confederate money.¹²⁸⁾

5) These hypotheses, the old abandoned ones and those which are in vogue now, mean nothing to the theologian and to the

128) *Science for the Elementary-School Teacher*, copyrighted 1940, has this: "Despite the fact that man is similar in some respects to the apes, the popular idea that man is 'descended from a monkey' is not held to be true by biologists. It may be true that in the course of evolutionary development both man and the apes had a common ancestor, from which both are descended; but the various families of monkeys, apes, and man have been distinct for a long time." (P. 373.) — In reading this handbook of elementary science we came across a curious phenomenon. It leaves the teacher in the lurch at a critical point. Chapter XVIII: "Man Is an Animal," starts out with the statement: "The human species is composed of individuals which have many of the characteristics of other animals." The phrase occurs repeatedly: "Like any other animal, man is affected," etc. Surely, being descended from some sort of animal, man is an animal. However, the boys and girls must be told — they know it already — that man greatly differs from the other animals. "Man's intelligence gives him an advantage in the struggle for existence. . . . How has man managed to survive? The answer is obvious. The human species possesses a brain which is of such a nature that it gives man an advantage over all other living things. He is able to reason. . . . The thinking processes are complemented by his ability to make his ideas known to his associates through the medium of speech," etc. (P. 375.) And the preface states: "One of the most recent species to make its appearance on the earth is modern man, a living being, *uniquely endowed with intelligence.*" The boys and girls will accept that. But now the bright members of the class will ask: Where did man's intelligence come from? Why is reason and speech not found in the apes and cats? How did the human species acquire reason and speech? The handbook suggests no answer to the poor teacher. It cannot, of course, suggest an answer. St. George Mivart says: "The origin of consciousness remains shrouded in inscrutable mystery." (*Origin of Human Reason*, p. 212.) Discussing the origin of speech, he quotes Romanes to this effect: "Any remark which I have to offer upon this subject must needs be of a wholly speculative, or unverifiable, character. I attach no argumentative importance to any of these hypotheses." See *The Testimony of Science* for many similar statements. And so the handbook is silent on this question. What shall the teacher do? Should he suggest to the pupils that there is such a thing as Creation? If he dare not do it, the bright pupils will think of that anyway.

scientist. The Bible theologian attaches no value to them. Bishop Manning, indeed, declared that "the evolutionary theory has been accepted by all schools of theologians for the last fifty years." (See *The Christian Century*, Jan. 26, 1938.) But that statement lacks scientific precision. The Bible theologians — the true theologians — do not dream of accepting this hypothesis. They refuse to let the evolutionary or the Copernican or any other hypothesis correct Scripture. As Dr. Pieper says: "It is unworthy of a Christian to force Holy Scripture, which he knows to be God's Word, into agreement with human opinions (hypotheses), with the so-called Copernican cosmic system and similar hypotheses, or to accept such forced interpretations by others." (*Op. cit.*, I, p. 577.) And Dr. Hermann Sasse describes the Christian position thus: "The Lutheran Church, today as formerly, has greater respect for the Word of God than for the hypotheses of modern science." (See *Allg. Ev.-Luth. Kztg.*, 1938, p. 82.)

However, at present we are not concerned with the reaction of theologians towards the demand to accept these hypotheses as truths. We are asking just now how much value the scientist attaches to them. The answer is: None, as far as their value as proofs is concerned. As the *Watchman-Examiner* (June 19, 1941) puts it: "You are not in the absolute realm of science when you are hypothetical. You must go outside its door when you take up a hypothesis, and you can come back in only when you have established your facts."

Facts! From the first chapter on the moderns have been telling us that "the facts" disprove Verbal Inspiration. We ask them to produce these facts — and here they are offering us hypotheses! That is counterfeiting, theological and scientific counterfeiting.

(To be continued)

TH. ENGELDER

Freedom and the Modern Physical World Picture*

A discussion of the problem of free will as affected by the new physics cannot claim finality in any sense. The modern world picture is not complete, for one thing, and we are free from agreement on the epistemological background of the doctrine of freedom. Yet the problem of the will remains the most fascinating in philosophy, and the possibilities which modern physics offers towards the solution are arresting enough to deserve more than passing notice. Any serious study of the subject unfortunately

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