

3-1-1942

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

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Recommended Citation

Engelder, Th. (1942) "Verbal Inspiration- a Stumbling-Block to the Jews and Foolishness to the Greeks," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 13 , Article 13.

Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol13/iss1/13>

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Concordia Theological Monthly

Vol. XIII

MARCH, 1942

No. 3

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

(Continued)

II

The second objection to Verbal Inspiration is based on the so-called unethical portions of the Bible. The mistakes of the Bible are to the moderns a small matter compared with the ethical blemishes they see in the Bible. These alleged immoralities and indecencies scandalize them beyond expression. That is what arouses their most violent protest.¹⁸⁸ The moderns, both conservatives and liberals, join with the unbelievers and infidels in loudly protesting that the Bible as it stands contains much that outrages their moral sensibilities. What the present age needs is an expurgated Bible; and since Verbal Inspiration stands for an unexpurgated Bible, Verbal Inspiration must be done away with.

The black list produced by the moderns in support of their objection is black indeed. The God of the Bible, of the Old Testament part of it, is painted in black colors. "Yahweh was a selfish, tribal god, not unlike the other gods of the peoples surrounding the Hebrews, a cruel god, a god of war, who demands the sacrifice of children and hates his enemies." (See *Luth. Church Quart.*, Jan., 1941, p. 79 f.; the charge is there refuted.) J. De Witt: "Especially shocking are the moral blemishes of the Bible. Acts are

188) H. M'Intosh: "The ethical and religious teaching is now usually first and most strongly urged in proof and illustration of the erroneousness and untrustworthiness of the Bible." (*Is Christ Infallible and the Bible True?* p. 4.) That is correct, says C. H. Dodd. "It long ago became clear that in claiming for the Bible accuracy in matters of science and history its apologists had chosen a hopeless position to defend. Much more important is the fact that in matters of faith and morals an unprejudiced mind must needs recognize many things in the Bible which could not possibly be accepted by Christian people in anything approaching their clear and natural meaning." (*The Authority of the Bible*, p. 13.)

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recorded in the Old Testament which exhibit a low standard of morality. . . . Take for example the butcheries in Canaan under Joshua. . . . In this connection the black treachery of Jael comes to mind, violating the sacred laws of hospitality. . . . The inspired books are more vulnerable here than at all other points. The boldest scoffer of our times in flaunting *'The Mistakes of Moses'* has declared that there are laws in the Mosaic code that would disgrace any modern statute-book, and his assertion cannot reasonably be disputed. . . . Enough has been given to discredit the whole volume, unless a broader definition can be found for the inspiration that produced it than any that has yet been advanced." Verbal Inspiration must go! (*What Is Inspiration?* Pp. 60 f., 68, 120, 183.) De Witt refers us to Ingersoll. Let us hear him. "The Bible is full of barbarism. . . . I call upon Robert Collyer to state whether he believes the Old Testament was inspired, whether he believes that God commanded Moses and Joshua or any one else to slay little children in the cradle. . . . I want Prof. Swing to tell whether he believes the story about the bears eating up children, whether that is inspired. . . . Everything that shocks the brain and shocks the heart, throw it away." (*Lectures*, p. 298 ff.)¹⁸⁹⁾ H. E. Fosdick agrees with Ingersoll on this point. "Those deeds in the Old Testament which from our youth have shocked us by their barbarity — the ruthless extermination of the Amalekites, . . . the ninth chapter of Esther, where the writer rejoices in a vengeful massacre . . ." (*The Modern Use of the Bible*, pp. 14, 26). The Lutheran R. F. Grau declared: "The morality of the Old Testament is imperfect" (see *Lehre und Wehre*, 1893, p. 324), and Dr. H. C. Alleman draws the inevitable conclusion therefrom: "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, however much we may sympathize with the motives which led to it." (*The Luth. Church Quart.*, July, 1936, p. 241.) H. L. Willett, too, has no sympathy with Verbal Inspiration, for "the book thus produced should be a clear and unvarying record of the divine mind, with no suggestion of mistake in matters of fact and norms of conduct." But: "The Bible is not a perfect book. . . . It is not

189) Similarly the scoffer Thomas Paine: "Whenever we read the cruel and torturous executions, the unrelenting vindictiveness, . . . with which more than half of the Bible is filled, it would be more consistent that we called it the word of a demon than the Word of God. It is a history of wickedness that has served to corrupt and brutalize mankind. . . . As to the book called the Bible, it is blasphemy to call it the Word of God." (*Age of Reason*, I, p. 21.) Similarly the scoffer Clarence Darrow: "The various parts of the Bible were written by human beings who . . . were influenced by the barbarous morality of primitive times."

final in its morality." And the verbal-inspirationists should be silenced. "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." (*The Bible through the Centuries*, pp. 3, 283, 289.) Verbal Inspiration is an evil thing and must go, declares C. H. Dodd, pointing to "the harm that has been done to the general conscience by allowing the outworn morality of parts of the Old Testament to stand as authoritative declarations. . . . The old dogmatic view of the Bible therefore is not only open to attack from the standpoint of science and historical criticism, but, if taken seriously, it becomes a danger to religion and public morals. A revision of this view is therefore an imperative necessity" (*loc. cit.*). The times call for an expurgated Bible.¹⁹⁰

190) We submit a few more statements which show how deeply the moderns are scandalized at our unexpurgated Bible, how bitterly they resent the claim that all Scripture is given by inspiration. S. P. Cadman: "Slavery, polygamy, incest, needless wars, cruel massacres, and other non-moral acts and crimes can all be justified by the baseless assumption that every word of Holy Scripture must be regarded as practically infallible and then literally construed. It is not too much to say that this dogma has been prolific of skepticism upon an extended scale." (*Answers to Everyday Questions*, p. 253.) G. L. Raymond declares that "the earlier books of the Bible manifest in places the influences of comparatively low domestic, social, ethic, and religious standards," points to "the wholesale slaughter committed by Joshua and David," and concludes that "it is not necessary to affirm that men must accept every phrase of the Bible as infallibly correct" (*The Psychology of Inspiration*, pp. 145, 153, 189). Dr. E. G. Homrighausen (Princeton Theological Seminary): "Few intelligent Protestants can still hold to the idea that the Bible is an infallible book; that it contains no linguistic errors, no historical discrepancies, no antiquated scientific assumptions, not even bad ethical standards." (*Christianity in America*, p. 121.) F. Baumgaertel: "It is a fact that certain traits in the character of Yahweh are offensive to us Christians: in his name people steal. [Ex. 11:2.] In his name blood was poured out like water: the butchering of the first-born in Egypt, the command to massacre whole populations, the slaughtering of the prophets of Baal, Samuel cutting down with his own hand the king of the Amalekites." (See W. Moeller, *Um die Inspiration der Bibel*, p. 21.) H. F. Baughman: "The ethics of the Bible are controverted by modern sociology. Its morals are questioned by modern psychology. . . . It is interwoven with the ethics of an ancient day, which have long since been displaced by the onward march of human knowledge." (*The Luth. Church Quart.*, July, 1935, p. 254 f.) At the Washington Debate, in 1937, Dr. H. W. Snyder, representing the U. L. C., declared that "the Lutheran Church, outside perhaps of the Missouri Synod, has never subscribed to a verbal theory of inspiration," and told why he cannot accept Verbal Inspiration: "As one writer on this question says: 'It [the Bible] has carried with it the husk as well as the kernel,' and in illustration of his meaning he quotes some stories of vengeance, cruelty, *lex talionis*, polygamy, adultery, which it relates." (See the *Journal of the A. L. Conference*, March, 1938; *CONC. THEOL. MTHLY.*, IX, p. 359.) In view of these facts the Christian reader must expurgate his Bible before he can get any benefit from it. In the words of Georgia Harkness: "The Bible has one great theme — the obligation of man to God and of God

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One of the blackest sections of the black list before us deals with the imprecatory psalms, Pss. 35, 55, 59, 69, 79, 109, 137, and others. Says Ingersoll: "I want Prof. Swing to tell whether the 109th psalm is inspired." H. E. Fosdick: "Read the closing words of the 137th psalm, which even Gounod's glorious music cannot redeem from brutality." (*Loc. cit.*) R. H. Malden, dean of Wells: "What are we to make of the fierce prayers for vengeance on the enemies of the writer, whether personal or national, which are to be found in some of the psalms? They belong to a more primitive state of society and were written by men who had little belief, if any, in life beyond the grave. . . . The ethical standards of more than two thousand years ago cannot be expected to be the same as our own." (*The Inspiration of the Bible*, p. 61 ff.) E. F. Keever, writing on "The Imprecatory Psalms" in *The Luth. Church Quart.*, April, 1940, p. 131 ff., does not agree with Henry Ward Beecher, who is reported to have said that "David seems to have been inspired at times by the spirit of the Lord, and at other times by the spirit of the devil"; but he agrees with Dr. Malden. He says: "Let us not look for Christian ethical concepts in the primitive morality of ancient tribes. If we study the religion, the ethics, the culture, and the national traditions of ancient Judaism; if we sense the madness of the everlasting wars that sacked their cities, . . . what other appeal could these ill-starred tribes make than utter frenzied cries to all the powers in the upper and nether world to curse the bloody, idolatrous hordes that almost brought them to extinction?" In the article "Some Thoughts on Inspiration" in the *Journal of the A. L. Conf.*, May, 1939, Hjalmar W. Johnson says: "The human element appears also with sad realism in the imprecatory psalms. In these passages (Ps. 109: 8, 9, 10; 137: 9) the human, or shall I say inhuman, element is sadly evident." And that proves, they say, that there was no Verbal Inspiration. In the words of R. W. Sockman: "If every word of Scripture were thought of as dictated by God to sacred penmen preserved from error, how would the reader reconcile the cruel explosiveness of the imprecatory psalms with the tenderness of Isaiah's fifty-third chapter or Paul's fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians? How would he harmonize the cynicism of Ecclesiastes with the buoyant hopefulness of Revelation?" (*Recoveries in Religion*, p. 61.)

They tell us further that these immoral sentiments vitiate the morals of the Christian people. People will make use of the

to man. More than once this obligation was crudely conceived, for man's own vindictiveness and passion have a way of getting mixed with his idea of holy things. If we would sort out the humanly crude from the divinely pure in the message of the Bible, we would have an authoritative measure—the mind of Christ." (*The Faith by Which the Church Lives*, p. 70.)

imprecatory psalms to give expression to, and justify, their carnal hatred. C. H. Dodd: "Many people found that the imprecatory psalms so perfectly expressed what they felt about the enemy that they could join in the services with a fervor and reality they had never known. Yet as they look back upon that state of mind they probably do not regard it as the high-water mark of their religious life. . . . The old dogmatic view . . . becomes a danger to religion and public morals." (*Loc. cit.*) These psalms must be expunged from the Christian Bible. They are not fit to be read in Christian services. "Give us Christian responsive readings! To be sure, there are some heart-warming, soul-lifting passages in the Psalter. But what place should there be in our responsive readings for ancient Jewish tribal teachings which Jesus Himself set aside?" (*Western Christian Advocate*, Jan. 19, 1928.) These psalms must be put on the *index locorum prohibitorum*. F. Baumgaertel asks that: "Ps. 137:9 duerfte doch nicht im Psalmbuch stehen."

Next on the black list are the "filthy stories" and the records of gross sins committed by great men of the Bible. "Old and modern theologians have spoken of 'filthy stories' in the Scriptures and insist that you dare not charge the Holy Ghost with telling them." (F. Pieper, *Chr. Dog.*, I, p. 338.) There is Gen. 38 (Judah and Tamar) and Ezek. 23! Ingersoll is scandalized at these portions of Scripture: "A great many chapters I dare not read to you. They are too filthy. I leave all that to the clergy." (*Op. cit.*, p. 368.) Paine is scandalized: "The obscene and vulgar stories in the Bible are as repulsive to our ideas of the purity of a Divine Being as the horrid cruelties and murders it ascribes to Him are repugnant to our ideas of His justice." (*Reply to the Bishop of Llandaff*, p. 33.) The Lutheran W. F. Gess is scandalized: "It is disgusting to burden God's Word with the record of such horrible sins. Reverence should forbid that. It does not take a keen eye to see that *Schmutzgeschichten* such as the story of Judah and Tamar and of the foul deed of Gibeah have no place in God's Word." (See *Proc., Syn. Conf.*, 1909, p. 45.) Dr. H. C. Alleman, too, feels that "the pure Scriptures must be separated from their filth." (See *The Lutheran*, Jan. 14, 1937.) "Furthermore," asks R. H. Malden, "What are we to make of the conduct of David in the matter of Bathsheba and Uriah the Hittite?" (*Loc. cit.*) R. F. Horton: "Did we not even as children wonder how Gideon, who had received a direct revelation from God, could encourage the idolatry of the ephod, or how Samson, whose strength came from the Spirit of God, should practice immoralities? . . . Granted that the crimes recorded in the book are not entirely approved, yet how comes it that they are not more emphatically condemned if the

writing comes in any sense from God? . . . When the simple truth of the matter is perceived, the idea that the Book of Judges is inspired in that sense [in the sense of Verbal Inspiration] will be maintained not, as now, by the friends but only by the enemies of divine revelation." (*Revelation and the Bible*, pp. 92, 100.)—Some years ago a book was published in New York which contained all the "filthy stories" the compiler could find in the Bible, and only those. The purpose of that black list was to ridicule the idea that the Bible is a "holy" book.—The point of the present argument against Verbal Inspiration is that the Holy Ghost would not and could not record these "filthy" stories and He would not do it for the further reason that the reading of them would harm public morals.¹⁹¹⁾

A special point is given the argument by anathematizing the idea that the Holy Ghost would speak by the mouth and write by the hands of men who had committed great sins. (See W. Lee, *The Inspiration of Holy Scripture*, pp. 217, 221 ff.)

Sections of the New Testament, too, are put on the black list. H. L. Willett lists "the anger of Paul at the high priest who ordered him smitten in court and his advice to Timothy about taking a little wine," also "the summary punishment of Ananias and his wife." "In other words, the Bible is not an authority to us on all the questions with which it deals." (*Loc. cit.*, p. 291.) Even Jesus Himself, as *the Gospels present Him*, is not free of moral obliquity. He infringed on the property rights of His neighbors. By what right did He destroy the fig-tree which was not His and deprive the Gadarene pig-owners of their property? Unless Verbal Inspiration is discarded, unless the Gospel accounts are set right, Jesus appears in a bad light. H. L. Willett: "Even in the life of Jesus the same difficulties appear. So difficult are the narratives of the demons sent into the swine and the cursed fig-tree that many

191) "Long passages are adduced about the sins of leading historical characters, such as the drunkenness of Noah, the incest of Lot, . . . the murder and adultery of David, the dissoluteness of Solomon, and all the evil-doings of the times of the judges, the kings of Israel and Judah, down to the close of the Old Testament; as also not a few kinds of things in the New Testament. 'There,' it is said with something akin to scorn and ironical triumph,—'there are your famous saints!—There is your trustworthy, infallible, and divinely inspired, and authoritative Bible!'" (H. M'Intosh, *op. cit.*, p. 318.) "Another objection raised against the divine origin of the Bible and the doctrine of inspiration is: The sins of the saints as recorded in the Bible must necessarily have an evil effect on the morals of its readers. . . . Do not Christian preachers continually protest against books. . . which present to the eyes and ears of men human foibles, passions, illicit sexual relations, and crimes in all their shameful reality? If this must also be said of the Bible, how can this book be inspired by God Himself? Has it not thereby forfeited all claims to being God's own Book?" (*Theol. Mthly*, 1925, p. 333: "The Bible and the Sins of the Saints.")

who hold without hesitation to the inspiration and authority of the Book wonder if there has not been some error in the record at these points." (*Loc. cit.*)¹⁹²)

Finally, the moderns are scandalized at certain doctrines of the Bible, doctrines taught not only in the Old Testament but also by the apostles and Jesus. Hear Ingersoll: "I would rather that this thrilled and thrilling globe, shorn of all life, should in its cycles rub the wheel, the parent star, on which the light should fall as fruitlessly as falls the gaze of love on death, than to have this infamous doctrine of eternal punishment true; rather than have this infamous selfishness of a heaven for a few and a hell for the many established as the word of God." (*Op. cit.*, p. 311.) Hear H. E. Fosdick: "Bible categories that shock the modern conscience — miracles, demons, fiat creation, apocalyptic hopes, eternal hell." (*Op. cit.*, p. 5.) R. F. Horton: "The writer of Heb. 6:1-8; 10:26, 27 is throughout imbued with the stern spirit of the old Law. . . . This doctrine seems at variance with the idea of God given to us elsewhere in the New Testament. We must treat it as a judgment passed by the writer, a judgment which, however sincere, can claim no more infallibility than other judgments which are passed by good and earnest men." (*Revelation and the Bible*, pp. 332, 335.) C. T. Craig: "Despite its majestic insights, the Epistle to the Hebrews has not been an unmixed blessing. It is more responsible than any other book of the New Testament for the retention of the idea that a bloody sacrifice was necessary in order to make possible the forgiveness of men's sins." (*The Study of the New Testament*, p. 111. — See the stinging rebuke administered to this writer in *Kirch. Zeitschrift*, 1940, p. 555.) A writer quoted by L. Gaussen: "St. Paul speaks of 'having delivered an incestuous person over to Satan,' 1 Cor. 5:5. Could this passage (fanatical no doubt) have been inspired? . . . He tells them, further, 'that in Adam all die,' 1 Cor. 15:22. Judaical superstition! It is impossible that such a passage can be inspired." (*Theopneustia*, p. 202.) And it is impossible that Verbal Inspiration, according to

192) "Mr. Huxley observes that the evangelist has no 'inkling of the legal and moral difficulties of the case,' and adds, the devils entered into the swine 'to the great loss and damage of the innocent Gerasene or Gadarene pig-owners.' Further: 'Everything that I know of law and justice convinces me that the wanton destruction of other people's property is a misdemeanor of evil example.'" (See W. E. Gladstone, *The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*, p. 298.) After the writer of the article "The 'Cursing' of the Fig-tree" in *The Luth. Church Quart.*, April, 1936, has given us the true story of this incident (the evangelist had garbled it), he states: "As to the matter of ownership, there is now no need of invoking the eminent domain of the Son of God in order to legitimize His behavior towards the property of other people. For Jesus did not kill the tree, and He had no thought of so doing." (P. 191.)

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which these passages and all other passages are inspired, can be true. This doctrine, too, is immoral and harmful. The moderns have been telling us that from page one on. Verbal Inspiration, "if taken seriously, becomes a danger to religion and public morals." (C. H. Dodd, *loc. cit.*)

This, then, is the situation: while the common folk throughout Christendom call the Bible "the good Book," the intellectuals declare it to be a book which is in parts bad, so bad that it needs to be expurgated before it can be placed in the hands of the common people. "A possible reason for the crime wave may be the teachings of the Sunday-school, says a Cleveland, Ohio, pastor in *Scribner's*. . . . If the lives of these men (the brigands of the Old Testament) are to be told the children, they must be greatly cut and told as stories of half-mythical characters." Just as censors are appointed for expurgating the plays presented to the public, so the moderns are calling for a Board of Censors for Certain Books of the Bible. The Bible needs most careful editing and pitiless expurgation. (See *THEOL. MTHLY.*, 1927, p. 181.)

Sections of the Bible outrage your moral sensibilities? The trouble with you is that you have permitted your carnal feelings to blunt your Christian sensibilities. In the first place, the moral sense of the Christian forbids him to charge God and God's Word with immoralities. The Christian trembles at God's Word, Is. 66:2. He believes that "every word of God is pure" (Prov. 30:5). He declares: "Thy Word is very pure," Ps. 119:140, and his Christian feeling is outraged when men speak of moral blemishes in God's Word. When the atheist and the infidel declare that their ethico-religious consciousness forbids them to respect the God of the Bible, the God who ordered the extermination of the Canaanites and inspired the imprecatory psalms,¹⁹³ all Christian theologians tell them: Do not appeal to your ethico-religious consciousness; you have none; you are uttering blasphemy. It is a *crimen laesae maiestatis divinae* to criticize God, and it is blasphemy to charge God's Word with sanctioning immoralities. The moderns are horrified at such an attitude, that is, any criticizing of God and their denunciation of it is just.

But the moderns are themselves doing this very thing. To be sure, they resent the charge that they are criticizing the *inspired Word*. They insist that these objectionable portions of the Bible

193) The infidels clothe their objection in just this form. "Regarding these things (the slaughter of the Canaanites, the ferocious and vindictive expressions in many of the psalms) the argument of skeptics is a brief one: This book professes to be divine, but it represents God as approving of immoral actions, and therefore it cannot be divine. Its claim is false, and we must disregard it." (Marcus Dods, *The Bible, Its Origin and Nature*, p. 87.)

belong to the "human side" of the Bible, are not inspired, are not God's Word, do not belong in the Bible. But pleading thus, they are pleading guilty. What right has the skeptic to treat the Bible as a human book? And what right has the modern to treat it as partly divine and partly human? Both, the moderns no less than the skeptics, claim the right to criticize that book of which God has solemnly declared: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." The moderns are not ashamed to say openly that the Bible is subject to their censorship. "It belongs to the Church in every age to examine the sacred writings by the light both of tradition and of its own spiritually illumined self-consciousness. . . . By the light of its own spiritually illumined consciousness it discerns the Word of God within those Scriptures. . . . The Church has the right of rejecting from this Word whatever does not satisfy the demands of its ethico-religious consciousness." (G. T. Ladd, *The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture*, II, pp. 502, 508.)¹⁹⁴ They are actually arrogating the right to sit in judgment on God's Word. And we tell them: You are committing the *crimen laesae maiestatis divinae*. When Professor Grau declared that "the morality of the Old Testament is imperfect," Dr. Stoeckhardt wrote: Das ist ein "blasphemies Urteil ueber die Sittlichkeit des Alten Testaments." (*Loc. cit.*) It is blasphemous to say that the writers of the Old Testament expressed unethical judgments, for, whether the moderns accept it or not, they wrote by inspiration of God. How is it possible that Christian theologians can speak disparagingly of the sacred writings? The skeptics do it because they are lacking the ethico-

194) Exercising his ethico-religious consciousness, Professor Ladd "finds various passages, and even some entire books of the Old Testament, which manifest a relatively low moral tone and contain relatively many moral imperfections. Still others of these proverbs show so much of mere shrewdness as scarcely to escape the charge of being immoral when considered from the Christian point of view (see Prov. 17:8; 18:16; 21:14). We can go only a certain distance in company with the spirit of the imprecatory psalms: thence our path and theirs lie in different levels and lines." (*Op. cit.*, I, pp. 464, 472.) Similar statements by others: "If, besides the divine truth that it embodies, the Bible also contains . . . moral incongruities and monstrosities, from which our souls recoil, how shall I separate the gold from the dross? . . . If anything agrees not with these words of Christ in the Gospels—polygamy, slavery, revenge, and barbarity of every kind—we renounce and denounce it as evil. Our enlightened moral instinct rejects it unreservedly and forever." (J. De Witt, *op. cit.*, p. 179 f.) "Who whispers to us as we read Genesis and Kings: This is exemplary; this is not? Who sifts for us the speeches of Job and enables us to treasure as divine truth what he utters in one verse, while we reject the next as satanic raving? 'The spiritual man—the man who has the spirit of Christ—judgeth all things.' This, and this only, is the true touchstone of Scripture by which all things are tried." (Marcus Dods, *op. cit.*, p. 160 f.) "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." (E. Schaeder, *Theozentrische Theologie*, II, p. 69.)

religious consciousness. The moderns are doing it because they have permitted their carnal sense of what is right or wrong to dull their Christian sense. Their Christian heart has not bidden them to separate the "chaff" from the wheat, the "filthy" from the pure. The suggestion that God's Word contains filthy elements outrages the Christian's sensibilities.¹⁹⁵

Let us repeat this. When the moderns call for an expurgated Bible, they are judging God. And that is the height of immorality. L. Gausson did not go too far when he denounced the arrogance of the moderns in these strong terms: "You do not, it seems, comprehend the divinity, the propriety, the wisdom, the utility of such or such a passage of the Scriptures, and on that account you deny its inspiration! Is this an argument that can have any real value, we do not say in our eyes, but in yours? *Who are you?* 'Keep thy foot when thou goest into the house of God,' feeble child of man, 'and be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they consider not the evil that they do. Be not rash with thy mouth; God is in heaven and thou upon earth,' Eccl. 5:1, 2. *Who art thou, then, who wouldst judge the oracles of God?* Hath not the Scripture itself told us beforehand that it would be to some a stumbling-block and to others foolishness, 1 Cor. 1:23; that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God and that he cannot even do so and that they are spiritually discerned, 1 Cor. 2:14? . . . Man must first return to his place as a weak, ignorant, and demoralized creature! He cannot comprehend God until he has humbled himself. . . . It is thus that people strike their own defective knowledge, like an impure hook, into the Word of God and drag to the public dung hill whatever they have been unable to understand and have condemned!" (*Op. cit.*, p. 204.) Instead of complaining that the Bible outrages their moral sensibilities, these men should recognize with fear and terror that they are suppressing, dulling, outraging their own ethico-religious, Christian consciousness, which trembles at God's Word.

Once more: if the moderns are right in placing the Bible on the *Index Expurgatorius*, Christ was wrong in underwriting the whole of Scripture. "It does not take a keen eye," said Gess, "to see that filthy stories . . . have no place in God's Word." Was, then, Paul dim-sighted when he did not find a single statement of Scripture offensive to his moral sense but declared that "whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning" (Rom. 15:4)? And did our Lord endorse all of Scripture (see

195) "All objections to the divine inspiration and the inerrancy of the Bible are unworthy of a Christian." (F. Pieper, *What Is Christianity?* p. 257.) The objection which is based on the alleged moral incongruities in the Bible is unworthy of the Christian.

John 10:35) because His eyes were not so clear as those of the moderns? When they take offense at what was not offensive to Jesus, they are virtually discrediting the good judgment of our Lord and Savior. Reverence for God—the first of all ethical demands—should make such an attitude impossible.¹⁹⁶⁾

But, say the moderns, Jesus *did* repudiate the imperfect morality of the Old Testament and stood for a more perfect ethics. "Jesus set aside the ancient Jewish tribal teachings." (*West. Chr. Advocate.*) "We go fearlessly to the old inspiration, approving or rejecting, as it may be. . . . Whatever in the Old Testament revelation is not in accord with the revelation of His righteousness or purity or love or truth in the words and life of Christ, has been annulled and superseded." (J. De Witt, *op. cit.*, p. 180.) "The task of harmonizing such ethical conceptions (the vengeful massacre of the ninth chapter of Esther, the brutality of the closing words of the 137th Psalm) with the Sermon on the Mount surely is too much for human wit or patience. . . . The method of Jesus is obviously applicable: 'It was said to them of old time, . . . but I say unto you.'" (H. E. Fosdick, *op. cit.*, p. 27.)¹⁹⁷⁾ Now, Jesus *did not* repudiate the ethics of the Old Testament. Where did He, for in-

196) "If the Mosaic cosmogony is fabulous, how is it that Jesus uttered no word against it? And why did He not denounce those imprecatory psalms which are 'too horrible to be read' in some of our modern pulpits? . . . Is it possible that His eyes were not as clear, in this particular, as those of our recent Biblical scholars? Or was His soul not so sensitive as theirs with regard to these dreadful things in Scripture? We are in a dilemma. Was He unscrupulous or merely ignorant? . . . To question the teaching of Jesus with respect to the Scriptures is not merely to doubt the statement of one who was subject to human limitations; it is to call in question the veracity of the living God." (D. J. Burrell, *Why I Believe the Bible*, p. 117 f.—By the way, Burrell is not a kenoticist. "His limitations, whatever they may have been, were certainly not such as to expose Him to the liability of error or to the danger of uttering an untruth." P. 116.)

197) Similar assertions: Marcus Dods: "There are actions recorded in the Old Testament which seem to have the divine sanction and yet are condemned by the New Testament code." (*Op. cit.*, p. 87.) Dr. J. Aberly: "In this total view of Scriptural teaching we must have the Spirit of Jesus to differentiate between what is temporary and what is permanent. . . . This view of the total purport of the Old Testament determined the corrections made of such teachings as were at variance with it. Illustrations of this will be found in the *correction of the law of retaliation*, among others, in the Sermon on the Mount, Matt. 5:17-48. (*The Luth. Church Quart.*, April, 1935, p. 119.) Dr. H. C. Alleman calls attention to "Old Testament stories of doubtful ethics and *lex talionis* reprisals" and insists: "Does not Matt. 5:39 abrogate Ex. 21:24?" (*The Luth. Church Quart.*, 1936, p. 241; 1940, p. 356.) "Will you please explain the meaning of Ps. 129:21: 'Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate Thee?'" The editor of *The Christian Herald* answered in the issue of March, 1940: "In reading this verse, we must remember that those words were spoken under the Old Dispensation—the dispensation of wrath and before the advent of Christ. Jesus said: 'Love your enemies.'"

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stance, disavow the imprecatory psalms? And do not quote Jesus' command "Love your enemies" as proving that Jesus repudiated the Moral Law of the Old Testament. He would ask you to quote His statement recorded Matt. 22:39. And when you quote: "But I say unto you," to prove that Christ revoked the *lex talionis* as permitting and sanctioning private revenge, you misinterpret the words of Jesus. Enough has been said on this subject in the fifth section of this essay, Assertion No. 3 (Aug., 1941). What needs to be said now is this: Those who insist that Jesus repudiated parts of the Old Testament teaching put Jesus in a bad light. They make Him contradict Himself. He said that not one jot or tittle of the Law shall pass away, Matt. 5:18. He said that Scripture cannot be broken, John 10:35, and the moderns make Him break Scripture again and again. Did Jesus, then, not know His own mind? Do the moderns not see that they are questioning the veracity of God? Reverence for God—the first of all ethical commands—should make such an attitude impossible.

In the second place, the ethico-religious consciousness which is offended at the morality taught in the Old Testament (and in the New Testament), its alleged cruelty, barbarity, etc., is not the ethico-Christian consciousness. It is a distorted moral sense. The ethics of God's people stems from the ethics of God. Our sense of right and wrong is formed on God's judgments of what is right and wrong. We know something of love because we know the love of God. And we have a sense of holiness and justice because we have somewhat realized the majesty of God's eternal righteousness and holiness. The moral sensibilities of the moderns are shocked by the Scripture story of the extermination of the Canaanites. That is because their moral sense is warped. They have no sense of the awful justice of God. Dr. H. E. Fosdick well says: "The trouble with many folk is that they believe in *only a part of God*. They believe in His love. They argue that because He is benign and kindly He will give in to a child's entreaty and do what the child happens to desire. They do not really believe in God's *wisdom*—His knowledge of what is best for all of us—and in His *will*—His plan for the character and career of each of us." (*The Meaning of Prayer*, p. 56.) Apply that here: the moderns believe in only a part of God; they do not believe in His holiness. Their moral sense is not fully developed. The extermination of the Canaanites was an act of the outraged holiness of God. The measure of their loathsome crimes and unspeakable depravity was filled up. They needed to be swept away from the face of the earth. God's holiness could tolerate them no longer. Their extermination had an ethical reason. And those who charge the

executors of God's judgment with inhumanity (charging God, in effect, with ungodliness) have no sound ethical sense.¹⁹⁸⁾

They say this story reflects the low morality of Old Testament times, the cruelty of "Yahwe, the tribal god," and of His servants. No, indeed, the God of the New Testament, Jesus Christ Himself, executes the same justice and vengeance. Jesus pronounced and executed a terrible judgment against Israel, man and woman, father and child. What befell Pompeii? Who has been scourging the nations that have gone their own evil way with the sword, with hunger, with pestilence? And what will happen on the dread Day of Judgment? The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and shall punish them with everlasting destruction, 2 Thess. 1:7-9. The moral sense of the Christian does not rebel against the divine justice exhibited in damning the wicked¹⁹⁹⁾ and exterminating the

198) W. E. Gladstone: "They [the Hebrew race] were appointed to purge and to possess the land of Canaan on account of the terrible and loathsome iniquities of its inhabitants. The nations whom they were to subdue had reached the latest stage of sensual iniquity, which respects neither God nor nature. The sensual power within man, which rebelled against him when he had rebelled against God, had in Canaan enthroned its lawlessness as law, and its bestial indulgences had become recognized, normal, nay, more, even religious and obligatory." (*Op. cit.*, p. 128.) L. Boettner: "The Old Testament teaches that not only certain individuals but sometimes whole towns and tribes were so degraded that they were a curse to society and unfit to live." (*The Inspiration of the Scriptures*, p. 58.) James Orr: "Extermination, where commanded, had always an ethical reason. If the Canaanites were condemned, it was because, after long patience of God, the cup of their iniquities was full to overflowing. 'After all,' says Otley, quoting Westcott, 'the Canaanites were put under the ban, not for false belief, but for vile actions.' Nor was there any partiality in this. To quote what has been said elsewhere: 'The sword of the Israelite is, after all, only a more acute form of the problem that meets us in the providential employment of the sword of the Assyrian, the Chaldean, and the Roman to inflict the judgment of God on Israel itself.'" (*Revelation and Inspiration*, p. 105.)

199) "Our emotions are not trustworthy. People say, 'I do not feel that God would condemn the wicked,' and therefore they refuse to believe that He will. But what have our feelings to do with God? What warrant have we to imagine that an infinitely holy God 'feels' about sin as we do and has the same shallow tolerant view of it as we have? No warrant whatever. The only way in which we can know how God looks upon sin is by what He says, and in the Bible we have the record of what He says." (J. H. McComb, *God's Purpose in This Age*, p. 67.) "These things, reason will still say, are not becoming a God good and merciful. . . . Reason wants to feel out and see and comprehend how He can be good and not cruel. But she will comprehend that when this shall be said of God: He damns no one, but He has mercy upon all; He saves all, and He has so utterly destroyed hell that no future punishment need be dreaded. It is thus that reason blusters and contends, in attempting to clear God and to defend Him as just and good." (Luther, XVIII:1832.)

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Canaanites. It is a warped ethico-religious consciousness that is offended at these things, a sickly sentimentalism, begotten by carnal reasoning. Dr. J. Aberly is right in declaring "that God reveals Himself not only in mercy but also in judgment. There is a severity as well as a goodness of God. . . . That easy-going sentimentalism which often is made a synonym for the Christian spirit certainly omits this sterner side, which must be regarded as inseparable from a religion that has the cross at its center." (*The Luth. Church Quart.*, April, 1935, p. 120.) A man who says of the ninth chapter of Esther and of the 137th Psalm what H. E. Fosdick said of these passages "believes in only a part of God" and has no true conception of the holiness and justice of God. His moral sense is distorted.

The same applies to those whose moral sensibilities are shocked by the so-called imprecatory psalms. The moral sense of the Christian is not shocked when God manifests His hatred of sin and pours out His consuming wrath upon the rebellious sinner, inflicting upon him woe temporal and eternal. The mind of the Christian is formed on the mind of God and reflects the divine hatred of sin. The Christian cannot remain indifferent when he sees men rebel against God; their machinations against God and His Word and His people arouse his indignation and holy wrath. For that reason he looks upon these psalms as holy psalms. He does not denounce them. He prays them. For in them holy men of God voiced their hatred of sin, denounced God's severe judgment against the enemies of God and His Church, and threatened them with temporal and eternal woe. They did that in God's name. Yea, God gave them the very words by which to express their and His wrath; He inspired these psalms. God made the psalmists able preachers of His holy Law. If these psalms called for personal revenge and voiced carnal hatred, we, too, would say that "David was inspired by the spirit of the devil." But they do nothing of the kind. They flow from, and give expression to, the stern, inexorable justice of God. "There is not one of these passages which tampers with truth or justice; they are aimed only at sin, to blast and wither it. 'Lead me, Lord, in Thy righteousness because of mine enemies,' Ps. 5:8. This is the universal strain. All these passages are strokes delivered with the sword of righteousness in its unending warfare with iniquity. Nor is there one among them of which it can be shown that it refers to any personal feud, passion, or desire. Everywhere the psalmist speaks in the name of God, on behalf of His word and will." (W. E. Gladstone, *op. cit.*, p. 180.) Luther: "The prayers in the psalms are directed either against the devil as a liar or against the devil as a murderer,

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that is, either against pernicious doctrine or against the tyrants and persecutors." (IV:1753.)²⁰⁰

The offense which men take at the so-called imprecatory psalms is due to two defects in their moral sense. They are, in the first place, deficient in the sense of the enormity and hatefulness of sin, of the rebellion against God, of false doctrine. They refuse to let God's wrath against the evil-doer make its full impression on their ethico-Christian consciousness. "If so many people nowadays find the language of the psalms we are discussing strange and offensive, it is largely due to indifference toward the sacred teachings which God has given us in His Word." (W. Arndt, *Bible Difficulties*, p. 40.) And, secondly, their moral sense lacks too much of the fear of God. They dare to lay down rules of behavior for the almighty, all-holy God. They tell us that it would be unseemly if God had inspired the imprecatory psalms. The rebuke which W. E. Gladstone administers to such presumptuousness is

200) The essay "The Imprecatory Psalms," by Prof. H. Hamann, in the *Proceedings of the New South Wales District*, 1940 (and in *Lehre und Wehre*, 1924, p. 292 ff.) fully covers the subject. We quote: "They reveal the holy and righteous will of the God of Sinai; they are the expression of His stern and inexorable justice; they make known to men God's fearful wrath against sin and ultimately also against sinners, if they do not repent, so that all may stand in awe and tremble before His outraged majesty. . . . The imprecatory psalms belong to the Law and represent the Law at its strictest and sternest, and no one should be offended at them who knows that God is a 'jealous God,' who will not abate one jot of His holy and immutable Law. . . . McClintock and Strong's *Cyclopedia*, VIII, p. 755: 'The truth is that only a morbid benevolence, a mistaken philanthropy, takes offense at these psalms; for in reality they are not opposed to the spirit of the Gospel nor to that love of enemies which Christ enjoined. Resentment against evil-doers is so far from sinful that we find it exemplified in the meek and spotless Redeemer Himself, Mark 3:5.' . . . I do not believe that the psalmist would have written those fearful words in Ps. 137:9 if he had not known that terrible prophecy uttered by Isaiah against the same proud city long before: 'Their children shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled and their wives ravished,' Is. 13:16. The psalmist simply pronounces his beatitude upon him who will carry out the doom foretold by the just and holy God. . . . Let us think of our Savior: what hard sayings, what words of flaming indignation did He utter when He opposed the malice and stubbornness of His enemies, who were at the same time the enemies of God, of God's people, and of true religion and who hardened themselves more and more in their iniquity! Seven times He pronounces the woe upon the scribes and Pharisees. . . . We recall the words of St. Paul in 1 Cor. 16:22: 'If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema,' i. e., accursed. . . . Not only according to the Old Testament but also according to the New Testament there is such a thing as righteous wrath against sin and, in a certain relation, also against sinners who persist in their sin; there is such a thing as legitimately calling upon God to punish and to avenge, when His glory and the welfare of souls demands it; there is such a thing as holy acquiescence and joy in His righteous and perfect judgment." See also the remarks by Dr. J. T. Mueller in *CONC. THEOL. MTHLV.*, XII, p. 470. (This also takes care of "the anger of Paul," which H. L. Willett has set down as a moral blemish.)

much too mild: "With respect to their severity²⁰¹ I suggest, and if need be contend, that we, in our ignorance and weakness are not fit judges of the extent to which the wisdom of the Almighty may justly carry the denunciation, even by the mouth of man, and the punishment of guilt." (*Op. cit.*, pp. 178, 180.) Because the sentiments expressed in the imprecatory psalms are offensive to the moderns, they will not believe in Verbal Inspiration. Because we believe in Verbal Inspiration, we know that those sentiments express the mind of God; and while some of the expressions may seem too harsh to us, we bridle our thoughts. We know that, while now we see only through a glass darkly, the light of glory will reveal to us that every word of the imprecatory psalms is in full accord with the eternal Holiness.

Believing in Verbal Inspiration, we know, too, that it was the Holy Ghost who recorded what the moderns are pleased to call *Schmutzgeschichten*, the stories of revolting crimes and heinous sins, and set them down in plain, unvarnished language. If God had asked Ingersoll and Gess to record the shameful story told Gen. 38, the shame of Judah and Tamar, they would have been horrified, would have indignantly rejected the proposal as coming from an unclean spirit. Moses had no such prudish scruples. And if we would "listen to what St. Paul says, Rom. 15:4: 'Whatsoever things were written aforetime' etc., if we firmly believed that the Holy Ghost Himself, and God, the Creator of all, is the true Author of this book" (Luther, II:469), we should know *a priori* that these stories contain nothing improper, unchaste, smutty.²⁰² "It is true, this is a rather gross chapter [Gen. 38]. However, it is found in Holy Scripture, and the Holy Spirit wrote it, whose mouth and pen are as clean as ours. . . . If He was not ashamed to write it, we should not be ashamed to read and hear it." (III:559.) There is nothing about it to cause a modest person to blush and, much less, to corrupt his morals. Convince yourself of that *a posteriori*. Read these chapters in the fear of God. You will see at once that "the most pure mouth of the Holy Spirit" here depicts sin in such colors that the reader's heart is filled with horror and detestation of sin. And all the coloring needed is to present sin in its own

201) He is speaking of the imprecatory psalms: "I hate them with a perfect hatred; I count them mine enemies," Ps. 139:22. This brings the objection to a point. It is that this immeasurable detestation and invocation of wrath by man even upon God's enemies cannot be justified, and is not to be referred to divine inspiration."

202) L. Gaussen: "We have been asked, finally, if we could discover anything divine in certain passages of the Scriptures, too vulgar, it has been said, to be inspired. We believe we have shown how much wisdom, on the contrary, shines out in these passages as soon as, instead of passing a hasty judgment on them, we would look in them for the teaching of the Holy Ghost." (*Op. cit.*, p. 355.)

color, in its nakedness and frightfulness. These so-called "filthy stories" do in the moral sphere what is done in the dissecting-room where a wretched body is cut up and laid bare in order to show how the disease had ravished it.²⁰³ Will the students be filled with lascivious thoughts when they see the dissector handling the nude corpse and uncovering the hideous filth produced by the disease? Not if they are normal men. The moral sense of one who cannot distinguish between the story of David's great sin and the current sex-novels is distorted.

These men do not serve the cause of Christian morals by demanding that the stories of the great sinners and of the extermination of the Canaanites, together with the imprecatory psalms, be deleted from the Bible. They are there for a good purpose. The sinner needs them, and the saint, who is a sinner, needs them. They warn us, 1 Cor. 10:11, and they comfort us, Rom. 15:4; 2 Tim. 3:16. "Why does the most pure mouth of the Holy Spirit stoop down to such low, despicable things, aye, things which are unchaste and filthy, yea, damnable, as if such things should serve to instruct the Church and congregation of God? How does that concern the Church?" Read on in Luther, II:1200 (and I:628 ff. — on the sins of Noah and of Ham) and thank God that He has shown you here the vileness of human nature, in the sinner and in the saint, the terrible wrath of God against the transgressor, and the wonderful grace of our Lord and Savior towards the vilest

203) Dr. Thomas De Witt Talmage (pastor of the Brooklyn "Tabernacle"): "Mr. Ingersoll declares that there are indecencies in the Bible which no one can read without a blush of shame. . . . I can go into the office of any physician here in Brooklyn and find magazines on the table and books on the shelves which the physician would not indiscriminately read to his family; yet they are good, valuable, necessary, morally pure books. A physician who did not have them would not belong in the profession. Even so there are passages in the Bible which form the anatomy of sin, showing what a lazar-house of iniquity the heart is when unrestrained. . . . When you read these passages, you will not be like one that has been infected with the evil, but like one that comes out of the dissecting-room and is much wiser than before he entered; he is in no wise enamored of putrefaction. There is a description of sin (as you will find it in the poems of Byron) which is seductive and corruptive, but the Biblical painting of sin warns and saves." (See *Lehre und Wehre*, 1882, p. 226; Weseloh, *Das Buch des Herrn und seine Feinde*, p. 121.) "Mayor Gaynor of New York said before a conference of Lutheran ministers that, when on a certain occasion he had put a Bible into the library of a city, a friend wrote him that he could not understand how Mayor Gaynor would put a book in a public library which he himself would not be willing to read from cover to cover in his family circle. The mayor said that the argumentation of the writer did not impress him at all; for, while it was true that the Bible speaks of shocking crimes, it never treats them as the present-day salacious literature deals with such matters, but always refers to sin and wrong-doing in such a way that a person is warned." (See *Luth. School Journal*, 1936, p. 106.)

sinner. All of us need to take these stories to heart. The pride of Israel needed to be laid low.²⁰⁴ Our nation would do well to study the reason for the extermination of the Canaanites. "What are we to make of the conduct of David in the matter of Bathsheba and Uriah?" asks the Dean of Wells. This: we are to make much of the fearful power of Satan over our sinful flesh, much of the fierceness of God's wrath in punishing sin, and very much of the grace of Jesus which forgives us our sins and crimes. "May these psalms" [and the story of David, etc.] "work in us what God designed them to achieve — teach us the heinousness of all sin and wickedness and the stern reality of God's righteous anger toward all who remain in sin, so that we may flee for refuge to the Savior, Jesus Christ, in whose wounds alone are to be found righteousness, life, and salvation." (*Proc., New South Wales.*) And here are the moderns declaring that these sections of Holy Scripture were not fit to be inspired, not fit to be read! Christian ethics would suffer thereby! These moderns do not know the first thing about Christian morals. Christian morality springs from the sense of the heinousness of sin and of the wondrous grace that saves from sin.

In the third place, some of the moderns stoop to unethical manipulations of the facts. F. Baumgaertel misrepresents the situation when he writes: "Den Propheten Elisa hoehnen spielende Kinder; sie haben ihre kindliche Ungezogenheit mit dem Tode zu buessen, 2 Koen. 2:23." Moeller calls that "eine Einschmuggelung in den Text" (*op. cit.*, p. 11). Anything goes if it serves to vilify the prophets and Scripture and Verbal Inspiration.²⁰⁵ — Verbal Inspiration, says Cadman, would make God responsible for "slavery, polygamy, incest, needless wars, cruel massacres." Note the sinister lumping together of what God commanded, what He tolerated, and what He absolutely prohibited. Incest is mentioned in the same breath with slavery and the extermination of the

204) Robert Haldane: "The pride of the Jews, who vaunted their descent from Abraham and even imagined that God had chosen them as His covenant people because of the high virtues of their forefathers, could not have been humbled in a more effective way than by reminding them of the sins of the patriarchs. The sins of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Judah are set down to warn Israel not to seek salvation through the works of the Law." (*The Verbal Inspiration of the Old and New Testaments Maintained and Established.* German edition, p. 197.)

205) "The unconverted man loves objections as the condemned man at court is glad to detect a flaw in the argument which is directed against him, though the flaw may not at all affect his guilt or the real conclusiveness of the testimony. A man disposed to skepticism opens the Word, if at all, not to find moral beauty, but to hunt for something on which to hang a new objection." (A. T. Pierson, *Many Infallible Proofs*, p. 179.) We had discrepancy-hunters, and here we have immorality-hunters. We are not judging individuals. But we want the man who is set on finding ethical blemishes in the Bible to ask himself what his motive is.

Canaanites. One would expect Dr. Cadman to differentiate between these things and tell his readers that the Bible nowhere sanctions incest, lest they get the idea that God, who did order these wars, took a tolerant view of the horrible crime of incest. And what about polygamy and slavery? The objectors like to harp on these subjects as constituting a flagrant case of moral obliquity. Ingersoll: "I have no love for any God who believes in polygamy. . . . I call upon Robert Collyer to state whether he believes that God was a polygamist. . . . God believed in the infamy of slavery." Now, God did not institute polygamy; he permitted it but never sanctioned it. See Gen. 2:24. "From the beginning it was not so," Matt. 19:8. Nor did God institute slavery. He tolerated it, for good and sufficient reasons (study statecraft!), provided for the humane treatment of slaves (see, for instance, Ex. 21:26 f.; 21:2; Lev. 25:39 ff.) and their Christian treatment (see, for instance, Col. 4:1; the Epistle to Philemon). Do not slander God and Holy Scripture! — R. F. Horton asked: "How comes it that the crimes recorded in the book are not more emphatically condemned if the writing comes in any sense from God?" That comes near being an outright falsehood. Did God use soft words in condemning the adultery and murder David committed? Or does Horton really mean to say that because Moses did not conclude Gen. 38 with the statement "These people committed a horrible crime," the moral sense of Moses was dulled? — Professor Baumgaertel: "Der angebliche Befehl Gottes zur Ausrottung der Kanaaniter ist ein misslungener Versuch einer Rechtfertigung fuer die grausame Landeseroberung." (See *Allg. Ev.-Luth. Kztg.*, No. 45, 1926, on this charge of Baumgaertel.) Can Baumgaertel and associates prove that God's command to exterminate the Canaanites, as recorded in the Bible, was a fiction, invented for the purpose of clothing the "crime" with divine authority? If not, they are guilty of the infamous slander of charging the holy writers with fraud, hypocrisy, and blasphemy. These things are not ethical.²⁰⁶⁾

206) In the spirit of Baumgaertel Prof. W. M. Forrest writes: "The account in Samuel says God tempted David to make a census of the people. That was before Jewish theology had invented the devil. When Chronicles was written centuries later, the inspired writer had no such notion of a verbally inerrant Bible as the Fundamentalists have. Hence he boldly changed the record and said Satan did the tempting. But in either case and in many others showing God cruel and vindictive we have a picture of God so alien to Christ's teaching that it is unfair to hold it as a part of Christian faith." (*Do Fundamentalists Play Fair?* p. 77.) — Some do not go so far as Baumgaertel and Forrest, will not charge the holy writers with wilful fraud. Marcus Dods explains and excuses the alleged moral blemishes in the Old Testament with the theory of the "progressive revelation." He says: "The best men among the Jews misunderstood God." (*Op. cit.*, p. 88.) Fosdick has the same explanation: "The Old Testament [the ninth chapter of Esther, the 137th

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Not all the items in the black list before us are due to a defective moral sense. Some are the product of ignorance and defective reasoning. We offer a few samples.

Ex. 11:2: "Let every man borrow of his neighbor," etc. Accordingly "the Israelites stole in the name of God" (Baumgaertel), "defrauded" their neighbors (Marcion). This charge springs from ignorance of the Hebrew language. **לָקַח** does not mean borrow, but *petere*, as in Luther's translation: "fordern," and in the R. V.: "Let them ask," and in Moffatt's translation: "ask," and in Gore's *Commentary*: "demand," and in Kretzmann's *Popular Commentary*: "demand." Did the Lord have the right to demand and take from the Egyptians whatsoever He pleased? (See *Lehre und Wehre*, 1908, p. 308; *Proc., Minn. and Dak. Dist.*, 1898, p. 34.)²⁰⁷

"A mind disposed to hunt for something on which to hang a new objection" is, says A. T. Pierson, glad to come upon 2 Sam. 12:31. "This has been violently assailed as a proof of the cruelty of David — the man after God's own heart, who nevertheless took the people of Rabbah and sawed them in twain or drew them over iron harrows or clove them with axes or roasted them in brick-kilns. But *what if it refers only to the work at which he set them?*"

Psalm] exhibits many attitudes indulged in by men and ascribed to God which represent early stages in a great development. . . ." (Op. cit., p. 27.) James Orr had men like Dods and Fosdick in mind when he wrote: "The writers of the Bible, it is said, attributed to Jehovah their own defective, semibarbarous conceptions." (Op. cit., p. 104.) Dods and Fosdick do not make the vile insinuations of Baumgaertel. They look on Moses and David as honest men. But they involve themselves in a difficulty of another kind. They represent God as being not quite honest. On their theory God permitted David to think that he was speaking the mind of God ("The Spirit of the Lord spake by me," 2 Sam. 23:2) when he wrote his imprecatory psalms; God took no steps to keep the writers of the Bible from attributing to Him their own semibarbarous conceptions; it was according to God's plan ["progressive revelation"] that men had in the initial stages false ideas of God; David thought that God was a semibarbarous Being because God planned it that way.

207) G. L. Raymond has a typically modern explanation of this "fraudulent" transaction. It does away with Verbal Inspiration, naturally, but clears God of fraud. He wants the passage interpreted in a *literary* sense, meaning that the words "The Lord said unto Moses" "need not be interpreted literally." God did not really say: "Let every man borrow," but Moses *thought* that the Lord meant that. "For this reason, when we come to consider the discrepancy indicated between what we conceive to be the character of God and the advice to do evil that good may come, we may conclude that these passages, interpreted in a *literary and not a literal sense*, mean no more than that Moses was inspirationally impressed with the conception that he should lead the people out of Egypt and obtain funds for the purpose in the best way he could, in which circumstances the natural promptings of a descendant of Jacob as well as of an enslaved race impelled him into advising the subterfuge of the false pretense of borrowing." (*The Psychology of Inspiration*, p. 139 ff.) In the same way Horton gets rid of the moral blemish presented by the imprecatory psalms.

(Angus' *Bible Hand Book*.)" M. Henry condemns this as a sinful act of cruelty. Be it so—it has as little to do with inspiration as the other sinful acts of David. R. Jamieson calls it "an act of retributive justice." Gore's *Commentary*, however, has: "Read as R. V., margin. The theory that the passage refers to various forms of torture is not supported either by the language or by the construction of the Hebrew." Moffatt: "He also brought away the townsfolk, whom he set to work with saws and iron picks and iron axes and made them labor at brick-making." Our old *Weimarische Bibelwerk* suggests a similar translation: "Er hiess das Volk bringen auf Saegemuehlen und in die Eisenbergwerke. . . ." Be sure that you know the exact translation of this passage—a *crux interpretum*—before you tell the world that you have bagged one more ethical blemish.

H. L. Willett's contention that "Paul's advice to Timothy about taking a little wine" proves that "the Bible cannot be taken as inerrant in all its parts, is not an authority to us on all the questions with which it deals," reveals the prohibitionists' misapprehension of the teaching of the Moral Law on this question. See Pieper, *Christ. Dog.*, I, p. 305, on 1 Tim. 5:23.

Jesus broke the Law, illegally deprived the owners of the swine of their property, says Prof. Huxley; and He had no right to kill His neighbor's fig-tree. The higher critics Willett and *The Luth. Church Quart.* exculpate Jesus by denying that He ever did these things. Both Huxley and the moderns are ignorant of the simple truth of natural and revealed religion which declares that the Lord is the absolute Owner of the earth and of man's possessions. They virtually deprive the Lord of the right of eminent domain. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof," Ps. 24:1. Luther: "Why did Jesus permit the devils to enter swine which belonged to other people? Answer: Christ is Lord of all, and there is nothing that does not belong to Him; the pigs, too, were His." (VII: p. 44.)²⁰⁸

208) Gladstone: "I find the answer to it in the reasonable and (as it seems to me) almost necessary supposition that the possession of the swine was unlawful and therefore was justly punishable by the ensuing loss. . . . The punishment inflicted upon the owners did not constitute a breach but rather a vindication of the Law; as a law would be vindicated if casks of smuggled spirits were caught and broken open after landing and their contents wasted on the ground." (*Op. cit.*, pp. 300, 303.) Lenski gives the same answer: "Swine were an illegal possession for Jews." Luther is willing to consider it: "*Vielleicht konnte auch Christum das Gesetz Mosis dazu bewegen haben, und er mag sie darum als Veraechter des Gesetzes gestraft haben.*" (*Loc. cit.*) But the answer given Ps. 24:1 is sufficient and all-conclusive.—The solution offered by the higher critics would, if accepted, deprive us of what is infinitely more precious than all earthly possessions—of the trustworthiness of Scripture.

O. Bensow (*Die Bibel — Das Wort Gottes*) on the authorship of the imprecatory psalms: "Die menschlichen Gedanken sind gegen die goettlichen Gedanken zu scharf hervorgetreten." We cannot conceive of a more grotesque concept of Inspiration than this. The Holy Ghost set out to utter His thoughts through David; but off and on the carnal feelings of David interfered, and the thoughts of the Holy Ghost could not get full expression. David should not have said: "My tongue is the pen of a ready writer," Ps. 45:2. According to the moderns he should have confessed: I bungled my psalms.

The moderns imagine that they are giving Verbal Inspiration the death-blow when they bring up the fact that the holy writers were sinful men. This argument, however, is the result of defective reasoning and of the failure to realize the profoundest truth of the Christian religion. The moderns point to the dissimulation practiced by Peter at Antioch, the doubting of Moses, the crimes of David. "David," they say, "was a wicked man," unfit to be God's mouthpiece and "incapable of writing these praises (in the Psalms) to the God of righteousness" (*Fundamentals*, II, p. 63). Note, first, the defective reasoning. It is based on the false premise that inspiration means sinlessness or, more precisely, that, if the holy writers were absolutely inerrant in their teaching and writing, they must also have been perfect in their lives. How will you prove that? Scripture does not say it. What St. Paul wrote in Rom. 7 concerning his great sinfulness did not keep him from saying that he spoke and wrote the words of the Holy Ghost. Nor does reason tell us that God can reveal His will only through sinless angels.²⁰⁹ But how can God make sinners His mouthpieces? Learn the basic truth of Christianity! Will you set a limit to the infinite grace of God? Surely Peter and David were not worthy to be chosen by God to be His spokesmen, His mouthpieces. David was amazed at this mark of divine favor. The adulterer and murderer, made "the sweet psalmist of Israel," exults: "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His Word was in my tongue." "My tongue is the pen of a ready writer," 2 Sam. 23:1, 2; Ps. 45:1. And how he loved to sing the praises of the God of grace! "Thou art fairer than the children of men; grace is poured into Thy lips," Ps. 45:2. Do you abhor the thought that God received back into His favor the murdering adulterer? Then why should you abhor the thought that God could use David's tongue to utter forth His wondrous

209) "Christ Himself distinguishes between the doctrine of the apostles and their life. We are bound to what they taught, not to what they did. They were not moved by the Holy Ghost in all that they did, but when they spoke, they were moved by Him. This objection thus confesses things which Christ strictly dissociates." (*Proc., Syn. Conf.*, 1886, p. 63.)

grace? Moreover, the sinner who has been pardoned is best fitted, psychologically, to become the mouthpiece of the God of grace. Do not criticize the wisdom of God's choice! Briefly, "whoever says that the Spirit of God cannot convert again the fallen Christian and cannot produce noble thoughts in him, knows nothing either of Christian theology or of psychology." (*Lehre und Wehre*, 1913, p. 216.) This objection is so preposterous that the *Neue Luth. Kztg*, No. 10, 1901, dismisses it in one sentence: "Weil Petrus einen sittlichen Irrtum begangen habe, koenne er nicht von intellektuellen Irrtuemern frei gewesen sein: das ist eine sehr voreilige Schlussfolgerung. Doch das sei fuer diesmal genug."

Dr. Pieper: "None of us, even though he were a doctor in all four faculties, can deny the inspiration of Holy Scripture without suffering an impairment of his natural mental powers. . . . All opposition to the divine truth, and that includes the opposition to the *satisfactio vicaria* and to the inspiration of Scripture (verbal inspiration), is, as can be clearly shown, irrational." (*Op. cit.*, I, pp. 280, 614.)

(To be continued)

TH. ENGELDER

Leading Thoughts on Eschatology in the Epistles to the Thessalonians

In the autumn of 52 A. D. or somewhat earlier, while on his second great missionary journey, Paul, accompanied by Silas, paid his first visit to Thessalonica. Acts 17.

Being favorably situated on the Aegean Sea, Thessalonica was at that time the largest city of the Balkan Peninsula and one of the most important cities of the Roman Empire, vying with Rome and Alexandria for commercial supremacy. The population of Thessalonica must have exceeded 100,000. Many Jews lived there. It was just the place for Paul to undertake extensive missionary activity.

Paul remained in Thessalonica at least three weeks. But in that short time he gathered a large congregation. The nucleus included a limited number of Jews but a large number of Greeks, many of whom had attended the synagog previously. Among the latter were not a few women of considerable means.

Paul's early departure from Thessalonica was not of his own choosing. The majority of the unbelieving Jews stirred up the populace against the missionaries to such an extent as to make it necessary for them to remain in seclusion. When Paul and Silas could not be found, their host Jason and several other newly converted Christians were brought before the civil author-