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

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

(Concluded)

This is, and must be, the burden of our concluding remarks: Let us "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3); let us faithfully guard the precious doctrine of Verbal Inspiration.

We shall earnestly contend for it if we realize, in the first place, how much is at stake. We must realize what the Church would lose if she surrendered Verbal Inspiration. We would lose our Bible. The battle for Verbal Inspiration is not a mock battle played by children. It is not some unseemly brawl among squabbling theologians — *Theologengezaenk*. No; the Church is engaged in a life-or-death struggle. It is a battle for her most precious possession. The battle for Verbal Inspiration is a battle for the Bible.

Inspiration makes the Bible what it is — God's Word. If what the moderns have been telling us is true, namely, that half of the Bible contains human errors and that the other half, the good half, is brought to us in words of men's own choosing, then the Bible is nothing but a human book — the word of man, unreliable, at bottom useless. "As Walther pointed out in his first pronouncement in *Lehre und Wehre*, 1855, p. 248, the denial of the inspiration of Scripture is destructive of the very *ratio formalis Scripturae*; it takes away that which makes Scripture what it is; for Scripture is the Word of God because of its being inspired of God." (Walther and the Church, p. 12.) If we would retain our Bible, we cannot surrender Verbal Inspiration. "With the Biblical doctrine of the inspiration of Holy Scripture stand or fall the certainty, truth, and divine character of Scripture itself and of the entire Christian religion." (Walther, *Lutherstunde*.)

In very truth, the moderns are asking us to scrap our old Bible and let them give us a new Bible, one of their own making. The new Bible of the liberals is written in Fosdick's modern thought forms; the Jefferson Bible is already on the market. The new Bible of the "positive" group would eliminate the erroneous, unethical, and trivial sections which their first three objections specify. And their last three objections make short work of the rest of the Bible. The words in which the saving truth is revealed are not inspired; for that would imply a mechanical inspiration. And you must not bind men to the words; for that would be atomistic and legalistic.

They have taken away the old Bible, and their new Bible contains nothing sure and definite. They tell us that only the

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concepts, not the words, of the old Bible are inspired. Who will be able to read their new Bible, which will contain not words, but concepts?—Their theologians have not yet been able to tell us exactly what the *Schriftganze* is.—They have not set down, in exact terms, what the "Word of God" says and in how far it agrees with the "Christian consciousness."

The moderns have scrapped the old Bible. It was not enough that they presented the Bible to the people as a tissue of truth and error, so that poor souls were filled with suspicion of the entire Bible and cried out: "We can no longer read it!" They had to go on and directly emasculate the true portions, causing the poor Christian to read the Gospel truths with doubt and lament: If John 3:16 is not in itself the Word of God, of what use is it to me?

The old Christian Bible, as the moderns offer it to the Church, presents a sorry appearance—mangled, mutilated, invalidated. Not a single passage and line is permitted to stand exactly as God wrote it. "Behold your Bible!" says the old evil Foe.

R. H. Malden, Dean of Wells, calls attention, in the opening paragraph of his book *The Inspiration of the Bible*, to William Chillingworth's statement "The Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants" and declares: "Any form of religion which cuts itself loose from the Bible will very soon cease to be Christian, even if it should masquerade in Christian costume." Malden does not believe in Verbal Inspiration. He does not hesitate to cut out of the Bible the Imprecatory Psalms. He characterizes the story of Creation and of the Fall as fairy tales, etc. And this is his definition of Inspiration: "When we call the Bible inspired, we mean (or at least I mean) that it is of unique and permanent religious value." (P. 4.) Question: Does not a religious body which refuses to accept the Bible as the very Word of God, accepting it only as a valuable religious treatise, cut itself loose from the Bible, with all that this, according to Malden's own statement, involves?

Dr. H. C. Alleman wrote an article for *The Lutheran*, Dec. 4, 1940, on "Let There Be No Bible Blackout" and declared: "There is one subject on which Lutherans of all shades of confessional interpretation agree." But when Dr. Alleman insists that the Bible contains errors and contradictions (*Luth. Church Quart.*, 1940, p. 356), ridicules after the manner of D. F. Strauss the account of Jesus' riding on the ass, declares that "the pure Scriptures must be separated from their dregs and filth" (see *The Lutheran*, Jan. 14, 1937), and warns against making the Bible "a legal code," he is inducing a Bible blackout. He is creating distrust of the Bible.

John W. Haley's book *An Examination of the Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* makes fine reading. It examines 571 doc-

trinal, ethical, and historical discrepancies, and disposes of them, generally in a very acceptable manner. It shows, for instance, that Strauss's ridicule about "Christ riding upon both animals, the ass and the colt," is not justified by the text.³²³ And now mark the tragedy of this: Haley makes the fatal concession that the sacred writers were "not infallible in all respects," "were not supernaturally guarded against trifling inaccuracies in the detail of unimportant circumstances (Whately)," were not "supernaturally informed on matters of natural history, history, etc., but were left to the guidance of their natural faculties (Alford)." Worse than this, he distinctly disclaims *verbal* inspiration, even in the *religious* teaching of the Bible. "Inspiration deals primarily with *ideas* rather than with *words*. It suggests ideas to the mind of the writer, allowing him, generally, to clothe them in his own language." (Pp. 6, 157.) Here he takes common ground with Dr. Alleman and the rest of the concept-theory men. Recall statements like these: "Inspiration does not apply to the words, but only to the substance." (G. L. Raymond.) "We are thrown back on the inner content of the revelation instead of its literary expression." (H. W. Robinson.) "For every essential issue there is divine truth at hand; that its *verbal expression is of human origin* can be frankly recognized" (*The Lutheran*, June 21, 1928), or, as J. A. W. Haas puts it: "Men were never saved by a Bible that was mechanically perfect in its verblivity." This teaching blacks out the Bible. Fallible men made the choice of the words dealing with the saving truth, and "we do not know," says L. A. Weigle, "whether the words of the Bible given us are true or accurate." And Seeberg assured us that "there can be no doubt that the Biblical authors could certainly draw conclusions intrinsically false from inspired truth." See how completely this theory of the moderns destroys the trustworthiness of our Bible even in its religious statements! Statements made by fallible men! And there is no way to tell "what is of the *form* of revelation and what is of the *substance*. It may be that an infallibly exact criterion has not been given us." (E. Lewis.) "No one knows," declares Grau, "how much is divine, how much human." No one knows how much of John 3:16 is absolutely reliable; the *words* are not absolutely reliable. The Bible is com-

323) Haley is not a discrepancy-hunter. On the contrary, he takes the discrepancy-hunters severely to task. "Moreover, I may be allowed to say that, the more thoroughly I have investigated the subject, the more clearly have I seen the flimsy and disingenuous character of the objections alleged by infidels. . . . One can scarcely read the pronouncements of these three (Strauss, Colenso, and Theodore Parker) and some others of their school without the conviction that the animus of these writers is often felicitously expressed by the old Latin motto, slightly modified: 'I will either find a discrepancy, or I will make one. *Aut inveniam discrepantiam, aut faciam.*'" (P. X, 25.)

pletely blacked out!—What a disreputable thing our Bible has become! It is, according to the moderns, an indistinguishable compound of truth and error, as far as secular matters are concerned. And as far as religious truth is concerned, it is the same indistinguishable mixture of the divine and the human. “Those who reject the Church doctrine of inspiration in favor of some lowered form have never been able to agree among themselves as to which parts of the Bible are inspired and which are not or to *what extent any part is inspired.*” (L. Boettner, *The Inspiration of the Scriptures*, p. 82.) Such a Bible cannot serve us. “In short, if we should doubt the verbal inspiration of the Bible, namely, that the very words of Holy Scripture are God-breathed, the Bible would certainly be useless to us; for in that case we should certainly be assailed by doubts as to whether or not the human writers had really used the correct terms in setting forth the holy and sublime subject matter.” (Pieper, *What Is Christianity?* P. 235.)

Put it this way: How much of the Bible is inspired? How much of it is worth keeping? The liberals say, Nothing is inspired. And the conservatives say, Nothing is inspired. These conservatives will tell us that, while they follow the liberals in rejecting many portions of the Bible as noninspired, they hold, in opposition to the liberals, that the religious portions are inspired. We must tell them that they do not in reality teach even that. “Nein, die Neueren leugnen im Grunde auch die Inspiration jener ‘ewigen Heilsgedanken.’” (Stoeckhardt, *Lehre und Wehre*, 1886, p. 313.) Our Bible, as it happens, is made up of words. Take the words away, and no Bible is left; but our moderns stoutly maintain that these words—including the Gospel words—are not inspired. “The Word,” says J. A. W. Haas, “is not built up out of inspired words.” (*Luth. Church Quart.*, 1937, p. 279.) If you want to get the “Word,” which is, they say, the real heart of Scripture, you must not look for words. The moderns ought in all fairness no longer confuse the Church by using the term “inspiration of the Bible.” The Bible, which consists of words, is *not inspired* if the words are not inspired. James Orr, not at all a verbal-inspirationist, understands the matter perfectly and declares: “If there is inspiration at all, it must penetrate words as well as thought, must mold the expression.” (*Revelation and Inspiration*, p. 209.) The verbal-inspirationist Dr. J. A. Dell, too, cannot understand why the moderns persist in keeping the term “inspiration” in their vocabulary. “The readers of this magazine (*Journal of Theol. of the A. L. Conf.*) will remember that I have shivered more than one lance in defense of the term ‘verbal inspiration,’ holding that, if the words are not inspired, the Bible is not inspired.” He then

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goes on to show what meaning the moderns attach to their "inspiration" and that such an "inspired" Bible is useless.³²⁴ The moderns ought to tell us openly what they are attacking. The attack on verbal inspiration, as Spurgeon once put it, is only the verbal form of the attack on inspiration itself.

The issue on which the battle for Verbal Inspiration is being fought is this: Shall we retain our old Bible or make us a new Bible? In those territories which the moderns have conquered men are practically writing new Bibles. "Every man is excogitating his own Bible." (Spurgeon.)³²⁵ Moffat has just told us what process they apply.

They are asking us to give up our verbally inspired Bible and accept one which is to the half a human product. Do we realize what deadly woe the old evil Foe means? Walther realized it. "Beware, I say, of this 'divine-human Scripture.' It is a devil's mask; for at last it manufactures such a Bible after which I certainly would not care to be a Bible Christian, namely, that the Bible should henceforth be no more than any other good book, a book which I should have to read with constant sharp discrimination in order not to be led into error. . . . In a word, it is unspeakable what the devil seeks by this 'divine-human Scripture.'" (*Lehre und Wehre*, 1886, p. 76.)

Luther realized it. "If this be the attitude of Rome" [if this be

324) "What, then, does Dr. Moffatt, who calls the 'theory of verbal inspiration' a caricature, believe concerning this written record? He says: 'We may say that, as God's self-revelation enters into history and experience to carry out His purpose and to realize His will, preeminently through the life of Christ on earth, the Word cannot be confined to its immediate and original audience. These recipients attest it, but they do not exhaust its significance. In their testimony lies a historical guarantee of its characteristic qualities. But also through them the revelation is transmitted, it is communicated afresh to successive generations, and Scripture, or the written Word, is a vital factor in the process. The point with me is, Is it a reliable factor in the process of transmitting God's self-revelation to successive generations? Can I today rely on its statements (conveyed in words) as true? If it is a patchwork of the opinions of uninspired men, I could have little confidence in it.'" (See CONC. THEOL. MONTHLY, XII, p. 304.)

325) Let us hear the whole passage from Spurgeon. It covers other sections, too, of this article. "To Luther Scripture was the last court of appeal. If any had convinced Luther of error out of that Book, he would gladly have retracted; but that was not their plan; they simply said, 'He is a heretic: condemn him or make him retract.' To this he never yielded for an instant. Alas, in this age numbers of men are setting up their own inspired writers. I have been told that every man who is his own lawyer has a fool for his client; and I am inclined to think that, when any man sets up to be his own Savior and his own revelation, much the same thing occurs. That conceited idea is in the air at present—every man is excogitating his own Bible. Not so Luther. He loved the sacred Book! He fought by its help. It was his battle-ax and his weapon of war. A text of Scripture fired his soul; but the words of tradition he rejected."

the attitude of the moderns], "then blessed be the land of Greece, blessed be the land of Bohemia, blessed be all those who have separated themselves and gone out from this Babylon. . . . As matters now stand, faith has been extinguished in her midst, the Gospel proscribed, Christ banished, and the morals are worse than barbarian. Still there remained one hope: the inviolable authority of Holy Scripture remained; men had at least the right view of the Bible, though not the right understanding of its sense. But now Satan is capturing this, too, the stronghold of Zion and the tower of David, unconquered up till now." (XVIII:425 f.)

The Church is in deadly peril. Let us repeat that in this form: she is facing the *loss of all Christian theology*. The Christian doctrine is based on the authority and trustworthiness of the Bible, and when the authority of the Bible is undermined, the Christian doctrine cannot stand.

Or put it this way: the principles on which the anti-inspirationists operate, the principle that science and the "Christian consciousness" have a voice in the interpretation of Scripture, that the words do not count because that would involve a "mechanical" inspiration and would lead to an atomistic and legalistic-literalistic use of Scripture, these principles lead, wherever they are consistently applied, to the nullification of all Christian doctrines. In the words of Dr. Pieper: "The result is that modern theology has lost the divine truth. It has renounced Holy Scripture as the infallible truth and the sole authority and has corrupted all the chief articles of the Christian doctrine, taking the very heart out of them." (*Proc., Del. Synod, 1899, p. 34.*)³²⁶⁾

The termites are boring into the inside of the sills on which the house rests and devouring their structure. If they are not destroyed, the edifice of the Christian doctrine will fall.

We have already, more than once, dealt with this matter. Now we would emphasize one particular point: the denial of Verbal Inspiration does away with the *certainty of doctrine*. Where the modern have substituted doctrines of their own making for the Biblical doctrines, they cannot, of course, speak with assurance. But even where they have retained some or many of the Christian doctrines, the divine assurance of their absolute truth is lacking. In the words of Dr. Pieper: "All who refuse to 'identify' Scripture and the Word of God, that is, all who deny the inspiration of

³²⁶⁾ In the Introduction to Graebner's *The Problem of Lutheran Union* Dr. J. H. C. Fritz writes: "Recently, in one of its official publications, the *Lutheran Church Quarterly*, issue of January, 1935, the United Lutheran Church resented the very idea of doctrinal purity, and by denying the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures it removes on its part the very foundation for it."

Scripture, practically make the entire Christian doctrine, the very center of it, too, uncertain." (*Lehre und Wehre*, 1928, p. 369.)

For these men do not believe that a doctrine is certain and absolutely true simply because Scripture teaches it. We believe that. Scripture, being the Word of God, given by inspiration, is the "sure Word," 2 Pet. 1:19. That guarantees the certitude of its teachings and gives us divine assurance. "*Homo est certus passive, sicut Verbum Dei est certum active.*" (Luther.) But the moderns, denying that the Scripture is the Word of God, cannot but deny, and do deny, that it is a sure word. They cannot, and do not want to, treat its statements as conclusive and infallible.

And will their substitute Bible supply the certitude of doctrine? The moderns base what they have retained of the Christian doctrine not on the words of Scripture but on the *Schriftganze*, on the "Word of God" hidden in Scripture. They base their doctrine on what their "Christian consciousness" has discovered to be this "Word of God." He who bases his teaching on "the infallibility of the letter of Scripture," says Ladd, finds himself "in the most insecure of all positions." It takes the "Christian consciousness, the spiritually illumined Christian reason and conscience, to discern the Word." (*What Is the Bible?* Pp. 453, 456, 468.) "Final authority," says the *Lutheran Church Quarterly*, 1935, p. 263 f., "is found in the final analysis within the soul. . . . Here the teacher of religion finds his authority. His message is an unceasing "Thus saith the Lord," and he speaks with confidence, not because he quotes a scripture, but because the word of God has found him." So, then, all that the moderns offer as the guarantee of the truth of their doctrine is the testimony of their reason, their experience, their feeling. Back of their "Thus saith the Lord" is the "Thus saith a fallible man."

The theology of the anti-inspirationists is from beginning to end a theology of uncertainty and doubt. It is throughout guesswork. They do not *know* how much of the Bible is of the substance of revelation and how much is the human forms. *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (rather liberal) states: "Als die Behauptung, dass alle Woerter der Heiligen Schrift eingegeben seien (Verbalinspiration) im 18. Jahrhundert zusammengebrochen war, war zwar der Glaube an die Sachinspiration geblieben, aber man wusste nicht sicher zu sagen, um welche Sache oder Sachen es sich handle." (P. 297.) The moderns have to guess at that. And when they have agreed that a certain passage must have a divine substance, Grau and Lewis tell us that there is no way of finding out how much of, say, John 3:16 belongs to the form (fallible human words) and what constitutes substance, the divine concept. You must guess at that.

More than that, the moderns cheerfully admit that their guess is probably wrong. What makes the guess is, according to their theology, the "Christian consciousness"; that finds the real Word of God in Scripture, tests the doctrinal statements of Scripture, formulates the Christian doctrine. But—this Christian consciousness changes with each generation. Their prophet Schleiermacher says so.³²⁷ H. F. Rall speaks in the same strain: "Leaders tried to establish authoritative forms . . . of belief which should remain unchanged; but the Church itself never remained exactly the same in any two generations. . . . Christianity has been a religion of freedom and change and advance. . . . We do not stop with Christ, but He gives us the line of advance." (*A Faith for Today*, pp. 38, 50.) There are doctrines, too, we are told, concerning which the Christian consciousness has not yet come to a definite conclusion. "Die Kirche hat noch nicht gesprochen." "There are certain doctrines in which the Church has not made a final pronouncement" (*The Lutheran Companion*, March 30, 1939); and it will never make a final pronouncement on these doctrines or on any of the doctrines, for the Christian consciousness, the framer of the Christian doctrines, is forever changing its mind. Do not expect the moderns to give you a definite, fixed, stable system of doctrine. They cannot say: "This is the real Word of God," and: "*Hoc verbum Dei manet in aeternum.*" A man trained in the school of Schleiermacher, Hofmann, and Ladd speaks in this wise: What I tell you about sin and grace may be wrong; another generation may give us a better system of truth.³²⁸)

327) "Dr. Patton, in his new book *Fundamental Christianity*, thus characterizes Schleiermacher's position: 'According to Schleiermacher, the New Testament is the record of the Christian consciousness of the apostolic age; but the Christian consciousness of a later age may be different, and in so far as it may differ, it has a right to supersede the record of the Christian consciousness of the early Church. The outcome of this principle would be that, the Christian consciousness being in a state of constant flux, no one can predict what the consciousness of the next age will affirm, and therefore no one can put much confidence in what the Christian consciousness of the present age affirms.' (*Theol. Mthly.*, VI, p. 373.)

328) Let us add a note on the stupendous folly of this modern principle: the doctrine changes in line with the changing Christian consciousness. Its basic thought is that everything human is subject to change and that, since it is human to err, the change is desirable.—To be sure, anything of human contrivance is in need of improvement. We have no fault to find with Thomas Jefferson's principle that the constitution of a free people should provide within itself an opportunity for each generation to revise it completely. It is a fine thing when the civic and political consciousness of a people rises to higher levels. But we certainly find fault with Schleiermacher's application of this principle to the field of doctrine. Our doctrinal Constitution was not framed by fallible men but by the infallible Lord. Again, the school of Schleiermacher (the moderns) forget that there is something about man that

The theology of the moderns is uncertain, unstable, undecided, and they are proud of this fact. They tell us that this is the ideal situation. R. Sockman: "Man", says Middleton Murray, 'cannot accept certainties; he must discover them.' . . . When we start on the search for religious certainty and authority, we must realize that we travel in the realm of values and cannot, therefore, demonstrate absolute proof. . . . To be 'dead certain' would be deadly." (*Recoveries in Religion*, p. 36 f.) G. A. Buttrick: "Meanwhile we should frankly admit the bankruptcy of 'literal infallibility' and, under guidance of the facts, set out on the long hard quest for truth." (See *CONC. THEOL. MONTHLY*, XII, p. 223.) J. S. Whale repeats "Lessing's profound remark: 'If God held in His right hand all truth and in His left only the ever-active impulse to search for truth, even with the condition that I must always make mistakes, and said to me, "Choose!" I should humbly bow before His left hand and say, "Father, give me this. Pure truth belongs to Thee alone."'" (*The Chr. Answer to Prayer*, p. 49.) Says the *Watchman-Examiner*: "We have come upon the blessed day of the 'open mind,' which means that we have no convictions any more, but opinions only, that is, that we hold our faith so lightly that we can easily let go of it and take hold of some other notion if the wind of popular favor changes; we are 'blown about by every wind of doctrine,' as the uncompromising apostle says." Do not ask the anti-inspirationists for a fixed system of truth.

What role would the Church play in the world if the moderns had their way? No longer "the pillar and ground of truth" (1 Tim. 3:15), proclaiming clearly and loudly the eternal truth committed to her, she would be turned into a debating society which discusses important questions but never reaches a conclusion. Listen to the wrangling, jangling voices! Should the deity of Christ be taught? Yes, says the affirmative side, Paul taught it. No, say the Anomoeans; Paul was there speaking only as a man. Is man justified by faith alone? Paul taught it, indeed, but the Christian consciousness of a later, the papistic, generation found that idea intolerable, and it won by a majority vote. The moderns are pleased that the issue is not yet settled. Luther thought he had the right idea, but the Christian consciousness of the present generation wants the works drawn in again and is finding wide support. No issue can be settled in this debating society. It is no

does not change. His sinful nature and the great need resulting therefrom do not change. If in some future generation man's sinful nature should change for the better, we should need an improved system of doctrine. Again, the "Christian consciousness" that changes and then changes the Christian doctrine, is not a Christian consciousness. Finally, it is the Christian doctrine which forms the Christian consciousness, not *vice versa*.

use to quote Scripture on any doctrine. The dissenter has the right, in this debating society, to veto it with the magic formula: Legalistic! Literalism!

The church of the moderns plays a sorry role in the affairs of men. It has lost the voice of authority. It has lost its power. Its preachers are unable to say: *Haec dixit Dominus*. In the old Church no one was permitted to preach who was not sure of his doctrine, sure of its being God's doctrine. "Think of Luther's words in *Wider Hans Worst*" [St. L. ed., XVII:1343] "in which he says that a preacher should 'declare boldly with St. Paul and all the apostles and prophets: "*Haec dixit Dominus*, God Himself hath said this." And again: 'In this sermon I have been an apostle and prophet of Jesus Christ. Here it is not necessary, not even good, to ask for the forgiveness of sins. For it is God's Word, not mine, and so there can be no reason for His forgiving me; He can only confirm and praise what I have preached, saying: "Thou hast taught correctly, for I have spoken through thee, and the Word is mine." Anyone who cannot say this of his own preaching should stop, for he must surely be lying and blaspheming God when he preaches.'" (H. Sasse, *Here We Stand*, p. 161.) In the new Church such assurance is taboo. Men are horrified when a man ascends the pulpit of this church and cries out: "I place over against all sentences of the fathers, men, angels, devils . . . solely the Word of the eternal majesty, the Gospel. . . . That is God's Word, not ours. Here I stand, here I stay, here I make my boast, here I triumph, here I defy the papists, the Thomists, the Heinziests, Sophists, and all the gates of hell. God's Word is above all, the divine majesty is on my side." (Luther, XIX:337.) Luther would not be permitted to teach in the seminary of the new Church. Luther who said: "A theologian and preacher must not say: 'Lord, forgive me if I have taught what is wrong'; but of everything that he teaches in public and writes he must be sure that it is God's Word." (XXII:1507.) The seminary authorities would tell him: No man can be sure how much of Scripture is God's Word.

This new Church has lost the voice of authority, has lost its power. For "how is it possible for a preacher to be a power for God whose source of authority is his own reason and convictions" (*Fundamentals* III, p. 111), his Christian consciousness, his guess at what the Bible means? Dr. Clarence E. Macartney refuses to have any dealings with this debating society. "When Luther said: 'Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise. So help me God,' he was taking his stand upon the Scriptures. But *where does the Protestant Church today stand as to the Scriptures? Does it stand anywhere?* And when the authority of the Scriptures is gone, all that we have is a vague 'I think so.' Human wisdom and specula-

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tion is a poor substitute for a "Thus saith the Lord." "Those who have departed from faith in an infallible Bible have made desperate, but utterly vain efforts to secure a suitable substitute and other standing ground. . . . No one can preach with the power and influence of him who draws a sword bathed in heaven and who goes into the pulpit with a "Thus saith the Lord." (See *Conc. THEOL. MTHLY.*, V, p. 398; VIII, p. 395. L. Boettner, *op. cit.*, p. 81.)

Those who attend divine services in the new Church planned by the moderns are badly served. In his parable of the soldiers casting lots Luther quotes Eph. 4:14 and remarks: "Κύβητα [sleight] is originally dice-playing and here means just this, that they use the words of God like dice, find no certainty in them, but make them serve all manner of varying opinions. . . . For what other effect can these wavering opinions and uncertain teachings have than that they toss us who are children to and fro, carry us hither and yon, force and drive us whither they will?" (IV:1310.)

The poor people sing: "*Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier, Dich und dein Wort anzuhoeren*"; we would hear the Word of Jesus! They are told by the preacher: The word of Jesus is hidden somewhere in Scripture, but the Christian consciousness of our theologians has not yet discovered the exact wording of it; wait till the Church has spoken.

The people ask: How much of what you are preaching is the absolute truth? The preachers tell them: Some of our preaching is not exactly the truth,³²⁹⁾ and the truths we do preach are more or less guesswork.

The Church would suffer a mortal hurt if Verbal Inspiration were lost. Why, there are men who deny Verbal Inspiration but still feel compelled to warn against accepting low views of inspiration. J. W. Haley advocates the concept theory and the partial-inspiration theory. "There is no need to ask whether everything

329) *Prophecy's Light on Today*, by C. G. Trumbull, p. 95: "A devoted Christian woman, who was a teacher in the Sunday school of a well-known church, went to her pastor one day to talk with him about doctrinal matters. She explained to him, inasmuch as she was very old-fashioned in her beliefs and was teaching the children in the Primary Department that the Bible was just what it claims to be, she wondered whether her pastor would really want to have her continue her work there or give it up. He assured her that he wished her to stay right on in her Sunday-school work there, saying: 'Most assuredly I do. I believe in teaching little children the Bible stories just as they are and, when they are older, teach them the truth.'" We heard the statement of a prominent Lutheran theologian: "Pupils may later discard the scientific import of the story." We heard the statement of *Christendom*: "The account of the Creation in Genesis, . . . the Christmas story of the Incarnation, . . . the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, . . . are still scrupulously retained, lovingly cherished, but considered as poetic expressions of some profounder or larger truth than that which their formulators realized." (I, p. 492.)

contained in the writings of the apostles was immediately suggested by the Spirit or not. . . . For these things were not of a religious nature, and no inspiration was necessary concerning them." And now mark his words: "We will simply add that the view of inspiration exhibited in the foregoing extracts, while it very well meets certain exigencies of the case, seems nevertheless peculiarly liable to be misunderstood and abused. *There is ever far greater danger to be apprehended from a lax than from a strict theory of inspiration.*" (Op. cit., p. 158. — Our italics.) And E. Grubb (extreme liberal) gives this cold-blooded diagnosis of the case: "Nor can we find in the Bible, any more than in the Church, a final and infallible standard of truth or duty. The Bible . . . is not infallible." And now: "The new view does not, it may be urged, give the same certainty as the old." And Grubb is pleased to have it so. He continues: "But, if the old is becoming incredible, what then? May we not be meant to understand that the desire for infallibility is itself unhealthy?" (*The Bible, Its Nature and Inspiration*, p. 239 f.)

Edwin Lewis wants certainty of doctrine. "Give us a sure word! this is the cry which we daily hear. . . . Tell us, is there nowhere one word which stands above all other words, no truth of rocklike quality, which nothing can move? . . . Tell us, must we always flounder, must we always be experimenters, must we always build up only to tear down?" And he destroys all certainty of the Christian doctrine when he declares: "Without a doubt our fathers came very close to Bibliolatry; they could make no distinction between the Word of God and the words of men by which that Word was given." (*The Faith We Declare*, pp. 49, 188.)

Georgia Harkness declares: "There is nothing a Christian minister wants more than to be able to say the right things and to say them with authority." And how shall he find the truth? By applying the methods of liberal theology? No; for "liberal theology, by moving so far in the direction of capitulation to the scientific method, almost lost its soul." By relying on the statements of the Bible? No; for "the belief in the literal inspiration of the Bible" is "a great pitfall." How shall we, then, arrive at the truth and obtain certainty? Mark the tragedy of the answer given: "There is no neat formula." "There is nothing a Christian minister wants more than to be able to say the right things and to say them with authority. How shall we do it? There is no neat formula." (*The Faith by Which the Church Lives*, pp. 46, 57, 142.) — A theology which refuses to base its teachings on the word of Scripture has lost its soul, its power, its authority, its convictions.

Do we realize how much is at stake? At the Washington Debate the spokesman of the American Lutheran Church told the

spokesman of the U. L. C.: "If behind Inspiration is placed a question mark, then all Christian doctrine is questionable." (See CONC. THEOL. MONTHLY., IX, p. 363.)

Do we realize how much Satan is interested in this matter? Dr. Bente writes in *Lehre und Wehre*, 1902, p. 130: "Today Satan is striking not so much at individual doctrines but rather at the foundation of all doctrines, at Scripture itself. . . . By yielding up the inspiration and infallibility of Scripture the Church would abandon every Christian doctrine to the whim and caprice of men. Nothing could give Satan and the enemies of the Church greater pleasure than to find that here in the Lutheran Church of America, too, as in that of Germany, this truth is being questioned or denied. It may at first sight seem an unwarranted statement, but it is actually so: the denial of the doctrine of inspiration overthrows the Christian theology. The Christian doctrines may indeed still stand for a time; but the entire theological edifice is undermined and hollowed out if it is no longer borne by the inspired, infallible word of Scripture. . . . If the theologian gives up the inspiration of Scripture, the old mighty *γέγραται* has lost its force and value for him. If the Bible is no longer the infallible Word of God but a human fallible record of the things of which it treats, the *loci classici* and *dicta probantia* are no longer of any avail. A veritable deluge of all manner of skeptical questions concerning the origin and content of Scripture is unloosed, which cannot be checked and controlled."

Have we the full sense of the grave peril confronting the Church? Here is the plain truth: the denial of Verbal Inspiration is *destructive of Christianity*. It involves the loss of the Bible; this carries with it the loss of the Christian doctrine; and all of that means the destruction of the Christian religion.

The Christian Church stands or falls with Verbal Inspiration. That was Dr. Walther's judgment. "Walther not only espoused, with sincere conviction, the doctrine of inspiration as the old Church maintained it, but also characterized the relinquishment of this doctrine as virtual apostasy from Christianity." (Pieper in *Lehre und Wehre*, 1888, p. 193. See also *L. u. W.*, 1911, p. 152.) We had his statement above: "With the Biblical doctrine of the inspiration of Holy Scripture stand or fall the certainty, truth, and divine character of Scripture itself and of the entire Christian religion." The Church would commit suicide if she renounced Verbal Inspiration.

The Christian religion, objectively considered, the teachings of Christianity, cannot be maintained where Verbal Inspiration is abandoned. We have just finished discussing that point.

Nor can Christianity, subjectively considered, the Christian

faith, the faith of the believer, stand where Verbal Inspiration falls. Let us now discuss this phase of it. We say that, when men deny that Scripture is verbally inspired, is the very Word of God, they are removing the foundation on which saving faith rests. "The denial of the inspiration of Scripture has these results: (1) We give up the knowledge of the Christian truth. . . . (2) *We relinquish faith in the Christian sense*, since the Christian faith can exist only *vis-à-vis* the Word of God. . . ." (Pieper, *Chr. Dog.*, I, p. 369.) That is one of the elementary truths of Christian theology. In the days of the old rationalism Woltersdorf gave expression to it in the lines:

Wenn dein Wort nicht mehr soll gelten,
Worauf soll der Glaube ruhn?
Mir ist's nicht um tausend Welten,
Sondern um dein Wort zu tun.

In the present day of the new rationalism *Signs of the Times* (March 26, 1940) gives expression to it in these words: "With the poet we say,

O Lord and Master of us all,
Whate'er our name or sign,
We own Thy sway, we hear Thy call,
We test our lives by Thine.

But *how can we hear His call* unless we believe in the inspiration of His message through the Bible? We must conclude that, if we discard the Bible, we deny Christianity." Faith rests on the inspired Scriptures.

On the verbally inspired Scriptures—that is another elementary truth of Christian theology. Rather, it is the same truth. Unless Scripture is verbally inspired, it is not inspired at all. And only because it is verbally inspired, is it the firm foundation of faith. The old rationalists presented the Bible as a purely human book. And Woltersdorf asked: Can faith rest on a human book? The moderns present the Bible as partly divine, partly human. And we ask, Can faith rest on declarations and doctrines which come to us in fallible human words? Ponder the words President C. C. Hein spoke at Copenhagen: "To the Lutheran Church the Bible as a whole as well as in all its parts is the pure and infallible Word of God, for the reason that the Holy Spirit has inspired it. The Lutheran Church does not distinguish between Scripture and the Word of God. . . . When we no longer hold fast the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture, . . . the very foundation of our faith will have been undermined. Instead of being built upon something objectively certain, *viz.*, the eternal truth of God's Word, faith will be based upon something subjectively uncertain and liable to change, such as experience or ecclesiastical group consciousness. Yes, 'what shall be my faith's foundation when Thy Word no more avails?' (Woltersdorf.)" (*The Second Lutheran World Convention*, p. 75. — See also *CONC. THEOL. MTHLY.*, XIII, p. 609.)

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Faith rests on the Word, *on the certain Word*. There can be no faith, *no assurance of faith*, if, as the moderns will have it, no man can know with certainty how much of John 3:16 and 1 John 2:1, 2, etc., belongs to the substance, to God's truth, and how much belongs to the form, man's fallible record of it. But "faith" which remains in doubt is not the Christian faith. In his parable of the soldiers casting lots Luther calls attention to this fact. "Faith, if it be not real assurance, is not faith at all." IV:1309.)³³⁰ Faith, indeed, always struggles with doubt; but if it be nothing but doubt, it is not faith at all. And the "faith" produced by the modern view of Scripture is, in its very essence, uncertainty and doubt. The modern view of Scripture is most certainly destructive of the Christian faith. In the words of B. B. Warfield: "The trustworthiness of the Scriptures lies at the foundation of trust in the Christian system of doctrine, and is therefore *fundamental to the Christian hope and life*. *The validity of the Christian's hope in the several promises of the Gospel rests on the trustworthiness of the Bible*. . . . Such a Word of God Christ and His apostles offer us when they give us the Scriptures, not as man's report to us of what God says, but as the very Word of God itself, spoken by God Himself through human lips and pens." (*Revelation and Inspiration*, pp. 66, 71.)

President J. W. Behnken in the tract *Come, See!* p. 13: "If the Bible is not the dependable, inerrant Word of God, do you realize that we would have no solid foundation for our faith? Oh, what a blessed assurance to know that our Redeemer 'without if or and' taught that the Bible is God's Word. . . . He said to His Father: 'Thy Word is truth' (not Thy Word *contains* truth)."

Examine once again the statement of G. Wehrung and the many similar ones quoted above: "Faith refuses to make a legalistic use of individual passages or of the entire Scripture. . . . We must apply this touchstone to every word of Scripture: Does it give expression to the Gospel as Gospel, the pure and clear Gospel?" E. Schaeder: "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." But if the words are not reliable as they stand, if the unreliable "religious self-consciousness" must find what is reliable, "faith" never reaches assurance. The faith grown by the moderns is not the Christian faith.

The faith grown by the moderns, relying upon an indefinite, unreliable Scripture, cannot stand in the day of spiritual affliction.

330) Luther is speaking of the Romish theology, but his words fit modern theology exactly. "What a dreadful picture! Not only is the voice of the Gospel silenced, but also the letter of it is made doubtful. . . . And these are the men whom all the world acclaims as the best teachers just because they teach that everything is uncertain, while we know that faith, if it be not real assurance, is not faith at all."

Recall Walther's words: "When he is facing death and reaches out for some verse of Scripture to uphold him, Satan will whisper to him: Who knows whether that particular passage is God's Word? It may belong in the erroneous section of the Bible. You cannot rely on it; you cannot die on it." Again: "It is not a small matter when a poor man is lying on his deathbed, seeks comfort in a passage of Scripture and Satan assaults him with the question: Yea, how do you know that God said that? May not the writer have misunderstood the Holy Spirit?" (*Proc. Iowa Dist.*, 1891, pp. 27, 61. *Lehre und Wehre*, 1911, p. 155.)

Is it, then, impossible for one who denies Verbal Inspiration to have the true Christian saving faith? God can bring such a one to faith and keep him in it. God performs miracles. By God's grace such a one clings to Scripture in spite of the *dictum* of his mind that Scripture is unreliable. Such a one, denying Verbal Inspiration, believes in it and practices it—he accepts Scripture as it stands as God's Word. But that is not the result of the teaching of the moderns. The denial of Verbal Inspiration can result, in and by itself, only in killing the assurance of faith, that is, killing faith itself. We repeat, in the solemn words of Stoeckhardt: "The teaching that the Bible is not the very Word of God robs the Christian of all comfort and all assurance. One who holds that the Bible is a book which has a divine and a human side, may easily, in the day of distress, in the hour of death, sink into despair. When he looks to, say, John 3:16, Satan may challenge him: Where is your guarantee that this word is not one of the human ingredients of Scripture, that God's love for the whole world of sinners is not merely a pious wish and self-delusion? But we believe that 'all Scripture is given by inspiration of God'; we can, by the grace of God, make the right use of the 'It is written'; with this weapon we can repel Satan, fell him with one little word." (*Proc. Central Dist.*, 1894, p. 21.)

Does the denial of Verbal Inspiration touch the heart of Christianity? Rudelbach declares: "Der Begriff der Eingebung der Heiligen Schrift gehoert mit zu den Wurzeln der Kirche und ist mit den Herznerven derselben verflochten." (*Zeitsch. f. die ges. luth. Theologie u. Kirche*, 1841, viertes Q. H., p. 1.) The moderns are uprooting the Christian doctrine and the Christian's faith.

The churches are today wandering about in the desert of uncertainty. J. H. Leckie declares in his *Authority in Religion*: "Religion without certainty is religion without strength." (P. 64.) Now Leckie is doing all that he can do to destroy the Christian's trust in the reliability of the Bible. "It is certainly true that the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy and plenary inspiration, in the old sense, is among the things that have been and the powers that are

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dead." (P. 50.) In its place he and his confreres are offering the Church this substitute: "The ideal organ of authority in religion must be found in the soul of man, in that secret place of its life where the voice of God is heard, . . . in the 'religious consciousness.'" (Pp. 76, 81.) What is the result? Let Leckie himself tell us: "There is much confusion and a great unrest. Some are preaching the Gospel in exactly the old forms and assuring themselves that the old dogmatic foundations remain; . . . others are striving to make the general sense of the Scriptures the ultimate rule of faith; and others are still crying, 'Back to the historic Christ!' while many are going on in the way of their fathers, keeping to the ancient paths, but haunted by a constant doubt that the basis of belief is gone. Perhaps this state of uncertainty, of varied and doubtful answers, is a necessity of the time. It may be that the Church must even wander a while in the desert: it may be that the word of reconciliation cannot be spoken till the thought and research of this age have performed their perfect work, till the uses of its labors are done. . . ." (P. 54.) — And when that distant day arrives, if the Christians should agree to accept the "religious consciousness" as the organ of authority, all of them would verily be wandering in the desert, chasing after a will-o'-the-whisp.

J. W. Haley writes: "A celebrated infidel is said to have exclaimed in his last moments, 'I am about to take a leap in the dark.' Cast the Bible aside, and every man at death takes a leap in the dark." (*Op. cit.*, p. 52.) Haley takes the rationalists severely to task. But mark the tragedy! If his own theory is correct, if only the concepts, and not the words, are inspired, the Christian at death must take a 'leap in the dark.'"

Edwin Lewis writes: "If the Christian preacher has reached the conclusion that the Bible is nothing at all but a collection of ancient literature of varying degrees of excellence, of what use is it to talk of the Bible as the bearer to men of the Word of God; of what use is it to seek to find in its pages a truth which is authoritative for the whole of life; of what use is it for him to expound one of its great passages, he harboring in his own mind all the time the suspicion that the passage represents only one more human guess, and creating in the mind of his hearer a similar suspicion?" (*Op. cit.*, p. 191.) But when Dr. Lewis tells his hearers that they must distinguish between the Word of God and the words of men by which that Word was given (see above), and that "the claim of revelation has been released from the burden of much unnecessary baggage, the stranglehold of this verbalism has been broken" (*A Philosophy of the Chr. Rel.*, p. 35), he cannot but create in their minds the suspicion that John 3:16 is not altogether trustworthy; the words are mere human words, guesses at what the real Word of God might be.

In his book *Faith Under Fire*, which contains his talks to men in the various Civilian Defense services in England, Michael Coleman says: "People are asking questions about God. What do they want to know? 'Know' is the important word: men and women long to 'know,' not merely that belief in a God is probable and reasonable, but to 'know' God Himself." (P. 8.) And now mark what he tells these poor people on page 48: "So many people imagine that the Bible being the word of God means that God, as it were, wrote it Himself, or held the pen of the human writers. The real truth surely is that God continually revealed and man continually attempted to understand, and sometimes only half understood, the truth that was there. So in the Bible we shall expect to find not only God's truth, which is always eternally true, but also man's sometimes erring ways of expressing truth." Can "faith" which is based on such a book stand under fire?

Are they making sport of the anxious inquirer, of the distressed Christian? "Gute Gewissen schreien nach der Wahrheit, . . . und denselben ist der Tod nicht so bitter, als bitter ihnen ist, wo sie etwa in einem Stuecke zweifeln. There are many good men to whom this doubt is more bitter than death." (Apology, *Conc. Trigl.*, p. 290 f.) The Christian cries out: My faith will die unless it find assurance in a sure word; and these men tell him: It is your faith, your Christian consciousness, which must make the word of Scripture sure.

And what are they making of God? Is He, too, making sport of the distressed Christians? He gives them His Word for their stay and anchor and when they would cling to it, does He tell them that these words may have a different meaning from that which the holy writers put into them, that they must not make an atomistic and legalistic use of these passages?

"O furor et amentia his saeculis digna!" (Luther, XIX:620.) Luther was stirred to holy wrath and indignation by this fact: "Zuletzt, so sie gestossen sind mit der Schrift, dass sie nicht voreber koennen, heben sie an und laestern Gott und sprechen: Sind doch St. Matthaeus, Paulus, Petrus auch Menschen gewesen, darum ihre Lehre auch Menschenlehre. . . . Der Apostel Rede ist ungewiss." (*Loc. cit.*) What would Luther have said of the present *saeculum*, in which the great majority of the Protestant theologians proclaim that half of the Bible is untrue and that what is true is couched in uncertain language? Let Stoeckhardt say it. "Of a truth, modern theology with its modern theory of inspiration is nothing but a deception of Satan, by means of which the Christians are led away from the sure, prophetic word, from the true Christ, from the true, living God, and cast into doubt, unbelief, damnation. May God protect us against such Satanic snares and keep us in the simplicity of faith." (*Lehre und Wehre*, 1893, p. 333.)

The Church is indeed engaged in a life-or-death struggle. "Let us not deceive ourselves," says Machen, "the Bible is at the foundation of the Church. Undermine that foundation, and the Church will fall. It will fall, and great will be the fall of it." (*Princeton Theol. Review*, 1915, p. 351.)

Mark the solemn words of Spurgeon: "The turning point of the battle between those who hold 'the faith once delivered to the saints' and their opponents, lies in the true and real inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. This is the Thermopylae of Christendom. If we have in the Word of God no infallible standard of truth, we are at sea without a compass, and no danger from rough weather without can be equal to this loss within. 'If the foundation be removed, what can the righteous do?' And this is a foundation loss of the worst kind." (See J. Horsch, *Modern Religious Liberalism*, p. 31.) The old evil Foe means deadly woe.

The war is on. *Are we*, in the second place, *prepared for the conflict?* They are not prepared who fail to realize that the age-long battle of the Church for her life is today being fought on the question of inspiration. On this front the enemy is concentrating his forces. He is still attacking the deity of Christ and other fundamental doctrines, but at present he seems to be chiefly concerned about getting the Church to discard Verbal Inspiration. "Die gegenwaertig am meisten bekaempfte und gehasste Lehre ist ohne Zweifel die Lehre von der Verbalinspiration." (*Lehre und Wehre*, 1910, p. 89.) This doctrine has always been attacked. The Anomoeans did not like it. Paine and the old rationalists hated it. But at no time has such a concerted and determined effort been made to remove it as in our generation. Here is where the Church must marshal her forces.

Do we realize that the enemy hates and abominates Verbal Inspiration and is sparing no efforts to get the Church to renounce and discard it? The moderns are convinced that Verbal Inspiration is a wicked and a harmful doctrine, and they are determined to drive the "foul spook" out of the Church. They are very tolerant with regard to other doctrines. Their principle is that men must be permitted to teach what they please; but they will not tolerate the teaching of Verbal Inspiration. Here tolerance ceases to be a virtue. Against this doctrine they have declared war to the death. They feel that they are engaged in a holy crusade. "Now, like the knights at the lists of Ashby," shouts J. P. Smyth, "we have to ride openly at each of the tents and strike with ringing blows and with sharp end of the spear the shield of each foe with whom we mean to do battle, for the sake of the Bible and our disquieted brethren." They mean to do battle with the foe who teaches "that an inspired Bible must be absolutely infallible in every detail."

(*How God Inspired the Bible*, p 56 f.) They are exulting over the great conquests they have already made in their holy war — “the claim of revelation has been released from the burden of much unnecessary baggage, the stranglehold of this verbalism has been broken” (E. Lewis) — and go forth to silence the few who still teach Verbal Inspiration. They are filled with indignation and horror that men would still retain “the old theory against the monitions of conscience. . . . The fall of the theory of verbal inspiration is an event of first rate importance. But in ecclesiastical practice men often involuntarily talk as if Verbal Inspiration still held its ground” (Seeberg, *op. cit.*, p. 2, 62). There are the Fundamentalists. They must be driven out. G. Harkness: “The battle against Fundamentalism, against the belief in the literal inspiration of the Bible, is not yet won. Like the poor, literalism is always with us.” (*Op. cit.*, p. 57.) There are the Lutherans in America who must be won over. W. Gussmann: “The day of Verbal Inspiration has passed, and we shall have to tell our American brethren: We cannot turn the course of history backwards.” (*Luth. Zeitblatt*, Jan., 1924.) There are the old-fashioned laymen. They must be rescued. B. Steffen: “While in point of fact Verbal Inspiration has long ago been overthrown by Biblical science, our laymen are tenaciously clinging to it. That is an intolerable situation, which cannot continue.” (*Zentralinspiration*, p. 1.) The moderns are straining every effort to drive out the last defenders of Verbal Inspiration. They are getting ready to deal Verbal Inspiration its deathblow. In fact, “in the report of the Anglican Commission so-called Fundamentalism receives its *coup de grace*.” (*The Living Church*, March 9, 1938.) The moderns have sworn not to rest till that has been accomplished. They are writing books and pamphlets on this subject, and it seems that they cannot write on any subject without coming back to this one subject. They are ridiculing Verbal Inspiration in the seminaries. They are denouncing it from the pulpits. They are attacking it not only in the *Christian Century* and the *Lutheran Church Quarterly*, but also in the *Ladies' Home Journal*, and laymen are joining them in that. — And shall we go on in our easy way, calmly ignoring the ceaseless activity of the foe? Do we feel that long articles on inspiration in our periodicals constitute useless baggage? Are we asking the preacher to discuss more important subjects in the pulpit?

Again, we must know — and be ready to defend — the exact point of attack. That is the inspiration of *the words*. The moderns are very willing to let us teach that the Bible is inspired and is a good book, a holy book. But they will not have us teach that the words of Scripture were chosen by the Holy Spirit and express the thought as perfectly and infallibly as only God can express it.

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They tell us plainly that we must not "make the words of Scripture coextensive and identical with the words of God." Thus Archdeacon Farrar.³³¹ They know exactly what we teach: "The theory of 'verbal inspiration' maintains that the entire corpus of Scripture consists of writings every word of which was directly 'dictated' by the Deity." Thus C.H. Dodd. (*The Authority of the Bible*, p. 35.) And that is exactly what they denounce. "Der Gedanke der Inspiration von Worten muss aufgegeben werden." Thus F. Buechsel. (*Die Offenbarung Gottes*, p. 115) — Let us not waste our time by defending what nobody attacks. The moderns are willing to let us retain any kind of vague inspiration, if it only be not Verbal Inspiration. The strategical point in the battle for the Bible lies here: Is Scripture absolutely infallible? Are the words of Scripture the identical words of God? And were Paul and Christ mistaken in teaching Verbal Inspiration?

We must know what the moderns are fighting for. They know exactly what they want. This is their ultimatum: Give up Verbal Inspiration and confess that the Bible is full of errors; there can be no peace between us until you let science in its various forms rule over the Bible. See *The Problem of Lutheran Union*, page 118: The *Magazin fuer Ev. Theologie und Kirche* of the former Evangelical Synod discusses Verbal Inspiration and quotes a sentence from Dr. Pfotenhauer's address delivered at the dedication of Concordia Seminary. Its comment is: "The Church will either have to say with President Pfotenhauer: 'We hold fast to the doctrine of verbal inspiration' or it will have to say: 'We acknowledge the need of the historical, critical method.' This method is used in our seminary, and we rejoice in it, since that sponsored by Pfotenhauer today is absolutely untenable." Peace will be declared on the day that the Christians declare that the Bible is not absolutely trustworthy.

Furthermore, we need to know where the enemy is to be found. Singapore fell because its guns pointed only one way. The Church is fighting for its life, for Verbal Inspiration, against infidels like Ingersoll and Darrow and against the modernists. But there are also, as has been shown above, many among the "positive," the conservative theologians, who attack Verbal Inspiration just

331) Farrar makes this demand even though he admits that Paul taught just that. "Paul shared, doubtless, in the views of the later Jewish schools — the Tanaim and Amoraim — on the nature of inspiration — . . . views which made the words of Scripture coextensive and identical with the words of God." But Paul was mistaken! (See Warfield, *op. cit.*, p. 175.) Hermann Schultz declared that Christ, too, was mistaken on this point. See footnote 265. We are here calling attention to this particular matter in order to show to what lengths the moderns will go in their warfare against Verbal Inspiration.

as vehemently as the modernists. They have gotten much of their ammunition from the pronounced foes of Christianity. Why, there are even Lutheran theologians who are out to storm this stronghold of Christianity, Verbal Inspiration. *The Theological Forum* (Norw. Luth. Church) wrote in 1934, p. 187: "One of the gravest dangers that are threatening the Christian Church today is that many who profess to be its members no longer accept the Bible as God's inspired Word. Even among Lutherans strange sounds are sometimes heard regarding this subject. 'There are some Lutheran theologians who find it rather difficult to declare unequivocally their exact position on the doctrine of the verbal inspiration of the Bible. To some of these it seems an unpleasant task to make their position clear.'" Yes, and some have unequivocally declared their exact position. Dr. H. A. Preuss knows who they are. He wrote in the *Lutheran Herald* of Feb. 20, 1935: "Let us awake from our peaceful, smug satisfaction as we tell the world that the Lutheran Church is free from the disease of modernism. . . . Here is a call to arms to the forces of truth against errors, of Lutheran Bible Christians against Lutheran modernists. . . . Then, by the grace of God, the Lutheran brothers in Christ, of whatever nationality and whatever synod, will find themselves fighting shoulder to shoulder for truth against error, for an infallible Bible against a human book, for a divine Christ against a mere human Christ." There is a great host of Lutheran theologians who are asking the Church to substitute for an infallible Bible a human, or a partly human book.—We would be remiss in our duty as keepers of the stronghold if we permitted the fact that these conservatives, these Lutherans, do not make common cause with the modernists on every doctrine to blind our eyes to the fact that they are making common cause with these same modernists on the vital doctrine of inspiration. Their work is just as deadly, if not more so.

One more point: we of the Lutheran Church must take our place in the front ranks. There are parties in the Reformed Church, the Fundamentalists and others, who are fighting valiantly for Verbal Inspiration. They are doing this in spite of the fact that in many instances they have departed from the formal principle of the Reformation, the sole authority of Scripture. And shall we lag behind them? do less than they? God expects us to do more than they. The Lutheran Church has shaped its entire *corpus doctrinae* by the formal principle of the Reformation. Lutheranism lives and moves and has its being in God's Word and its sure message of salvation. It is instinctive in Lutheranism to give instant battle to him who infringes on the authority and trustworthiness of Holy Scripture. Understanding fully the *sola*

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Scriptura, the Lutheran Church is best equipped to lead in the holy war. God has placed a sacred responsibility upon Lutheranism today. Listen to these burning words: "Should Lutheranism ever relinquish the truth of the inspiration and inerrancy of the Scriptures, by that very act it would surrender the formal principle of the Reformation; for the very essence of that principle is the infallibility of the Scriptures. Then it would cease to be Lutheranism; and Luther's declaration 'The Word of God they shall let stand' would be mere mockery upon our lips, because we should have surrendered our heritage and *our divinely wrought distinctive character*. Oh, that we Lutheran Christians might be conscious not only of this, but also of the high and holy responsibility which God has placed upon Lutheranism today! In this age of unbelief, superstition, error, syncretism, and unionism, of sects and fanatics, may Lutheranism, standing as an immovable rock at the Christian world's very heart through faithful witness-bearing, preserve to the Christian world its own precious Reformation heritage, the Word of God, the whole Word of God, and nothing but the Word of God—the *infallible Word* of God as the only source of faith and the infallible standard for teachers and their teaching." (President Hein at Copenhagen; *loc. cit.*) Lutheranism must lead in the battle for Verbal Inspiration.

Many Lutherans have gone over to the enemy. Let those, then, that remain do *double duty*. Our glorious Lutheran Church must not be let down.

We need to acquaint ourselves in the third place, *with the tactics of the enemy*. Wars are lost when the skill and power of the foe are underrated. "Deep guile and great might are his dread arms in fight." What tactics does he employ in his fight against Verbal Inspiration?

1. He insists that Scripture does not teach Verbal Inspiration. The first attack—the assertion that Scripture does not teach inspiration of any kind—fails in many cases. So a second maneuver is employed: Scripture certainly teaches inspiration, but not Verbal Inspiration. "The Bible itself does not make any claim to infallible authority for all its parts." (C. H. Dodd, *op. cit.*, p.14.) It is "an amazing statement that the Scriptures themselves teach that 'every word' contained in them is inspired by the Holy Ghost." (*The Lutheran World*; see *Lehre und Wehre*, 1904, p. 39.) "There is no assertion in Scripture that their writers were kept 'from error.'" (*Auburn Affirmation*.) How can Scripture teach Verbal Inspiration, they say, since the Bible contains thousands of errors? And this teaching would involve a mechanical inspiration and lead to atomistic and legalistic abuses of Scripture! The moderns would beguile the Christians with the thought that Verbal Inspira-

tion is an unscriptural, an anti-Scriptural teaching and that, when they cast it to the moles and bats, they have Scriptural warrant for doing it.

This guileful attack on Verbal Inspiration is today usually put into this form: Verbal Inspiration is a mere human theory, without basis in Scripture, and must not be foisted on the Church; Scripture teaches the fact of inspiration, but does not define its extent; Verbal Inspiration is a theological or dogmatical deduction, not a dogma of Scripture but a theory invented by men. The moderns employ this maneuver on every possible occasion. They never tire of telling the Christians: you must accept the fact of inspiration but need not accept the theory of Verbal Inspiration.³³² The result

332) For instance, the commissioners of the U.L.C. declared at Baltimore: "The disagreement [on the doctrine of verbal inspiration] relates to a matter of theological interpretation." (See *The Lutheran*, Oct. 5, 1938.) The Augsburg Sunday School Teacher finds that inspiration is taught in 2 Tim. 3:16, 17, but that the teaching of Verbal Inspiration is "perhaps" due "to an extremist exegesis" of this passage. Is Verbal Inspiration a fact or a theory? A.D. Mattson (Augustana Synod) writes in the *Journal of Theol., Am. Luth. Conf.*, 1941, p. 546 f.: "Theologians sometimes fail to make an adequate distinction between a fact and their theory about that fact. . . . The Christians must recognize that the Bible is inspired by the Spirit of God. That is a fact. However, many theories have been advanced as to how God inspired the Bible. . . . All theories of inspiration within the Lutheran Church are the theories of individuals, some more or less adequate. . . . Facts remain, but theories may be transitional." Referring to Verbal Inspiration ("the enslaving legalism of the letter"). W. H. Greever (U.L.C.) writes in *The Lutheran World Almanac* for 1937, p. 94: "The Scriptures declare the fact of inspiration, . . . but make no explanation concerning the issues involved in the 'theories' of form and degree which furnish the material for present-day controversies on the subject. The particular theories which men hold on this subject are, at the most, but deductions from the Scriptures, which, however rational and logical, cannot be demanded, legitimately, as articles of faith." H.W. Snyder (U.L.C.) declared at the Washington Debate, Nov. 1, 1937: "Some of our theologians, on the other hand, accuse the Synodical Conference of lending its weight to the verbal-inspiration theory. . . . There seems to be no question about there being an inspiration, but the manner and extent of it are a matter of dispute." (See *Journal of the Am. Luth. Conf.*, 1938, March issue; *Conc. Theol. Mthly.*, 1938, p. 357 ff.) *The Lutheran*, Feb. 20, 1936: "The Lutheran Church has never formulated a theory of inspiration, it has merely stated its fact." *The Luth. Companion*, Dec. 16, 1933: "Does Dr. Lenski mean to imply that the fact of inspiration (which Lutherans accept) must be identified with the theory of verbal inspiration (a theory which is by no means unanimously accepted by consistent Lutherans)? The Lutheran Church has no official theory of inspiration." That applies, they further state, to the Church in general. C. Gore: "The Church never showed any disposition to define the scope of inspiration. There is no authoritative dogma about inspiration. There is to be found neither in the Bible nor in the words of the Church any authoritative definition of inspiration. If we are now unwilling to say that the Bible is the Word of God," etc. (*The Doctrine of the Infallible Book*, pp. 47, 62.) — The reader will notice that when the moderns speak of "the form and degree," of "the extent" they mean Verbal Inspiration. The reader will also notice that, when they throw these two terms: "manner and extent" together, they are practising sophistry. Scripture does not reveal the

"manner" of inspiration; it does not tell us "how God inspired the Bible." That was a miracle. Why do they couple these two terms, "manner" and "extent"? Note, finally, that Scripture teaches the fact of inspiration and the fact of Verbal Inspiration. Since Scripture says that all Scripture is given by inspiration, it teaches that all the words are inspired. Scripture does teach "how God inspired the Bible"—in this way that the Holy Spirit spoke the very words of Scripture.—The reader may have time to read and study the following declaration on this matter. J. O. Lang writes in the *Pastor's Monthly* of May, 1935: "We boldly assert that we accept no 'theory' of verbal inspiration, but rather the 'fact' of verbal inspiration. When we speak of a theory of verbal inspiration, we speak of something which may not be true, and we are endeavoring to explain just how it took place, and the 'how' the Church has never attempted to describe because the Bible does not describe it. Inspiration belongs to the sphere of the miraculous. However, when we state our doctrine of verbal inspiration, we are stating the fact which the Scriptures present, namely, that God so directed and controlled the holy writers that they wrote what He wanted them to write and the form in which He wanted it written. This is no 'theory.'" Samuel Miller's letter to Dr. J. A. Dell, published in the *Journal of the A. L. Conf.*, July, 1939, p. 10, states: "I want to thank you for your answer to an article entitled 'Some Thoughts on Inspiration' by Hjalmar W. Johnson. It seems strange that people cannot understand that the term 'verbal inspiration' designates the doctrine of the inspiration of the Bible and does not stand for a theory of the mode. I cannot help but wonder if they are ignorant of the meaning of the term or if they are willfully confusing the issue. Surely the Bible plainly states, and the Lutheran Confessions take it for granted, that the words by which God's revelation has been recorded were inspired by the Holy Spirit. It surely is a very subtle way of attack that those of us who hold to the doctrine of verbal inspiration shall now be called 'un-Lutheran.' . . ." Dr. J. A. Dell writes in the *Journal of the A. L. Conf.*, Sept., 1938, p. 2: "In the *Lutheran* of June 8 the subject 'Growing Unity' was discussed on the young people's page. There it was said: 'The differences that keep American Lutherans from complete unification are more on the surface than real. All agree that the Scriptures are inspired. But some insist that some certain method of inspiration should be accepted, while others, as in the United Lutheran Church, declare that the fact of inspiration must be accepted while the method may be a matter of opinion.' . . . Concerning the method none of us knows anything, and therefore concerning the method there can be no argument among us at all. . . . If there is so much agreement among us, what is all the argument about? All the argument is about the fact of inspiration, and there is none at all about the method. The difference among us is, that while we all say 'The Scriptures are inspired,' we do not all seem to mean the same thing. For some seem to wish to reserve to themselves the right to reject some of the Scriptures or some portion of some of the Scriptures as uninspired and unreliable. You can see that this denies the fact of inspiration as concerns those rejected portions, and has nothing to do with method. . . ." *CONC. THEOL. MTHLY.*, 1939, p. 64 f., reprinted this and added the following: "The commissioners of the U. L. C. reported at Baltimore that 'the commissioners of the A. L. C. supported what is titled the 'Verbal Theory of Inspiration.' . . . The U. L. C. commissioners were 'unable to accept the statement of the Missouri Synod that the Scriptures are the infallible truth "also in those parts which treat of historical, geographical, and other secular matters." . . . Then the U. L. C. convention declared: 'We believe that the whole body of the Scriptures is inspired by God.' . . . And that means that the distinction between the fact of inspiration and the 'theory' of inspiration (verbal, plenary inspiration, absolute infallibility of Scripture being a mere theory) is a clumsy form of sophistry. It deals with an 'inspiration' which is not real inspiration."

of this insidious procedure is that men will say with J. P. Smyth: "The Bible itself nowhere directs us what we are to believe about inspiration. Indeed, the Bible says very little of its inspiration at all beyond merely asserting its fact. It leaves us entirely to our own judgment as to its nature and extent, and as to what is involved in the fact of a book being inspired." (*Op. cit.*, p. 59.) And the *Lutheran Herald*, Oct. 13, 1942, commends Edwin Lewis (the man who finds "much unnecessary baggage" in the Bible) for taking this position: "He accepts the fact" (*italics in original*) "of the inspiration of the Bible without much theorizing." People are made to believe that, while they are rejecting great portions of the Bible, they are still treating it as an inspired book.

2. The moderns minimize the importance of Verbal Inspiration. They suggest to the Christians that they can get along very well without it. The liberals tell them that there is no need of any inspiration at all. They say with the editor of *The Christian Century*, March 30, 1938: "The writers of the Bible were even like ourselves — like E. S. Jones and Kagawa, if you wish. . . . I cannot imagine what added authority the Bible would have if it were conceived as having been dictated by God to a stenographer." And those who want to be known as conservatives speak in the same way of Verbal Inspiration. They say with E. H. Delk: "It is an unnecessary point of view of what is essential to Christianity." (*The Luth. Ch. Quart.*, 1936, p. 426.) They offer us substitutes, which are just as good as Verbal Inspiration, or rather, much better. All is well with you, they say, if only the concepts be inspired; all you need is the "Word of God" or the *Schriftganze*; be satisfied to have the Gospel truths inspired, and do not bother about the trivial matter of *plenary* inspiration; after all, it is not quantity but quality which counts: "the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is qualitative but not quantitative." Bound to prove that inspiration is relatively unimportant, the moderns point out that men were saved before an inspired Bible or an inspired New Testament existed. We heard R. F. Horton's statement "The New Testament is itself a record of the Christian faith being propagated at a wonderfully rapid rate without a New Testament at all. Peter had no writings to appeal to, except the Old Testament Scriptures; Paul preached his 'Gospel' without any reference to a written Gospel and never hinted that the further preaching of the faith should depend even on his own Epistles." (*Rev. and the Bible*, p. 218.) The inspired Scripture is of less importance than the *viva vox* of the Church — that is a commonplace of present-day theology. They will even say that it is of less importance, as the basis of faith, than "experience." In the words of Kahn: "The true Christian bases his Christianity not on the inspiration and

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authenticity of Scripture but on the living fact of his real communion with God through Christ.”—The moderns are urging the Christians to forsake the sure Word, the inspired Word, and to set out on the chase after an *ignis fatuus*.

A favorite device of the anti-inspiration propaganda is to denounce the verbal-inspirationists as quibblers and hairsplitters, ranting over theological *minutiae* and disturbing the peace of the Church with their unseemly brawls about “minute doctrinal differences.” Let one example suffice. The *Luth. Church Quart.*, 1934, p. 114, declares: “Scriptural theology will not quibble over such questions as whether the Bible is the Word of God or contains the Word of God.” The moderns tell their people—and our people—that it is unprofitable to discuss the question whether the Bible is inspired throughout or only in parts and that the verbal-inspirationists, neglecting the important matters of the Church, are wasting their time over trivialities. It is a clever piece of propaganda. Much would be gained for the cause of the moderns if the Christian people could be made to rate the defenders of Verbal Inspiration as trifling quibblers and unreasonable hairsplitters.

And as disturbers of the peace. The charge is made that those who insist on Verbal Inspiration are keeping the Christian churches apart, are keeping the Lutheran synods apart, are keeping them apart by holding out for trivialities. That is an intolerable state of affairs, says H. L. Willett: “The controversies over the inspiration of the Scriptures, . . . creation or evolution, etc., . . . are ceasing to be counted worthy of causing divisions among the friends of Jesus.” (See the *Chr. Century*, Jan. 27, 1937.) There are Lutherans who speak in the same strain. Recall the statement by *Folkebladet*, Nov. 23, 1938: “The theory of verbal inspiration has brought more confusion among Christians than perhaps anything else. . . . When a subjective theory is elevated to the status of an objective primary truth, then *virvar* surely will ensue in the Church.” Recall the statement by the *Lutheran* which Dr. Dell quoted above: “The differences that keep American Lutherans from complete unification are more on the surface than real”—one of the differences being that some insist on Verbal Inspiration; and that is such a trifling matter. It is quibbling, we heard the *Luth. Church Quart.* say. Again, it is said: “The achievement of closer unity among Lutherans will require, for one essential, a higher view of Scripture than is represented by the theory of inspiration by dictation.” (1935, p. 417.) The *Lutheran Companion*, March 30, 1939, complains that “Lutheran unity is made contingent upon the acceptance of definite individualistic interpretations of certain doctrines in which the Church has not made a final pro-

nouncement or has permitted considerable latitude of opinion." The *Lutheran Standard*, May 2, 1942, published the statement "that theological *minutiae* should never have become divisive in the Lutheran Church," and declared, March 22, 1941, that "to quibble over theories of inspiration is no less a disaster" and no less disgraceful than to quarrel over "the color of vestments." In the Washington Debate on Verbal Inspiration Dr. Snyder asked the representative of the A. L. C.: "Shall we quarrel over an ad-iaphoron while a sin-sick, needy world is hungering for the bread of life?" There are Lutherans who keep on saying: "Our petty divisions seem pitiful." "Our minor differences are not fundamental moral and religious differences." "When Lutherans forget their silly differences, then the Lutheran Church in America will grow as it never grew before." (See *CONC. THEOL. MTHLY.*, VIII, p. 546.) — It is a skillful maneuver, a crafty argument. Who does not desire to see all Christians united? Who does not realize the great importance of it? The moderns play upon this sentiment and, stressing the importance of union, aim to create in the Christians the idea of the relative unimportance of Verbal Inspiration and then proceed to characterize it as unimportant in itself.

3. The moderns distort, vilify, and damn Verbal Inspiration. The object of the lying campaign is to keep the Christians from having anything to do with such a disreputable thing. It is, they say, a crude dogma, a clumsy distortion of what Scripture teaches on this point. Few intelligent Protestants still hold it. How can they in view of the hundreds of errors in the Bible? There are, they say, very few theologians, and assuredly no eminently learned ones, who hold the old doctrine of verbal inspiration. It represents the unintelligent view of the fundamentalists, the incredible fatuity of the literalists. It is only the metallic, inert, wooden, and narrow mind of the obscurantists, reactionaries, pre-Kantians, antediluvians that refuses to discard this dogma of the spiritually comatose seventeenth century, this worm-eaten dogmatism. This petrified inspiration dogma must be discarded with the rest of the world's old discarded mind lumber. Only an intellect childishly restricted will stand for it. No balanced mind will uphold it. It constitutes a mental aberration of the gravest type. Its avowal, one of them said, held to its last logic, would risk a trip to the insane asylum. There would be no purpose, said Dr. Kaftan, in discussing theological matters with people who believe in Verbal Inspiration.

Have nothing to do with it, the moderns exhort the Christian: for it is a new doctrine, *ein schlechthinniges Novum*, unheard of in the Church until the post-Reformation period. The Bible theologians invented it. The seventeenth-century theologians invented it. Luther got it from the Catholic theologians. The Lu-

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therans took it over from the Reformed. To maintain it today, *waere ein repristinierender Rueckgriff auf Luther oder gar auf das Bibeldogma des Altluthertums* (M. Doerne). And, worst of all, it would be Fundamentalism.³³³⁾

Beware of Verbal Inspiration, say the moderns, for it is a hurtful dogma. It paralyzes the intellect. It restricts the mental growth of the human race. This cast-iron theory of the atomistic verbalists is a dogmatic fetter, a strait jacket, which handicaps the exegete. Worse than that, it is prolific of skepticism. The theory of literalism has been the death of any form of belief in Scripture; for there are the five hundred discrepancies and errors! *Seelen-mordende Verbalinspiration!*

Beware of this evil thing! It is a wicked doctrine. It is not Christian. It is a heathen conception. It is a rabbinical superstition. Literal inerrancy is irreligious. It is immoral to hold that the doubtful ethics of the Bible were taught by God.—It cannot be upheld without the loss of intellectual integrity, of intellectual honesty, of the sense of truth.—It represents the Roman Catholic ideology. It is the product of rationalistic considerations.—It calls for, and creates, a slave mentality. This tyranny of an infallible book, this enslaving superstition, this bondage to old categories, must be broken, the prison house of verbal infallibility must be demolished.—This idolatrous acceptance of Bible authority, making the Bible a fetish, Bibliolatry, *sich aus der Schrift einen Offenbarungsgoetzen machen, Vergoetzung des einzelnen Worts*, is an idolatrous perversion of Christianity.—Verbal Inspiration is, in a word, a heresy. The foul spook must be cast out.

Will this lying propaganda have the desired effect? Is there *deep guile* and *great might* in it? The arguments advanced by the moderns are so puerile and fatuous that they should not beguile any Christian.³³⁴⁾ They do not appeal to the rational mind, and

333) Are we Fundamentalists? Our Western District declared that *true fundamentalism* means: 1) Unqualified acceptance of every word of the Bible as divine, infallible, and eternal truth. . . . (See *Lehre und Wehre*, 1927, p. 247.) When the term of reproach "Fundamentalists" refers to this point, we are proud to be called that.—We are not in accord with the Fundamentalists on other important doctrines. The moderns who smear us as Fundamentalists surely know that.—It is a falsification of the historical facts to represent Fundamentalism in its fight for Verbal Inspiration as differing from Christianity.

334) R.F.Horton, for instance, proves that the written Word is not absolutely necessary with the fact that "the Christian faith was propagated [in the apostolic era] at a wonderfully rapid rate without a New Testament at all." The moderns make much of this argument. G.T.Ladd told us: "True Christian faith existed before the Bible." (*What Is the Bible*, p. 443.) *The Living Church*, Sept. 27, 1942: "The New Testament obviously cannot be the very foundation and basis of Christian truths which were taught to thousands by the early Church before the New Testament was produced." Here the Catholics come to the aid

they are repulsive to the Christian mind. But they must possess a powerful influence. Else they could not have captivated this great host of theologians. Their power lies in this, that they appeal to the wicked flesh. There is "deep guile and great might" in the tactics of the foe. His foolish and wicked arguments find instant acceptance with the evil heart of man. Our evil heart is prejudiced against God's Word. It delights in having God's Word besmirched.

of the moderns. A leaflet sent in the other day by one of our readers has this: "Why do you Catholics consider the Church and not the Bible as your rule of faith? . . . The truth is that Christianity preceded the New Testament. The Gospels and Epistles were written for the benefit of a Church which had been in existence already for many years." Will such an argument beguile any Christian? To be sure, the inspired word of the Apostles created the Christian faith. Nothing else can create faith. But we have their inspired word in the inspired New Testament and nowhere else. We need the New Testament absolutely. The Catholic substitute (the pronouncements of the Church) and the Protestant substitute (the *viva vox* of the Church) cannot serve. Neither the Catholic nor the Protestant teachers and preachers speak by inspiration of God.—The denunciation of the "Fundamentalist literalism" operates with a transparent sophistry. The fact that Fundamentalists—and others—are often guilty of *literalistic* interpretations of Scripture does not prove that the statements of Scripture need not be taken literally. (See CONC. THEOL. MONTHLY, XII, p. 867, on the charge raised by C. L. Venable [U. L. C.] that "Missouri Lutherans" are guilty of "Bible literalism.")—Examine Kahn's statement that "the true Christian bases his Christianity . . . on the living fact of his real communion with God through Christ." The *Proceedings of the Syn. Conference, 1886*, say on page 18: "What is 'the living fact of his real communion with God'? It means, if it means anything at all, 'his Christianity.' Das ist also das sauer erarbeitete Resultat, bei dem Kahn ankömmt, dass der wahre Christ sein Christentum stellt auf—sein Christentum."—Glance over the long list of absurdities examined in the preceding articles. There is the famous case of Luke dealing with a non-existent Lysanias—according to Bruno Bauer and D. F. Strauss. Errors have to be found in the Bible, if not by fair means, then by foul means. These same men, Strauss and Bauer, find a "contradiction" in the fact that the announcement made to Mary, Luke 1:26 ff., and that made to Joseph, Matt. 1:20, are not identical! How, then, can the Bible be verbally inspired? There is the famous case of Jonah's *dagah*—not a fish, but a skiff! And there is the crowning absurdity of the concept theory. "The extent of inspiration applies not to the words but to the sense." (G. L. Raymond.) The moderns are stupidly asking us to perform an intellectual impossibility. You cannot have the sense without the words. This favorite theory of the moderns is nonsense. And can you express this idea, this concept, in any other way than by using the word "nonsense"? Verily, "there is nothing too absurd to have been stated or imagined on this question" (McIntosh).—The moderns are lacking in spiritual insight, too. Here they have been making concessions to the unbelievers, "shortened the lines of defense," but, as Dr. Nutter pointed out in the *Living Church*, "the anticipated stampede of the intelligentsia into the Church, which was to follow the abandonment of miracle, has not taken place." The moderns do not know how to deal with unbelievers. And what advice are they giving the believer? They ask him to rely on his "Christian consciousness" for finding and establishing the truth. But we know, says Spurgeon, "that every man who is his own lawyer has a fool for his client." What the moderns offer us on Inspiration is devoid of common sense and of Christian sense.

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Our proud flesh refuses to submit to Scripture, as Verbal Inspiration requires it to do, and hails the opportunity to sit in judgment on Scripture, as the moderns ask it to do. It is thus that the foolish objections against Verbal Inspiration carry great weight. And the great danger of our losing the battle, of our giving up Verbal Inspiration, lies in this, that our own flesh is the ally of the enemy. When Satan rouses up the pride and wickedness of our flesh, we have to contend with "deep guile and great might," against superhuman forces. We cannot win the battle unless we use the almighty resources which are at hand.

But the victory will be ours if, as we shall consider in the fourth place, we employ against the tactics of the foe *the divine strategy: bring the almighty Word into action.*

That was the strategy St. Paul employed. He knew that divine power inheres in the Word, 1 Thess. 2:13; he did not enlist human wisdom to fight its battle, but permitted the simple Word to demonstrate its power, 1 Cor. 2:4, 5. That was Luther's strategy. "Durch das Wort ist die Welt ueberwunden, ist die Kirche erhalten worden; sie wird auch durch das Wort wiederhergestellt werden." (XV:2506.) All that Luther did was to put God's almighty Word into action. "God's Word has been my sole study and concern, the sole subject of my preaching and writing. Other than this I have done nothing in the matter. This same Word has, while I slept or made merry, accomplished this great thing." (XX:21.) The only method Luther employed to prove the truth of any Scripture doctrine was to let Scripture speak for itself. "He loved the Sacred Book! He fought by its help. It was his battle-ax and his weapon of war." (Spurgeon.)

How shall we prove the truth of Verbal Inspiration? Being a teaching of Scripture, it carries within itself divine power. It proves itself. All that we need to do is to proclaim: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," and let this Word do its work. It has the divine power to convince men of its truth and produce their joyful acceptance of it. Learn to apply this strategy, as Luther learned to do it. The *Princeton Theol. Review*, Vol. 15, pp. 513 and 555, thus describes Luther's strategy: "For Luther Scripture thus came to rest for its authority . . . on its own self-evidencing power. . . . The indefeasible certitude of the Christian as to the divinity of the Word comes from God Himself." Quoting Luther (Erl. Ed., 28:298; St. L., XX:74) to the effect that the Christian must be, and can be, "unshakably certain that it is God's Word, though all the world should fight against it," the *Review* points out: "Luther saw with hawklike clearness the main point in the solution of the problem of authority in the Christian religion: *the inspired Scriptures carry themselves; they do not depend for*

their power on the testimony of the Church or any human authority, but only on the witness of the Holy Spirit who *creates in the believing heart the conviction of their divine origin and contents. . . .*"

We are asked to surrender (or modify) the doctrine of Verbal Inspiration. Our unbelieving, proud flesh asks it. We are sorely tempted to do it. But in this fearful conflict, which tries the soul and rends the heart, we shall gain the strength to overcome our flesh from this very doctrine itself. It speaks with divine power to our troubled soul. Let that power work in you! When we are tempted to delete 1 Tim. 5:23 and 2 Tim. 4:13, the Holy Spirit speaks out in our hearts: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God!" When we are invited to strike out the account of Creation, of Jonah and the fish, and of the thousand other miracles, there comes the cry from heaven: "The Scripture cannot be broken!" When Satan asks us to split up John 3:16 and 1 John 2:2 into thoughts of God and words of men, the word: "which things we speak not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth," reverberate in our hearts in "demonstration of the Spirit and of power." Verbal Inspiration teaches that the words of Scripture are God's Words, and that teaching fills us with such holy awe of the majesty of Scripture that we trample the sacrilegious mutterings of our flesh underfoot as the evil spawn of Satan. Let this divine teaching do its work, and you will say: "God's Word counts for more than all angels and saints and creatures" (Luther, XVIII:1322); you will say: This teaching of Scripture — Verbal Inspiration — has more weight than all the teachings of a pseudo-science and a pseudo-theology.

What shall we do when our proud flesh keeps on angrily protesting against Verbal Inspiration? Holy Scripture fights our battles for us in this way, too, that in denouncing this awful wickedness it threatens those who persist in it with a terrible fate. Ponder Matt. 11:25 and 1 Pet. 2:6-8! Woe unto him against whom God finally pronounces the dread judgment of obduration, in consequence of which these things are now *hidden* from him, he is cut off from understanding Scripture; that which is a savor of life unto life has become a savor of death unto death unto him. If a man *will* stumble at God's Word, it shall be to him a stumbling block and a rock of offense. Hear again how Luther enforces this warning of Scripture: "I beg and faithfully warn every pious Christian not to take offense at the simple language and ordinary stories which he frequently finds here. . . . For this is the Scripture which makes fools of the wise and prudent and is open only to babes and fools, as Christ says Matt. 11:25." (XIV:3.) Hear again how Pieper enforces it: "One who criticizes Scripture — which, as God's

Word, will not be criticized but *believed* — comes under the fearful judgment of God described Matt. 11:25." (*Op. cit.*, I, p. 280.) And hear how J. W. Haley presents this Scripture truth: "Those who are disposed to cavil find opportunities for caviling. *The disposition does not miss the occasion.* . . . "There is light enough for those whose main wish is to see; and darkness enough for those of an opposite disposition.' (Pascal.) . . . Those persons who cherish a caviling spirit, who are bent upon misapprehending the truth and urging captious and frivolous objections find in the sacred volume difficulties and disagreements which would seem to have been designed as stumbling stones for those 'which stumble at the Word, being disobedient; whereunto also they were appointed' (1 Pet. 2:8). Upon the willful votaries of error God sends 'strong delusions, that they should believe a lie' (2 Thess. 2:11), that they might work out their own condemnation and ruin. 'If we disparage Scripture and treat it "as any other book," then Almighty God, who is the Author of Scripture, will punish us by our own devices. . . . Our presumption and our irreverence will be instruments of our punishment.' . . . When the difficulties of Scripture are approached with a docile and reverent mind, they may tend to our establishment in the faith; but when they are dealt with in a querulous and disingenuous manner, they may become judicial agencies in linking to caviling skepticism its appropriate penalty — even to the loss of the soul." (*Op. cit.*, p. 39 f.) Haley addresses this warning to skepticism. But it applies — Scripture applies it — also to those who in more subtle ways deny the inspiration of Scripture and deride the truth that the *words* of Scripture are the very words of God. This warning of Holy Scripture is the power of God. It fills our hearts with fear and dismay over the frightful catastrophe which the machinations of Satan and the wickedness of our flesh are preparing for us. And the better we know our danger, and the more earnestly we call to God for His gracious help, the better prepared we are for receiving the full influence of the power of the teachings of Scripture.

And how shall we win others for the doctrine of Verbal Inspiration? Scripture wins its own battles. All that is required of us is to put the power of the Word into action — simply to proclaim the teaching of Scripture. That was Luther's strategy. When dealing with men who deny or doubt "that what Christ and the apostles spoke and wrote is the Word of God, . . . say only this: I shall give you sufficient ground from Scripture; if you believe, well; if not, just go your way" (IX:1238). As long as men will listen to us, we give them ground from Scripture. That has the power to convince them. And it is the only thing that can win them. They may for a time struggle against this doctrine of

Verbal Inspiration as utter foolishness, but, as Dr. Walther says: "our only help lies in this, that the divine foolishness, the old unadulterated Gospel, be preached to it" (the present apostate world). (*Lehre und Wehre*, 1875, p. 41.) So we say: The only way to gain the victory in this battle is to preach the divine foolishness, the old unadulterated doctrine of Verbal Inspiration. That preaching, that testimony carries divine power.

When a man accepts Verbal Inspiration, a miracle is being wrought. Let us not attempt to argue men into accepting it. Our words of human wisdom cannot perform miracles. It takes almighty power to subdue the ratiocinations of the flesh. And this almighty power lies in the teaching of Scripture on Inspiration. Let us apply the power! — We can add nothing to it by our reasoning powers. But this great and glorious thing God permits us to do: we can proclaim His truth.

How many will be won through our testimony? That is not for us to say. That lies in the hands of the gracious Lord. But those that will be won will be won through the power of the Word, and we thank God for every opportunity given us to present the conquering doctrine of verbal inspiration to men.

We are fighting to win men for Verbal Inspiration, and we are fighting to preserve Verbal Inspiration for the Church. Are we fighting for a lost cause? We hear them shouting that our cause is doomed. They are getting ready to give Verbal Inspiration the *coup de grace*. But we know that it will never perish from the earth. The Bible has withstood all the assaults of the foe. It is an impregnable rock.³³⁵ And so has Verbal Inspiration stood, an impregnable rock, against all the assaults of the enemy, from the first century down to the present day. The clamor of Paine and Strauss, the clamor of the liberal and conservative moderns, could not silence its almighty voice. Many Christians, theologians and laymen, are broadcasting this powerful voice. In various church bodies this doctrine is being proclaimed with apostolic clarity and

335) J.R. Stratton, in his book *The Battle over the Bible*, says on page 16: "Intellectual pride has often rejected it (the Bible) because of the vanity of man's mind; and infidelity has battled against it with a relentlessness worthy of a better cause and a malignity unmatched elsewhere in the dark realm of prejudice, hatred, and spite. What has the result been? Always victory for the noble old Book! It has successfully resisted the sophistries of Hume, the misguided eloquence of Gibbon, the rationalism of Rousseau, the ignorant blasphemies of Thomas Paine, the satirical mockery of Voltaire, the idle quibbling of Strauss, the shallow witticism of Renan, the cheap buffoonery of Bob Ingersoll, the audacious assaults of the Communists of France, and the insidious duplicity of the rationalistic theologians of Prussianized Germany. As with Moses' bush, the Bible has burned, but it has not been consumed. Phoenixlike, it has risen from its ashes to new heights of usefulness and power."

firmness. Will it endure unto the end? It will never perish. It will have its Thermopylaes, but it will never be utterly defeated. It will always remain to be the Christians' stay and comfort. Even if a time should come that it were no longer *publica doctrina* in any church body, it would be exercising its divine power secretly. If at some future time all the theologians of the world should meet in solemn conclave and promulgate the decree: *Si quis dixerit, Scripturam Sacram esse ipsum Verbum Dei, anathema sit*, the Christians would spurn that decree. In practice they would cling to, and apply, Verbal Inspiration. It is possible that a Christian theologian might in *disputationibus* argue against Verbal Inspiration but that in the hour of stress and trial he will, by the grace of God, cling to John 3:16 as the verbally inspired, absolutely true and certain Word of God. All Christians will in the future as well as now believe, in their hearts, in Verbal Inspiration.

We do not know whether such a conclave will ever be held. We doubt it. But let that be as it may. We are concerned with the present. Verbal Inspiration is, thank God, the *publica doctrina* in large areas. And our sacred duty is to keep faithful watch and ward over it. And while the moderns are importuning us to join them in anathematizing it, we are glad of the opportunity God has given faithful witnesses to make its loud voice resound throughout the earth and bring assurance and comfort to many souls who, but for this testimony, would remain in uncertainty and doubt and might possibly despair.

We shall certainly keep up the fight for Verbal Inspiration. That entails, as any other war, hardship and suffering. But the strength to bear that is supplied by the Word. There is the disturbing fact that the great majority of present-day theologians is against us. Those that fight for Verbal Inspiration are but few in number.³³⁶⁾ In this situation our flesh raises the disturbing question: If Verbal Inspiration be a doctrine of Holy Scripture, why would so many theologians refuse to accept it? May it not be an open question? Again, our flesh takes the defeatist attitude: What can your small number hope to accomplish against this vast host? And what have you to offer to offset the great learning and prestige on their side?—Verbal Inspiration will give us the

336) "It is, sad to say, true what Nitzsch-Stephan says of the 'present situation': 'In our day the orthodox doctrine of inspiration has hardly any significance in dogmatics. It is, true enough, being still upheld by a few, e. g., Koelling and Noesgen, with some modifications. . . . The rest of the theologians, including the conservatives, reject the old doctrine.' Zoeckler mentions as lonely defenders of the old doctrine: Kohlbrugge, Gaussen, Kuyper, and 'among the Lutherans particularly Walther in St. Louis and with him the Missouri Synod.' Also most of the present-day Reformed theologians have given up the inspiration of Scripture." (Pieper, *op. cit.*, p. 327.)

strength to overcome these misgivings, doubts, and temptations. What Scripture says on Verbal Inspiration gives us divine assurance, and we shall maintain it though all the world should protest its truth. And as to those great resources which the foe can command, there are greater resources at our disposal. We have the almighty truth of Verbal Inspiration on our side. We can do miracles. "Das ist ein Wunder ueber alle Wunder," says Luther, "dass ein solch gering Wort, das kein Ansehen hat vor der Welt, soll so viel Leute gewinnen." (XII:1568.) The Scripture truth that the Bible is verbally inspired is stronger than all the wisdom of the world and the might of the great number. The power of God's truth is fighting for us. This talk about the great majority being against us shall not disturb us. "I believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God. . . . I can trust God, though I shall have to stand alone before the world in declaring Him to be true." (Dr. H. A. Kelly.) "Ob mir schon die ganze Welt anhinge und wiederum abfiele, das ist mir eben gleich, und denke: Ist sie mir doch zuvor auch nicht angehangen, da ich allein war." (Luther, XIX:422.)

We need strength to bear the ridicule and the reproaches heaped upon us in this cause. No one can today uphold Verbal Inspiration without being made the butt of universal ridicule. Obscurantists! Backward theologians! Fundamentalists! Now, we can easily bear that; but it cuts deeper when we are reproached — sometimes by well-meaning men — with sinning against God and men by taking such an uncompromising stand. When we refuse to be satisfied with the vague inspiration commonly taught and stand out for every jot and tittle of Verbal Inspiration, they say that that is due to sinful pride and carnal prejudice and wicked stubbornness. We could bear that, too; but then our own flesh raises the same clamor. Is Verbal Inspiration really so important? — In this fierce trial we fall back on our old strategy. We examine again all that Scripture says on Verbal Inspiration. Convinced of the truth of it, we know we would be sinning against God if we suppressed it. Convinced of its necessity, we know that we would be sinning against our fellow men if we yielded any part of it. And thus the Lord fulfills His Word "Thou, therefore, gird up thy loins, and arise and speak unto them all that I command thee. . . . For, behold, I have made thee this day . . . an iron pillar and brazen walls against the whole land. . . . They shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee" (Jer. 1:17 ff.).

Will we stand firm when we are asked to sacrifice Verbal Inspiration in the interest of church union? Particularly at this point the foe displays "deep guile and great might." They say,

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at times, that the verbal-inspirationists lose nothing under this unionistic arrangement since they will be permitted to keep on teaching their peculiar doctrine to their heart's content; and our flesh is very willing to be beguiled by such suggestions. Or they tell us that we have no right to make Verbal Inspiration divisive of church fellowship since "the Scriptures declare the fact of inspiration but make no explanation concerning the issues involved in the 'theories' of form and degree, which furnish the material for present-day controversies on the subject" (*The Luth. World Almanac*). Or: let the Scripture teaching be what it may, church union is of such supreme importance that all questions of inspiration are trivial in comparison. And our flesh fully agrees. We find it hard to stand firm. And when at this point the reproaches assume particular virulence—sinful pride, carnal prejudice, wicked stubbornness—and our own flesh begins to rage and rave, we begin to waver. In this crisis the Word of God comes to our aid. Let a man once be convinced of the truth and supreme importance of Verbal Inspiration, and he will be able to resist all temptations to compromise it. He will not only refuse to yield up one jot or tittle of it but will also refuse to give the hand of fellowship to those who deny all or any part of Verbal Inspiration; for that would make the denial of it a matter of little importance. Knowing that the Christians need the precious doctrine of verbal inspiration, he will not jeopardize their spiritual welfare by asking them to receive as their spiritual advisers those who deny either the truth or the importance of it. The truth of God's Word and the interest of his fellow Christians weigh so much for him that the reproach and shame he suffers in this cause weigh very little.

He maintains friendly relations with all who are searching for the truth, searching for it in God's Word, but he cannot make common cause with men who set out to ravage and despoil God's Word. He absolutely refuses to bid them Godspeed.

Stubbornness? May we be of those to whom the Lord says: "Behold, I have made Thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their forehead. As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead; fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks," Ezek. 3:8, 9.³³⁷)

337) J.A.Dell: "We desire unity among Lutherans but not unity at the expense of truth. If it comes to a choice between these two: (1) outward unity, with a hushing up and smoothing over of deep-going differences in our views regarding the reliability of the Bible, and (2) outward disunity, even controversy, with the result that this doctrine of inspiration is thrust into the foreground and thought about and debated—if it comes to a choice between these two, I say, the second alternative is much to be preferred. For the former can never lead

Contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints! That is a call to arms which cannot be disregarded. We would not disregard it. Our flesh, indeed, would have us evade the service, and we need to be reminded, by the Law, of the punishment meted out to the traitor. But as far as we are spiritual, we enter the battle for Verbal Inspiration willingly and gladly. For we love this glorious doctrine. We owe so much to it. We owe to it the greatest blessing of Christianity: the assurance of God's grace. But for Verbal Inspiration the Gospel promises could not yield assurance and comfort. We fight for it not merely because it is one of the things which Christ has commanded us and must be observed but because it is tied up with the truth and reliability of the Gospel. We love this precious teaching.³³⁸ It has comforted

to a real unity, but the latter may." (*Journal of the Am. Luth. Conf.*, March, 1938.) Th. Graebner, *The Problem of Lutheran Union*: "The United Lutheran Church is not at all minded to make doctrine an issue in an attempt at Lutheran union. . . . By denying the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures it removes on its part the very foundation for it (doctrinal purity)" (J. H. C. Fritz, page VII). "With the desire for union expressed in the resolutions (of the U. L. C. adopted at Savannah) we find ourselves in hearty agreement. . . . But it would be a fatal mistake to make a public declaration of unity if the reality of it is absent. . . . In the last decades there has arisen a new issue, indicated by the words 'higher criticism' and 'inspiration of the Bible,' on which, it seems, the various Lutheran bodies are not occupying common ground. Any attempt to bring about agreement between the synods will have to take this issue into consideration." (Wm. Arndt, p. 40.)—A church union between those who teach and those who deny, or tolerate the denial of, Verbal Inspiration will produce *virvar* with a vengeance. On Bible Sunday the first guest preacher will declare: "Is not the inspiration of Scripture too high and holy a reality to be defined in terms of stenography? . . . That avowal [of Verbal Inspiration], held to its last logic, would risk a trip to the insane asylum." And the second guest preacher will declare: "Beware, beware, I say, of this 'divine-human Scripture.' It is a devil's mask." Dr. Pieper thus describes the *virvar*: "In derselben Kirchengemeinschaft, so dass die Bekenner und die Bestreiter der goettlichen Autoritaet der Schrift eintraechtig und bruederlich beieinander wohnen, als ob nichts zwischen ihnen stuende? Das ist ein Unding, wiewohl es heutzutage sehr allgemein — auch in der amerikanisch-lutherischen Kirche — praktiziert wird." (*Lehre und Wehre*, 1928, p. 370.)

338) "How thankful I am that in this evil world, where men are groping blindly and the blind are leading the blind, it is our privilege to have an infallible rule of faith and practice, even the Word of God! We cannot safely trust our own reason, for we do not know enough; nor our feelings, for they are unstable and biased by sin; nor science, because it cannot tell us what we most want to know; nor the teachings of the Church, for the Church is not infallible. But we can trust the Word of God, for it is God-given; it has been transmitted to us faithfully and it is being continually proved true. Therefore our duty is to lay aside all prejudices concerning it, to study it, to receive the Christ revealed therein, and to obey Him in all things." (J. H. McComb, *God's Purpose in This Age*, p. 73.) "The Bible abides as the faithful witness — the most faithful witness we have — concerning the character of God, the need of man, and the Gospel which alone can meet that need." (Dr. P. W. Evans, in the *Watchman-Examiner*, Aug. 14, 1941.)

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us and been our stay in the day of temptation and in the hour of affliction, and we want the future generations to be blessed by it. It is a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks, but we have found it to be the power and wisdom of God and the foundation of our trust in the grace of God. "By pagan pride rejected, spurned," the Word, given by verbal inspiration, is our greatest treasure. We thank God that He has permitted us to enlist in its service.

"Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord hath spoken.' That is and must remain our battle cry. That is the device emblazoned on our banner. If ever our Synod should no longer hold this banner aloft, her fall would not be imminent but would already have set in, and she would be fit only to be cast away as insipid salt that no longer serves but only deserves to be trodden under foot." (Walther.) Taking up the battle cry *Γέγραται*, as the Captain of our salvation sounded it against Satan, let us earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints and preserve unto the Church the precious doctrine of verbal inspiration. (See *Walther and the Church*, p. 24.)

TH. ENGELDER

Outlines on Old Testament Texts
(Synodical Conference)

Third Sunday in Advent

Isaiah 61:1-6

In this Advent season we like to dwell on the prophecies of the Old Testament in which the coming of the Redeemer is foretold. The saints of the Old Covenant lived in a period of waiting; their thoughts were directed to the future. In a different, but real, sense we in this season of the year are in an attitude of waiting, our thoughts occupy themselves with the coming Christmas festival when the birth of the Savior will be observed. It is quite natural that the old prophecies which thrilled the waiting hearts of the saints of the Old Covenant have a special appeal for us these days.

The contents of the beautiful prophecy before us today can well be summarized in the expression found here:

Beauty for Ashes

1

We find here statements referring to the *misery in which men are by nature*.

The speaker of the text is the Messiah Himself. That is