

Modernism and Biblical Inerrancy

[Brian Schwertley](#)

Introduction

One of the greatest enemies of biblical Christianity is Modernism or Christian Liberalism. In fact one could make a case that Christian Liberalism has caused more harm to Protestant denominations and institutions in the twentieth century than any other heretical movement. What is Christian Liberalism? Christian Liberalism is part of a broader religious, political and cultural movement in (first) Europe and then America which has as its foundation a secular humanistic world view. The reason that historians and theologians refer to Christian Liberalism as Modernism is the fact that Christian Liberals have bought into and adopted the modern secular world view. They have adapted their teachings to reflect the spirit of this age. What occurred with the denominations that adopted Modernism was a steady erosion of faith in Christ and the Bible coupled with a new faith in the presuppositions of Progressivism and Naturalism. This involved a faith in Mankind. The “discoveries” of man in science, industry, the social sciences and economics would bring in a humanistic millennium. Some common characteristics of modernism are a belief in Darwinian evolution, statism (communism, socialism, welfare fascism), negative higher criticism, historical and ethical relativism and subversive gradualism. Because Modernism is still the most dominant religious force in academia, civil government and the media today, a study and refutation of some of its most prominent teachings is necessary. Further, the theological lessons that should have been learned from the theological battles between Modernists and Fundamentalists (c. 1870-1940) have not been learned by many people, for new forms of Modernism are still destroying Christian institutions (e.g., Fuller Seminary)¹ and denominations (e.g., The Christian Reformed Church).

The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible

The great dividing line between Modernism and biblical Christianity is over the foundational issue of biblical inerrancy and ultimate authority. The historic orthodox Christian position has always been that God speaks to His people through the Bible, which is inspired by God and thus is infallible (or inerrant) from cover to cover. All Scripture is of divine origination;

¹ “The battle for the Bible in this twentieth century (plus the previous decade) may be schematized into three periods. First (1893) was the condemnation by and suspension from the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. of Charles Augustus Briggs for maintaining that the Bible asserts falsehoods. Second was the Auburn Affirmation [the Auburn Affirmation was written in 1923 primarily by Henry Sloane Coffin and Robert Hastings Nichols. It was signed by 149 modernist ministers in the PCUSA. In 1924 it was published and was eventually signed by over 1,200 modernist ministers. This document explicitly denied the inerrancy of Scripture]. The third is the renewal of these positions in the book now under consideration [*Biblical Authority*, 1977]. This book was stimulated by the publication of Harold Lindsell’s *The Battle for the Bible* (Zondervan, 1976). But the present attack on the Bible began with the reorganization of Fuller Seminary and the reorganization of all or most of its orthodox faculty members” (Gordon H. Clark, *The Concept of Biblical Authority* [Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1980], p. 1).

therefore, it is God's Word. "Every single word of the Bible is, by its own witness to itself, infallibly true [cf. Mt. 5:18; Is. 45:19; Ps. 119:160; Ps. 119:160; Jn. 17:17].... [Thus,] the Bible is 'absolutely errorless' in any of the subjects it touches on in teaching—whether statements about history, natural history, ethnology, archaeology, geography, natural science, physical or historical fact, psychological or philosophical principle, or spiritual doctrine and duty."² Because the Bible is God's special self-revelation of Himself to man and is infallible (i.e., objective truth) it is the ultimate and final source of authority in all matters of worship, doctrine and discipline.

The foundation of Christian Liberalism is not the Bible but mankind or more specifically the modernist scholar, church leader or bureaucrat. The great presupposition of Modernism is a *fallible* Bible. Since Christian Liberalism encompasses a fairly wide range of heretical viewpoints regarding Scripture, what follows are the general, typical teachings of modernist scholars regarding the Bible. Modernists argue (in accordance with their anti-supernatural presuppositions) that the Bible is a human record of the religious evolution of Middle Eastern tribes from polytheism to monotheism. These tribes eventually become known as the Israelites. According to Christian Liberal scholars the Bible is full of myths and legends. Thus, the Bible does not tell us God's word but rather reveals the religious teachings of an ancient religious community. Common slogans among Modernists are: 1.) The Bible is not truth itself but contains truth. 2.) The Bible is not a textbook regarding science. Therefore, one should not expect it to accurately reflect what really occurred during creation, etc. 3.) The Pentateuch, the Gospels, and other historical books were never intended to be taken as literal historical accounts. 4.) The Bible is full of contradictions. 5.) The Bible reproduces the scientific errors, ethical views, and social prejudices of the time period in which it was written. Therefore, many of the Old Testament laws are unethical, unjust and barbaric. 6.) The miracles recorded in the Bible should not be regarded as true for they violate the laws of nature. One could go on, but the points enumerated above are sufficient for a person to understand the Modernist.

Some Philosophical Considerations

A person in a modernist church and anyone who reads an article in *Time* magazine regarding the Bible or who watches "public television" will be told that the Christian Liberal position on the Bible is simply one of clear factual evidence. The truth, however, is that modernist scholars have always ignored the biblical, historical and archeological evidences that do not fit in with their secular humanistic presuppositions. If one's starting points are: that God is not sovereign; that He cannot reveal Himself infallibly to mankind in propositional form; that miracles are impossible; that the doctrine of hell cannot be true; that the realm of faith is non-rational and non-historical; that man is the autonomous determiner of truth and reality, etc., then of course he will regard the Bible as fundamentally untrustworthy, as merely another ancient religious book. Higher criticism's conclusions regarding the Bible are the inevitable result of an apostate unbelieving axiom. The modern secular "scientific" methodology says that the Bible cannot be received as self-authenticating for that would be dogmatism. That would be a blind submission to authority. Therefore, in order to be really scientific and objective one must subject the Bible to the accredited historical and literary methods of liberal seminaries and universities. But all that this so-called scientific process has done has been to shift people's faith away from

² Greg L. Bahnsen, "The Inerrancy of the Autographa" in Norman L. Geisler, ed., *Inerrancy*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1980), pp. 152-153.

biblical authority to the authority of the so-called Bible experts. People are no longer following the dogmatism of the Scriptures but the dogmatism of unbelieving theologians.

Remember, when a person holds to a particular viewpoint regarding the Bible his viewpoint does not and cannot occur in a vacuum. It is of necessity a part of an overall world view. It involves a view of ontology (a theory of being), epistemology (a theory of knowledge), history, God (e.g., Is God sovereign? Can He communicate in propositional form to mankind? etc.), man, creation and even salvation. Thus, the issue is not one of mere factuality but the world view that one uses to formulate, sift, and analyze the facts. The true Evangelical does his best to derive his presuppositions from God's own Word. His starting point is the self-contained ontological trinity who reveals Himself infallibly to man in the Bible. By deriving his overall world view and doctrine from Scripture he approaches the Bible with reverence. He knows that it is self-authenticating, inerrant, perspicuous (i.e. clear) and sufficient. He knows that saving faith in Jesus Christ cannot be separated from faith in Christ's words. The Modernist (on the other hand) comes to the Bible with presuppositions that are antithetical to biblical authority. He starts with the assumption that truth is only that which is determined to be true by man. God is placed in the dock to be judged by finite, sinful, arrogant men. Second, he assumes historical relativism. The message of the Bible cannot have meaning for a modern age for it is a very old book. It must be probed, analyzed and recast by modern scholars in order to be relevant in the modern age. If a doctrine or ethical stipulation appears out of touch with modernity the modernist scholar simply discounts it as a myth, or a redaction, or the opinion of an ancient person who didn't know better.

What is ironic regarding the modernist position is that not only is it just as dogmatic as biblical Christianity, it also is irrational. The Modernist presents himself as the champion of objectivity and reason. Yet, he abandons the Bible while proclaiming himself the champion of Jesus and Christianity. But, how can one rationally claim to be a champion of a religion that is based on divine truth while denying that such a truth exists? It is at this point that the Modernist takes off the mask of rationalism and objectivity and replaces it with the mask of mysticism, irrationality and subjectivism. The Modernist seeks to hang onto the Christian label with such bizarre platitudes as: "Divine truth is not found in written propositions but in a personal authentic awareness of God"; or, "Scripture's power does not derive from its objective inspiration or truth but from its wonderful spiritual effect upon man"; or, "Although the Bible is not inspired by God and is not a reliable source for dogmatic assertions it nevertheless has a powerful authority in the religious experience that it stirs in the hearts of its students." The Modernist, by pulling the rug out from under objective truth, is left with an anthropological religion. By making man the ultimate reference point for truth the Christian Liberal is left with rank subjectivism and silly mystical slogans. Once one understands the overall modernist position in its world view context one should never again fall for the argument that Christian Liberals are rational, objective and scientific while orthodox Christians are fideistic blind followers of authority. Biblical Christianity which rests on biblical infallibility is the only rational, defensible position. It is the only position that avoids subjectivism, relativism and mysticism.

Some Preliminary Considerations

When investigating the doctrine of the inspiration and infallibility of Scripture, the most logical place to begin is the Bible itself. If the Bible does *not* claim to be inspired by God; if it does *not* claim to be inerrant or without error in everything it teaches, including matters of science and history; if it merely claims to be a fallible record of an ancient people's religious

experience—then there is obviously no reason to insist upon its infallibility and its total authority over the church and all of mankind. However, if the Bible does teach biblical inerrancy, then we must defend Scripture’s claims with every fiber of our being.

An argument based upon the Scriptures will be considered circular reasoning, unscientific and inadequate by many. However, one must keep in mind that the Bible is unique. Because it is God’s word it must be self-authenticating, for there can be no authority above God Himself. The Bible is to be believed because it is God’s Word. The author of Hebrews says that “because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself” (Heb. 6:13). This point, however does not mean that a Christian’s belief in the Bible is irrational, or a blind leap into the dark (fideism). Belief in the Scriptures is supported by abundant evidences. As the Westminster Confession says: “the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is to give all glory to God)...and the entire perfection thereof are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the word of God...”³ One could add the amazing discoveries of archeology, perfectly fulfilled prophecy, signs and wonders and so on. While all these evidences testify to the truth of Scripture we must never forget that the Bible ultimately rests upon God’s own authority. “God ‘testifies to Himself’ because there is nothing more epistemologically authoritative or morally ultimate that could authorize what He discloses.”⁴

Before we examine the many biblical passages and doctrines that clearly teach that the Bible is God’s inspired, infallible Word, it should be noted that Christianity stands or falls upon biblical inerrancy. Why? Because the Bible is the foundation of *every* doctrine of the Christian faith. Christianity is a religion that is based on real space and time historical events and God’s own interpretation of those events. In order to become a Christian a person must believe in Christ *as He is revealed in the Scriptures*. The Bible is virtually the only source of information regarding these events and it is the *only* source that gives us God’s interpretation of these facts. Consequently, all theology must be based upon the Bible. While it is true that certain things are learned about God from general revelation (i.e., God’s revelation of Himself from nature; cf., Ps. 19:1; Rom 1:18ff.), the apostle Paul says that this information is enough only to condemn the natural man (cf. Rom. 1:20ff.). If a person is to have saving faith in Jesus Christ he must have faith in the Bible that tells us who Jesus is. Faith in Christ as a person cannot be divorced from faith in the Scriptures that define Christ and His work. Apart from God’s special revelation one man’s image or interpretation of Christ is just as good as any other’s, for they are all figments of men’s imagination. They are all subjective guess work. Without the Bible Modernists are blind men groping in the dark. Their religion is nothing more than an intellectually sophisticated form of idolatry.

If, as Modernists assert, the Bible is a mixture of truth and error, then none of the Bible can be trusted on its own authority. But what is this higher authority? Is it itself infallible, objective and totally reliable? No. The higher authority is merely the latest popular theory taught in modernist institutions. Higher criticism is not a hard science. An archeologist can uncover a pavement stone or ancient monument and can say that Pontius Pilate really existed and ruled when the Bible says he ruled. The modernist scholar, however, says things like: “Based on my analysis of the Hebrew grammar there are two different authors of the book of Isaiah.” Does the modernist scholar really know whether two different men wrote the book of Isaiah? No. He has a

³ Chapter I, section V.

⁴ Greg L. Bahnsen, *Van Til’s Apologetic: Readings and Analysis* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1998), pp. 201-202.

theory. He has an educated guess based on his own modernistic presuppositions. The professing Christian in a modernist church cannot place his trust in any portion of Scripture without first consulting with the latest modernist authorities to make sure he is not believing in some foolish myth, or a redaction by a power hungry priest, or a legend from a second century Christian community bent on molding the human Jesus in their own image. When the sure foundation of the infallible Bible is replaced by the perverted opinions of secular humanists masquerading as Christian teachers, then (according to their own teaching) the Bible cannot be trusted at any single point.

Modernists are no different than Romanists, for the foundation of their theology is not *Scripture alone* but rather human tradition. Roman Catholics look to the church fathers and the theological inventions of the Middle Ages (e.g., purgatory, Mariolatry, transubstantiation, celibacy for priests and nuns, the papacy, etc.) while Christian Liberals follow the traditions of secular philosophers (e.g., Hobbes, Spinoza, Hume, Kant, etc.) and apostate theologians (e.g., Schleiermacher, Ritschl, Bushnell, Bultmann, etc.). For both Romanists and Modernists, the ultimate authority is not the Bible but the church. In Roman Catholicism the Pope and church hierarchy determine doctrine, while among Christian Liberals it is seminary professors and the church bureaucracy. Basically, in modernist denominations whoever has the power determines the doctrine. The only limiting factor in modernist denominations is public opinion. Those in power hold back on the more radical views until the people in the pews who pay their salaries are won over to the new views. Jesus' rebuke to the scribes and Pharisees equally applies to all Modernists: "Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition... They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch" (Mt. 15:6, 14). Paul warned us of such evil men: "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ" (Col. 2:8). Isaiah warned: "To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Is. 8:20).

Biblical and Theological Arguments

From cover to cover the Bible presents itself as God's word. It is God's inscripturated self-revelation of Himself to mankind. The Bible is an infallible record of redemptive history and it tells us everything that God wants us to know regarding faith and life. How do we know that it is the inspired infallible word of God? Because it plainly tells us so. There are many scriptural arguments for biblical inerrancy.

1. There are hundreds of passages in the Old Testament which identify the words of the prophets as coming directly from Jehovah. Phrases such as "Thus says the LORD," "says the God of Israel," "says the LORD of hosts," "says the LORD God," "says the Holy One," "says the LORD," "says the Holy One of Israel," "the God of Israel says," "the LORD says," "the High and Lofty One says," "says the King," etc. occur over 864 times. There are innumerable instances of phrases such as "the LORD has spoken," "God had spoken," "the LORD has said," "I have spoken," "I the LORD have said," "I have said," etc. The Bible says that God spoke verbally to Adam and Eve, Noah, the patriarchs, Moses, the prophets and apostles. Christ Himself is the ultimate revelation of God to man. "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son" (Heb. 1:1-2).

2. There are introductory formulas in the Bible which plainly assert that the prophets spoke the very words of God. There are phrases such as: “the word of the LORD that came to ———,” “the word of the LORD unto the prophet ———,” “the word that the LORD spoke to ———,” “the word that the LORD has showed me,” “the word of the LORD by ———” (cf., Gen. 15:1, 4; 1 Kgs. 6:11; 12:22; 13:20; 16:1; 17:2; 18:1; 19:9; 21:17, 18; Isa. 38:4; Jer. 1:2, 4, 11, 13; Hos. 1:1, 3; Joel 1:1; Amos 3:1; Jon. 1:1; 3:1; Zeph. 1:1; Hag. 1:1; Zech. 1:1, 7; 4:8; 6:9; 7:8; etc.).

The prophets were aware that they were telling the people God’s word. They would introduce God’s message with phrases such as: “hear the word of the LORD” and “hear this word that the LORD has spoken.” Bromiley writes, “The prophet is the man to whom the word of the LORD (Yahweh) comes and who then declares this word to the people.... It is not the prophet’s own word.... The prophet does not produce the word from within himself. It is no mere matter of religious insights; the word is from God. What the *prophet* says is true because it is what *God* says.”⁵ After examining the many passages noted above one should not conclude that only visions and direct statements of God are inspired. For the Bible also identifies the biblical writers’ historical records, poetry, worship songs and so on as divinely inspired. King David the great song writer said: “the Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue” (2 Sam. 23:2). Isaiah said: “search from the book of the LORD, and read” (Isa. 34:16). Young writes, “He [Isaiah] is in effect referring to this prophecy as a part of a whole. It is part of an actual Scripture, of a book written down, so that men may turn to it and find therein the reference to this prophecy. Isaiah appeals to written words of God as the authority by which men are to judge the truthfulness of His message. When one finds the prophecy in the Scripture he is to read, and by reading, will be able to verify the truthfulness of what Isaiah had predicted” (Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969], 2:442). Paul said, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Tim. 3:16; cf., 2 Pet. 1:21). There are scores and scores of passages that confirm this teaching. Here are a few samples. “So the LORD said to him [Moses], ‘Who has made man’s mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the LORD? Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say’” (Ex. 4:11-12). “The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue” (2 Sam. 23:2). “Then the LORD put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me: ‘Behold, I have put My words in your mouth’” (Jer. 1:9).

3. The Bible asserts its own purity, perfection and truth. Therefore, any idea that Scripture contains impurities, imperfections or falsehoods must be rejected. “The words of the LORD are pure words” (Ps. 12:6). “The law of the LORD is perfect.... The commandment of the LORD is pure” (Ps. 19:7, 8). “Your word is very pure.... The entirety of Your word is truth” (Ps. 119:140, 160). “Every word of God is pure” (Pr. 30:5). Jesus said, “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth” (Jn. 17:17). The non-Christian world and all Modernists reject these passages. Contrary to all modernist apostates we declare with the apostle Paul: “Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar” (Rom. 3:4).

4. The inspired authors of the New Testament regarded the Old Testament writings as the word of God. They repeatedly appeal to the Old Testament as coming directly from Jehovah. There is no question that all the apostles held to a strict view of verbal plenary inspiration. This fact is demonstrated in the manner in which the New Testament authors refer to the Old

⁵ G. W. Bromiley, “Word, Word of the Lord” in Merrill C. Tenney, ed., *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1975), 5:957.

Testament when they quote from it. There are passages that are said to be spoken by God and there even passages that substitute the word of Scripture for God.

Examples of New Testament authors which attribute Old Testament passages to God are as follows. Matthew refers to Isaiah's prophecy of the virgin birth of Christ (Isa. 7:14) as "spoken by the LORD" (Mt. 1:22; cf., 2:15). When the apostle Peter referred to Psalms 69:25 and 109:8 he introduces them by saying: "this Scripture must be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David" (Ac. 1:16). Before he referred to Psalm 2:1-2 he also said: "LORD, You are God...who by the mouth of your servant David have said: 'Why did the nations rage...?'" (Ac. 4:24-25). "Therefore He [God] also says in another Psalm: 'You will not allow your Holy One to see corruption'" (Ac. 13:35). Before quoting from Isaiah 55:3 (which Modernists do not even believe was written by Isaiah) Paul said, "He [God] has spoken thus: 'I will give you the sure mercies of David'" (Ac. 13:34). When the author of Hebrews quoted from Psalm 2:7; Deuteronomy 32:43; Psalm 97:7 and Psalm 104:4 he said, "For to which of the angels did He [God] ever say" (Heb. 1:5); "But when He again brings the first born into the world, He [God] says" (Heb. 1:6); "And of the angels He [God] says" (Heb. 1:7). When the same author introduced Psalm 95:7-11 he said, "Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says" (Heb. 3:7).

B. B. Warfield gives numerous other examples. He writes, "In the same line with these passages are commonly ranged certain others, in which Scripture seems to be adduced with a subjectless *legei* or *phasi*, the authoritative subject—whether the divinely given Word or God Himself—being taken for granted. Among these have been counted such passages, for example, as the following: Rom. 9:15, 'For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion' (Ex. 33:19); Rom. 15:10, 'And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people' (Deut. 32:43); and again, 'Praise the LORD, all ye Gentiles; and let all the people praise him' (Ps. 107:1); Gal. 3:16, 'He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed (Gen. 13:15), which is Christ;' Eph. 4:8, 'Wherefore he saith, when he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men' (Ps. 68:18); Eph. 5:14, 'Wherefore he saith, awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead and Christ shall shine upon thee' (Isa. 60:1); 1 Cor. 6:16, 'For the twain, saith he, shall become one flesh' (Gen. 2:24); 1 Cor. 15:27, 'But when he saith, all things are put in subjection' (Ps. 8:7); 2 Cor. 6:2, 'For he saith, at an acceptable time, I hearkened unto thee, and in a day of salvation did I succor thee' (Isa. 49:8); Heb. 8:5, 'For see, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern that was showed thee in the mount' (Ex. 25:40); James 4:6, 'Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud but giveth grace to the humble' (Prov. 3:34)."⁶ The fact that the apostles repeatedly say, "he says" (which obviously refers to God) when quoting from the Old Testament Scriptures, is irrefutable evidence that they regarded it as divinely inspired.

Not only do the apostles say "God says," "He says," "the Lord says" or "the Holy Spirit says" when referring to the Old Testament, they also substitute the word Scripture for God. In

⁶ B. B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority Of The Bible* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1948), p. 301. Warfield in a lengthy study of the New Testament phrase "the oracles of God" argues decisively that such a phrase meant that the N. T. writers regarded the whole Old Testament Scripture as "the very Word of God." He writes, "It will probably seem reasonable to most to interpret Rom. iii.2 as certainly, Heb. v. 12 as probably, and Acts vii. 38 as very likely making reference to the written Scriptures; and as bearing witness to the conception of them on the part of the New Testament writers as 'the oracles of God.' That is to say, we have unobtrusive and convincing evidence here that the Old Testament Scriptures, as such, were esteemed by the writers of the New Testament as an oracular book, which in itself not merely contains, but is the 'utterance,' the very Word of God' and it to be appealed to as such and as such deferred to, because nothing other than the crystallized speech of God" (*The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, p. 406).

Galatians 3:8 Paul wrote: “And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, ‘In you all the nations shall be blessed’” [cf. Gen. 12:1-3]. In Romans 9:17 Paul wrote: “For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, ‘Even for this purpose I have raised you up’” [cf. Ex. 9:16]. In both of these examples God is the One who spoke. God spoke directly to Abraham and He spoke to Pharaoh by Moses. For the apostle Paul, no distinction existed between Scripture speaking and God speaking. The Bible has the same infallibility, dependability and authority as God Himself speaking. The apostle so habitually identified “the text of Scripture with God as speaking, that it became natural to use the term ‘Scripture says,’ when what was really intended was ‘God as recorded in Scripture said.’”⁷

5. An examination of the gospels reveals that Christ believed and taught that the Old Testament Scriptures are divinely inspired and completely authoritative in all matters of faith and practice. What is of particular interest is the fact that Christ believed and taught that all the Old Testament historical narratives are true, reliable, and factual accounts of what actually occurred. Jesus even held to the literal historicity of events that virtually all Modernists deny. He pointed to the creation of Adam and Eve by God as the definitive answer to the Pharisees’ question regarding divorce (Mt. 19:4; Mk 10:6-8). He referred to the murder of Abel, Adam and Eve’s son (Lk. 11:51). Our Lord used Noah and the flood to illustrate what would occur at the second coming (Mt. 24:37-39; Lk. 17:26, 27). He also referred to Lot (Lk. 17:28-32) and the destruction of Sodom by fire and brimstone (Mt. 10:15; 11:23, 24; Lk. 10:12). If these events never really happened, then they could not have been used by Christ as *historical* paradigms of the events surrounding the second coming (unless one believes the second coming is a myth and that Christ is a liar). Jesus used the historical account of Jonah and the great fish to illustrate His resurrection (Mt. 12:39-41; Lk. 11:29, 30, 32). Once again, if Christ was mistaken regarding Jonah’s stay in the fish’s belly then why should He be trusted regarding the central tenet of the Christian faith—the resurrection?

Jesus taught the historicity of the Patriarchs: Abraham (Jn. 8:56), Isaac and Jacob (Mt. 8:11; Lk. 13:28). Unlike Modernists, He taught that Moses wrote the Pentateuch. Moses is the giver of the law (Mt. 8:4; 19:8; Mk. 1:44; 7:10; 10:5; 12:26; Lk. 5:14; 20:37; Jn 5:46; 7:19). Christ repeatedly referred to the Old Testament moral law as the absolute standard for ethics (e.g., Mt. 18:16; 19:4-6, 18-19; 22:37-40; Mk. 10:19; 12:29-31). He called the Old Testament law the commandment of God (Mt. 15:3-4). Jesus taught that David was a psalm writer who wrote by divine inspiration: “For David himself said by the Holy Spirit” (Mk. 12:36; cf., Mt. 22:43-44; Lk. 20:42-43). He repeatedly quoted from the book of Psalms as an infallible prophetic guide to His own ministry and to settle matters of doctrine and ethics (e.g., Ps. 8:2—Mt. 21:16; Ps. 22:1—Mk. 15:34; Ps. 31:5—Lk. 23:46; Ps. 41:9—Jn. 13:18; Ps. 69:4—Jn. 15:25 [note Jesus’ phrase, “that the word might be fulfilled”]; Ps. 118:22, 23—Mt. 21:42; Mk. 12:10; Lk. 20:17; Ps. 118:26—Mt. 23:39, Lk. 13:35; Ps. 110:1—Mt. 22:43-44, Mk. 12:36; Lk. 20:42-43).

Jesus taught that the prophetic writings of the Old Testament were inspired by God and absolutely true. He quoted from Isaiah (Isa. 6:9, 10—Mt. 13:14, Mk. 4:12; Isa. 29:13—Mt. 15:7-9, Mk. 7:6-7, Lk. 8:10; Isa. 53:12—Lk. 22:37; Isa. 54:13—Jn 6:45; Isa. 56:17—Mt. 21:23, Lk. 19:46, Mk. 11:17; Isa. 61:1, 2—Lk. 4:19; Isa. 66:24—Mk. 9:48) and unlike Modernists did not believe or teach that there were 2 or 3 different authors of the book. He quoted from Jeremiah (Jer. 7:11—Mt.21:13, Lk. 19:46, Mk. 11:17), Daniel (Dan. 11:31, 12:11—Mt. 24:15, Mk. 13:14), Hosea (Hos. 6:6—Mt. 12:7; Hos. 10:8—Lk. 23:30); Micah (Mic. 7:6—Mt. 10:36); Zechariah (Zech. 13:7—Mt. 26:31, Mk. 14:27), and Malachi (Mal. 3:1—Mt. 11:10). When

⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 299-300.

Christ discussed the prophetic element of the Old Testament He taught without equivocation that *everything* written regarding Himself must come true. “Then He said to them, ‘These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that *all things must be fulfilled* which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me’” (Lk. 24:44). For Christ, Scripture has an absolute dependability. “Then He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day’” (Lk. 24:46). When the Bible says that something will take place, there is an absolute necessity that it must come to pass. Furthermore, Jesus did not extend biblical authority to only part of the Bible, or to only the thoughts of the authors, but to the very letters. “For assuredly I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled” (Mt. 5:18).

A passage where Christ teaches the plenary inspiration and divine authority of every word in the original manuscripts of the Old Testament Scriptures is John 10:34-35: “Jesus answered them, ‘Is it not written in your law, ‘I said, ‘You are gods’”? If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken). . . .’” In this passage Jesus: (1) Bases His whole argument upon one word in the Hebrew text. (2) Says that the Old Testament (the word law is used in a broad sense to include the writings and the prophets) is the word of God. (3) Says that Scripture cannot be broken. That is, it cannot be deprived of its binding authority. “Scripture cannot be broken. It is absolutely indestructible, no matter how man may regard it. The Old Testament, *as it lies there in written form!* is inspired, infallible, and authoritative.”⁸ Pink writes, “Mark how in v. 35 the Savior said, ‘The Scripture cannot be broken.’ What a high honor did He here place upon the written Word! In making use of this verse from the Psalmist against His enemies, the whole point of His argument lay *in a single word*—‘gods’—and the fact that it occurred in the book divinely inspired. The Scriptures were the final court of appeal, and here the Lord insists on their absolute authority and verbal inerrancy.”⁹ “That ‘the Scripture cannot be broken’ presupposes the inspiration of the Scripture, is for all who will see, perfectly clear.”¹⁰ J. C. Ryle writes, “Scripture cannot be broken. The theories of those who say that the writers of the Bible were inspired, but not all their writings,—or the ideas of the Bible inspired, but not all the language in which these ideas are conveyed,—appear to be totally irreconcilable with our Lord’s use of the sentence before us. There is no other standing ground, I believe, about inspiration, excepting the principle that it is plenary, and reaches to every syllable. Once leaving that ground, we are plunged in a sea of uncertainties. Like the carefully composed language of wills, settlements, and conveyances, every word of the Bible must be held sacred, and not a single flaw or slip of the pen admitted” (*Expository Thoughts on the Gospels* [Cambridge, England: James Clarke and Co., 1976] 2:251).

When Jesus was confronted by Satan in the wilderness He responded to every temptation with a quote from the Old Testament. Each quote is introduced by our Lord with the authoritative formula “It is written” (Mt. 4:4, 7, 10; Lk. 4:4, 8). This phrase, “it is written” (*gegraptai*), indicates that the Scripture passages quoted by Christ from Deuteronomy were written or given in the past by God yet continue to be have enduring effect. They continue to have God’s authority behind them. They still are in force and must be obeyed. A good translation of *gegraptai* would be “it stands written.” Our Lord could have spoken on His own authority, or

⁸ William Hendriksen, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1953), p. 128.

⁹ A. W. Pink, *Exposition of the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1975 [1945]), 2:149.

¹⁰ E. W. Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Gospel of John* (Minneapolis, MN: Klock and Klock, 1980 [1865]), 1:542.

even have given new revelation, but He chose to say, “It is written.” He stood squarely upon the authority of the Old Testament Scriptures. He relied upon the sword of the Spirit. “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword” (Heb. 4:12). “Christ uses Scripture as his shield: for this is the true way of fighting, if we wish to make ourselves sure of the victory.”¹¹ The formula “it is written” occurs at least seventy times in the New Testament. Warfield writes, “When a NT writer says, ‘It is written,’ there can arise no doubt where what he thus adduces as possessing absolute authority over the thought and consciences of men is to be found written. The simple adjunction in this solemn and decisive manner of a written authority, carries with it the implication that the appeal is made to the indefectible authority of the Scriptures of God, which in all their parts and in every one of their declarations are clothed with the authority of God Himself.”¹²

Jesus’ attitude toward Scripture can also be observed in His confrontations with His chief opponents the Scribes and Pharisees. Christ constantly rebuked the scribes and Pharisees for not believing in and submitting to the Scriptures. “For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words” (Jn. 5:46-47)? (Some Modernists do not believe Moses or his writings; then, according to Christ, how can they believe in Him?) Our Lord rebuked the Pharisees for *adding* human traditions to the word of God. “Why do you transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?... Thus you have made the commandments of God of no effect by your tradition” (Mt. 15:3, 6). Christ’s statement clearly presupposes that Scripture is the ultimate, sole standard of doctrine and ethics. Jesus taught that the opinions of men were subject to error but that Scripture held an unchallengeable authority. Unlike Modernists, our Lord taught that men are *not* to submit Scripture to their fallible human opinions but rather to submit themselves to Scripture’s inerrant God-breathed authority. Modernists have nullified Scripture by replacing it with their own unbelieving, wicked and even blasphemous opinions. Christ’s denunciation of the Sadducees applies to all Modernists: “You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God” (Mt. 22:29). Jesus’ answer to false doctrine was “have you not read what was spoken to you by God” (Mt. 22:31; cf. Mk. 12:26; Lk. 20:37).

How do Modernists respond to the fact that Jesus believed in and taught the inspiration and inerrancy of the Old Testament Scriptures? The more radical Modernists would say that Christ was merely human and was simply mistaken regarding the Bible. In other words He was finite, limited in knowledge and subject to errors in judgment, just like the rest of us. This view is blatantly un-Christian and evil. Other Modernists, who are more concerned about appearing to be Christian, argue that He accommodated Himself to the culture and society in which He lived. In other words, He knew that the Scriptures were full of mistakes, lies and myths, but He *pretended* they were inerrant because he didn’t want to upset His first century audience. They assert that if Jesus came during the twentieth century He would be a Modernist and would openly admit that the Bible is full of mistakes, mythological stories and legends.

Is this Modernist response to Christ’s teaching regarding the Old Testament Scriptures biblical? Is it rational? The very idea that Jesus Christ (who is God [Mt. 1:23; Jn. 1:1-3, 14; Rom. 9:6], who cannot lie [Tit.1:2; Heb. 6:18], who is omniscient [Heb. 4:13; Rom. 11:22]) would appeal to a lie, or a myth, or to a redaction of evil con-artist priests to establish a doctrine or ethical teaching and present that teaching as God’s word which is absolutely true, is an explicit denial of Christianity. To teach, as Modernists do, that either Christ was *unaware* of the

¹¹ John Calvin, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1981), 16:214.

¹² B. B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, p. 240.

mythological nature of the creation account, Noah and the flood, Sodom and Gomorrah and Jonah and the great fish; or, that He purposely lied to the people (to cater to the erroneous Jewish teachings regarding the Scriptures that were popular in His day) is a denial of the Christ of the Bible. A Jesus who was not God, who was a sinful man, who was unethical, who was a rotten liar cannot be an atonement for the sins of the elect. The modernist Christ is no more ethical than a con-artist cult leader or the typical (habitual liar) democratic politician. The doctrine of biblical inerrancy is so interwoven with the doctrine of Christ that to deny the former logically leads to a denial of the latter. Plenary inspiration and the biblical inerrancy of the autographa is a heaven or hell issue.

Further, the idea that Jesus purposely lied to the people because He did not want to offend their first century misconceptions regarding Scripture is rendered ludicrous when one observes how Christ offended the Jewish people throughout His ministry. He referred to the Jewish leaders as blind leaders of the blind (Mt. 15:6, 14), hypocrites (Mt. 23:13), sons of the devil (Jn. 8:44) and white washed tombs (Mt. 23:27). He referred to the Jewish people as a generation of vipers (Mt. 3:7; 12:34; 23:33; Lk. 3:7), and as a wicked and adulterous generation (Mt. 12:45; 16:4). He taught a very restrictive, unpopular view of divorce (Mt. 19:9). He refused to accommodate His own view of the kingdom to the popular, carnal Jewish concept of the Messiah as an earthly, military conqueror and dictator and thus refused their attempt to make Him king (Jn. 6:15). He appears to have purposely offended the masses when He told them of the necessity of eating His flesh and drinking His blood (Jn. 6:51-56). When He told the Jews that He was equal to the Father they became so angry they took up stones to kill Him (Jn. 10:28-39). Whenever He encountered false teaching among the Jews He repeatedly refuted such teaching without any regard to the enmity that it would cause toward Him (Mt. 5:20ff; 12:3-8; 15:3-20, etc.). Christ's primary concern was never with popularity but with setting forth the truth regarding Himself and Scripture. He faithfully delivered the message given to Him by the Father unto the people. "He who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard from Him....I speak what I have seen with My Father" (Jn. 8:26, 38). Jesus is "the way, *the truth* and the life" (Jn. 14:6; cf., Jn. 1:14). He is "the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness" (Rev. 3:14; cf. Isa. 65:16). He is *not* the false prophet, liar and fraud that Modernists present Him to be. Do you believe in the Christ of Scripture or the false Christ of the Modernist?¹³

¹³ The modernist position is also the denial of the kingship or mediatorial reign of Christ. After the resurrection Jesus the theanthropic Messiah is made the exalted king over all things in heaven and on earth (Mt. 28:18; Ac. 2:34-36; Rom. 1:4). Before the ascension He commanded His disciples to make disciples of the nations "by teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Mt. 28:20). Since Jesus authored all the Scriptures by His Spirit, and since He Himself taught the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible, then the Bible is a book that is to be used to disciple the nations. Christ is the king who rules by the Holy Spirit and the word of God. The Bible is our king's law-word over the nations. Modernists, however, present a king with no real law. If the Bible is full of lies, myths and legends and cannot be trusted, then it cannot serve as our blueprint for godly dominion. Thus, no one should be surprised to discover that Modernists seek dominion through the state's power. They have embraced the religion of man—secular humanism. As a result, on virtually every major issue they hold to a position diametrically opposed to the Bible (e.g., they support abortion on demand, socialism, infanticide, euthanasia, sodomite and lesbian rights, radical feminism, earth-worship, environmentalism, opposition to the death penalty, etc.). There is no neutrality. Apart from God speaking infallibly and authoritatively to mankind in the Bible, people are left with mysticism, existentialism and statism. North writes, "power religion is a religion of *man's autonomy*. It seeks power or wealth in order to make credible this claim. In the cosmic hierarchy of authority, there can be no meaningful, efficacious judicial appeal beyond mankind in history" (*Crossed Fingers: How the Liberals Captured the Presbyterian Church* [Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1996], p. 47). By destroying biblical authority, Modernists have severed all communication with God. They cannot murder the true prophets of God like their apostate predecessors did in Israel, so they did murder the Bible and its authority instead.

6. An examination of the prophetic office reveals that God required 100% accuracy of all genuine prophets. Anything less was a death-penalty offense. “But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. And if you say in your heart, ‘How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?’—when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him” (Dt. 18:20-22). If God required 100% accuracy of a prophet in order for that prophet to be a true prophet of Jehovah, then according to the Modernist view of the Old Testament the Scriptures are primarily the work of false prophets. What is the point of having a Scripture reading, or the exposition of Scripture, or even going to church, if the Bible isn’t true, if the Bible doesn’t even meet the test of Deuteronomy 18:20-22? A person would be better off if he stayed in bed than if he attended an apostate-unbelieving modernist church. Furthermore, the Bible says that a prophet who teaches the people to worship a false god is to be put to death (Dt. 13:1-5). Since Modernists teach people to worship a false Christ and a false god they stand under a special curse of God. In a true Christian nation they would be executed and their seminaries would be closed or given to God’s true teachers of the word.

7. The Bible contains many commands not to add or detract from God’s word. These commands presuppose that God’s word is unique; that only God’s word is infallible and authoritative. God’s word explicitly teaches *sola Scriptura*. “You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you” (Dt. 4:2). “Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it” (Dt. 12:32). “Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him. Do not add to His words, lest He reprove you, and you be found a liar” (Pr. 30:5-6). “For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book” (Rev. 22:18-19).

If, as Modernists assert, the Bible is full of lies, myths and legends, then why does the Bible contain such stern warnings against altering the text of God’s word? If the Bible is fallible; if it is a mixture of truth and error; if it contains the mistaken and even dishonest manipulative alterations of men (e.g., the J, D, E, and P theory); then the many strong warnings not to tamper with God’s word are the words of deluded fools. But if the Bible is what it claims to be (the inerrant, inspired, very words of God), then woe unto Modernists who make a mockery of the Bible’s claims. These false teachers “...are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever” (Jude 12-13). We must heed the words of the prophet Isaiah: “To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (8:20).

8. The Bible contains some very specific declarations that the Scriptures are inspired by God. The two classical passages on the subject of inspiration are 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:21.

In his second epistle to Timothy (and the last letter he wrote) Paul is concerned that Timothy “hold fast the pattern of sound words” (1 Tim. 1:13) that he had been instructed in by the apostle. Paul wants Timothy to “commit these [teachings] to faithful men who will be able to

teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2). Timothy must be concerned about “rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15) and his own personal sanctification (cf. 2 Tim. 2:21-22) for there are many who stray from the truth; who are involved in “profane and vain babblings” (2 Tim. 2:16). Timothy must also be prepared for the coming time of lawlessness and persecution. In contrast to the evil men and false teachers who “will grow worse and worse” (2 Tim. 3:13), Timothy is to continue in: 1.) the inspired teachings of the apostle Paul (cf. 2 Tim. 2:2; 3:10, 3:14) and 2.) the Holy Scriptures (i.e., the Old Testament). Why? Because “all Scripture is God breathed.” The passage in its immediate context says: “But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:14-17).

Paul says that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Tim. 3:16). This verse raises two questions. What does Paul mean by the phrase “all Scripture” and what does he mean by “inspiration of God”? The term Scripture (*graphe*), which occurs over fifty times in the New Testament (in a singular or plural form), *always* refers either to the whole Old Testament (the sacred Scriptures) or to a passage from the Old Testament (e.g., Mk. 12:10). The Greek word *pasa* can be translated as “all” (KJV, NKJV, NASB, NIV, RSV, JB) or as “every” (ASV, NEB). Most translators and commentators (at least the conservative ones) favor translating *pasa* as “all” for the following reasons. First, the Greek grammar permits (cf. Rom. 11:26) and some of the greatest Greek scholars (e.g., C. F. D. Moule) favor the translation *all*. Second, the context decidedly favors the translation *all*. Paul had just told Timothy in verse 15 that the Holy Scriptures (i.e., the whole Old Testament) are able to make a person “wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” Paul then proceeds to tell Timothy why the Holy Scriptures are able to do this. It is because “all Scripture”, or the entire Old Testament, is inspired. Third, the translation “every Scripture” is easily interpreted in a manner that violates the immediate context and the analogy of Scripture. A Modernist could say that “every inspired Scripture” (NEB) is profitable, but the uninspired Scriptures are not profitable. This translation contradicts verse 15 (as noted above) where Paul says the whole Old Testament is able to make one wise for salvation and the hundreds of passages that teach or imply the inspiration of the Old Testament. Many conservative scholars (e.g., William Hendriksen, George W. Knight III, Fairbairn) argue that the translation “every Scripture” still teaches the inspiration of the entire Old Testament for it would mean that every Old Testament passage, or every component part of the sacred Scripture is inspired. The important thing to note is that Paul explicitly teaches that *the entire Old Testament* is inspired by God. This one passage refutes all the foolish trash that emanates from modernist colleges and seminaries (i.e., Satan’s training centers).

The second question is: what does “inspired by God” mean? Does it mean that the authors of Scripture had a special gift of human inspiration like Shakespeare or Milton? Does it mean that the Bible has the ability to inspire its reader? In 2 Timothy it means neither. Both views are totally off the mark. The Greek word translated “inspired by God” (*theopneustos*) is a compound word which contains the word for God (*theos*) and the verb for breathe (*pneo*). The verb has an aorist stem (*pneus*) with the verbal adjective ending—*tos*.¹⁴ Thus, it literally means “God-breathed.” The reason that virtually all English translations use the phrase “inspired by God” is because the early English translators followed the Latin Vulgate (*inspiratus a Deo*) and

¹⁴ George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), p. 446.

that tradition is still with us. The great Bible scholar B. B. Warfield has proved (rather conclusively) in a fifty page article on the word *theopneustos* that the word should be taken as a passive verbal form. This means that Scripture's *source* is the breath of God. Warfield writes, "What is *theopneustos* is 'God-breathed,' produced by the creative breath of the Almighty. And Scripture is called *theopneustos* in order to designate it as 'God-breathed,' the product of Divine spiration, the creation of that Spirit who is in all spheres of the Divine activity, the executive of the Godhead. The traditional translation of the word by the Latin *inspiratus a Deo* is no doubt also discredited, if we are to take it at the foot of the letter. It does not express a breathing *into* the Scriptures by God. But the ordinary conception attached to it, while among the Fathers or the Dogmaticians, is in general vindicated. What it affirms is that the Scriptures owe their origin to an activity of God the Holy Ghost and are in the highest and truest sense His creation. It is on this foundation of Divine origin that all the high attributes of Scripture are built."¹⁵ The divine breath refers to the Spirit of God who guided the human authors of Scripture in such a manner that what they wrote was exactly what God wanted. Paul writes, "But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2:10-11). To say that all Scripture is God-breathed is the same as saying that all Scripture is God's word.

The apostle Peter also teaches that Scripture is a result of a special work of the Holy Spirit. "And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:19-21).

In order to understand verse 21 one must first consider the context of the passage. Verse 21 comes at the end of and is the climax of a section which deals with the apostolic testimony regarding Jesus Christ and the nature of sacred Scripture which confirms that testimony (2 Pet. 1:16-21). This section is found in a crucial position in between: first, a section where Peter tells the recipients of the letter he is about to die and he wants to remind them to be "established in the present truth" (2 Pet. 1:12); and second, a long section in which the recipients are warned of false prophets and false teachers (2 Pet. 2:1-22). Then Peter returns to the theme of the third section with a discussion of scoffers (2 Pet. 3:3 ff.). It is interesting that the two classical passages regarding inspiration and divine origin of Scripture both came in the context of the need to continue in correct doctrine and a warning regarding false teachers. For both Paul and Peter the word of God is the only way to maintain sound doctrine and eliminate false teachers.

In the section which contains Peter's discussion of inspiration he sets forth his apologetic for the truth of the Christian faith. First he sets forth his apostolic witness. The apostles in preaching the gospel were not following "cunningly devised fables" (2 Pet. 1:16) or myths,¹⁶ or

¹⁵ B. B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, p. 296.

¹⁶ "The word *fables* (*muthoi*) carried a disparaging flavour in the religious language of the time; it stood for mythical stories about gods, the creation of the world, miraculous happenings, etc." (J. N. D. Kelly, *The Epistles of Peter and of Jude* [Peabody, MA: Hendrikson, 1969], p. 316. Peter, in refuting the unbelievers, scoffers and skeptics of his day, also refutes the Modernists of our day. Modernists teach the exact opposite of what Peter says. Modernists assert that the early church did follow cunningly devised myths regarding creation, the flood, Jonah and the fish, the destruction of Sodom, the virgin birth of Christ, the miracles of our Lord and the bodily resurrection of Christ. Peter's whole point in verse 16 is that the apostles were preaching historical facts—real events. The common modernist ploy of arguing that "whether miraculous gospel events really happened isn't important, for it is the

human lies. They were eyewitnesses to the real historical events. Peter singles out the transfiguration where Peter, James and John were practically blinded by the glory of Christ and where they heard the voice of God the Father testifying about His beloved Son. Second, he turns his attention to the nature of sacred Scripture. Scripture is absolutely trustworthy; therefore, it must be obeyed.

In verses 19 to 21 Peter identifies three things about the nature of Scripture. First he says, “We also have the prophetic word made more sure” (2 Pet. 1:19). This statement can be legitimately interpreted in two different ways. It can mean that the Old Testament predictions were attested and thus made more sure by the apostolic eyewitness accounts of the perfect fulfillment of prophecy regarding Christ and His kingdom. Or it may mean that the written word of God is more sure than even being an eyewitness of a miraculous event. Nisbet writes, “He calls it *a more sure Word*, comparing it with *the voice from Heaven*, but because it is a greater matter to have foreseen and foretold things to come, than to have seen and related the greatest things present. And because a transient voice is more easily mistaken or forgotten than a standing authentic record, therefore the written word is a more sure ground for sinners’ faith to rest upon than a voice from heaven could be.”¹⁷

Second, Peter says, “that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation” (2 Pet. 1:20). This statement is interpreted in a number of different ways. For the sake of brevity we will consider two of the better interpretations. The first, which is partially reflected in most English translations, regards the Greek word *epilyseos* as meaning *interpretation*. The word has the basic meaning of loosening, unloosing, or untying something and in this context it carries the metaphorical meaning of explaining or interpreting Scripture. Therefore, Peter’s point is that no one should impose his own imaginations or fantasies upon Scripture but should let Scripture interpret Scripture “because the Spirit, who spoke by the prophets, is the only true interpreter of himself.”¹⁸ According to this interpretation Peter rebukes false teachers who rush headlong into Scripture with all sorts of fanciful ideas. Scripture is unique. As a divinely inspired book it must be treated with a special reverence and care.

The second interpretation regards the word *epilyseos* as referring to origin or source. Thus, the meaning is that “no prophecy of Scripture comes out of private disclosure,”¹⁹ or “originates or arises, as the result of any private determination.”²⁰ This interpretation fits in beautifully with verse 21. Peter is saying that prophecy is not something that the prophets made up or came up with on their own. On the contrary, these men spoke because they were moved or carried along by the Holy Spirit (verse 21 explains verse 20).

Peter completes his consideration of Scripture with an explanation of divine inspiration. “For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet. 1:21). The apostle explicitly refutes the Modernist view of inspiration.

religious existential effect of these stories that is important” is forever dispelled by Peter’s appeal to historical, space-time factuality.

¹⁷ Alexander Nisbet, *1 and 2 Peter* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1982 [1658]), p. 239.

¹⁸ John Calvin, *Commentary on the Second Epistle of Peter* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1981), 22:389.

¹⁹ A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, n. d. [1933]), 6:158.

²⁰ D. M. Lloyd-Jones, *Expository Sermons on 2 Peter* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1983 [1948-1950]), p. 95. “Therefore 1:20 should be translated, ‘No written prophecy ever came into being by any individual’s setting it free, [or, more literally,] by private release. Because...,’ etc. Peter is asserting the complete absence of human initiative in revelation. Revelation is initiated by God. Therefore, since God revealed the message to Moses or Isaiah, it must be true and therefore authoritative” (Gordon H. Clark, *The Holy Spirit* [Jefferson, MD: The Trinity Foundation, 1993], p. 30).

Peter says that prophecy or divine revelation *never* came by, sprang forth, or originated out of the will of man. Contrary to much modern religious thought, the Bible is *not* just a collection of the writings of men who had wonderful religious experiences and encounters with God. It is *not* a record of human wisdom, cunning or insight. It is *not* a record of what wise men thought would happen. It is *not* a redaction of power-hungry corrupt priests or of second or third century church officials bent on molding Christ in their own image. The only prophecy that arises as a result of the human will is *false* prophecy. “Thus says the LORD of host: Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophecy to you. They make you worthless; they speak a vision of their own heart, not from the mouth of the LORD” (Jer. 23:16; cf. 14:14). “Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel who prophesy, and say to those who prophesy *out of their own heart*, ‘Hear the word of the LORD!’ Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Woe to the foolish prophets, *who follow their own spirit* and have seen nothing’” (Ezek. 12:3-3)!

Peter says that genuine prophecy came because “holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” What does Peter mean when he says that men *were moved* by the Holy Spirit? The word translated moved (*pheromenoi*) means to be carried along or driven. It is the same word that is used to describe a ship driven by the wind in Acts (cf. 27:15, 17). The Spirit of God came upon the prophets and apostles and carried them along. The Holy Spirit gave them a special revelation and controlled them in such a way as to guarantee that what they said or wrote was the very word of God. “The human authors were powerfully guided and directed by the Holy Spirit. As a result, what they wrote is not only without error but of supreme value for man. It is *all* that God wanted it to be. It constitutes the infallible rule of faith and practice for mankind.”²¹ Smeaton writes, “They remained silent till they received the Spirit’s communication, or the unmistakable impulse of the Spirit (Jer. xx. 17); in other words, they did not start till the lists were opened, and they were told to run. The Spirit did not give them this gift as a permanent habit, or as so much reserved wealth from which they could draw at their discretion. He gave them light and divine communications for the official purpose which all inspiration subserved only at certain times; and He so moved them that they could not but speak or write what the Spirit enjoined them to declare.”²² Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones tells us the significance of Peter’s statement. He writes, “We have set out by Peter in this very explicit manner the great New Testament and Old Testament doctrine of revelation. The claim is made here that God has been pleased in His infinite compassion and condensation to speak to men. The claim is made for this Book that it is absolutely unique, that there is no other book in the world like it. All other books are the production of man; they are the result of man’s will, man’s understanding, man’s insight. But here is a Book which claims that it is a record of God speaking. And it claims this with regard to the message—revelation—and also the way in which the message was recorded—inspiration.”²³

Although the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture is clearly taught in the Bible, there are some issues that need to be discussed in order to sharpen our understanding of this doctrine. First, inspiration applies to the Bible as a whole and not just to direct revelations given to prophets by visions, dreams or language. The historical sections, poetry, proverbs, epistles, etc. are inspired. A passage of Scripture does not have to be dictated by God to be inspired and authoritative. Thus, those sections of Scripture which are not the result of a direct vision or voice of God came by a special superintendence of the Holy Spirit. (This brings us to our next point.)

²¹ William Hendriksen, *Thessalonians, Timothy and Titus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1979), 2:302.

²² George Smeaton, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1974 [1881]), p. 149.

²³ D. M. Lloyd-Jones, *Expository Sermons on 2 Peter*, p. 98.

Second, the Bible does not teach what has been called the dictation theory of inspiration. That is the writers of Scripture were not used like robots, neither were they mere amanuenses. Reformed Churches have always (rightly) held to what is called the organic view of biblical inspiration. This means that the Holy Spirit operated on the writers of the Bible in such a manner that preserved the natural exercise of their faculties. Thus, all the peculiarities of each author are preserved. Each author has his own life experiences, personality, and writing style that are reflected in their written works. The Bible is the product of both God's and man's agency; however, the Holy Spirit worked concurrently in and through the authors to sovereignly produce a perfect, infallible outcome. Hendriksen gives an excellent description of this process: "By causing him to be born at a certain time and place, bestowing upon him specific endowments, equipping him with a definite kind of education, causing him to undergo predetermined experiences, and bringing back to his mind certain facts and their implications, the Spirit prepared his human consciousness. Next, that same Spirit moved him to write. Finally, during the process of writing, that same Primary Author, in a thoroughly organic connection with all the preceding activity, suggested to the mind of the human author that language (the very words!) and that style, which would be the most appropriate vehicle for the interpretation of the divine ideas for people of every rank and position, age and race. Hence, though every word is truly the word of the human author, it is even more truly the Word of God."²⁴

Third, the inspiration of God extends not just to the thoughts of the biblical authors but also to the very words. Theologians refer to this as *verbal inspiration*. 1.) New Testament writers and Jesus Himself made theological distinctions and arguments on the basis of a single word. As earlier noted, Jesus based a whole argument on the single word "gods" (Jn. 10:34, 35). In Galatians 3:16 Paul bases a whole theological argument on the fact that one word is singular (seed) and not plural (seeds). Christ and the apostles believed in the accuracy of Scripture down to the most minute details. 2.) The Bible specifically says that the very words of Scripture are of the Spirit of God. "These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor. 2:13; cf. 1 Th. 2:13). Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away but My words will by no means pass away" (Mk. 13:31). "Thus says the LORD: 'Stand in the court of the LORD's house, and speak to all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the LORD's house, all the words that I command you to speak to them. Do not diminish a word'" (Jer. 26:2). 3.) The idea (common among those who hold to a theory of partial inspiration) that the thoughts of the biblical writers were inspired but that the very words are not inspired is illogical. Can infallibly true thoughts be expressed with inaccurate, untrue words? Thoughts are made up of individual words. Inerrant thoughts can only be secured and preserved through inspired, infallible words.

9. The New Testament not only proves the inspiration and authority of the Old Testament but it also testifies to its own inspiration. This point needs to be made because modernist scoffers sometimes will admit that the biblical evidence for the inspiration and infallibility of the Old Testament is very strong. (However they still do not believe in it or submit to its authority.) But they argue that there is no evidence for the inspiration and authority of the New Testament.

There are many reasons why we must accept the full inspiration and authority of the New Testament. First, the apostles had a unique calling, mission and authority from Christ (Mt. 10:40-41, Ac. 1:21-22; 1 Cor. 9:1; 15:7-8), whereby they received special revelations of the Spirit (Eph. 3:3-5) and special sign gifts (Ac. 14:3; Heb. 2:3-4). Jesus promised the apostles that they would be supernaturally guided by the Holy Spirit during the most difficult and crucial moments of

²⁴ William Hendriksen, *Thessalonians, Timothy and Titus*, 2:302.

their ministry (cf. Mt. 10:19; Lk, 12:14; Jn 14:16; 15:26, 16:7, 14). The apostles had the unique responsibility of establishing the first churches and of laying a foundation of instruction for all subsequent generations (Eph. 2:20 ff.). The apostles and their close associates (who were prophets) were given the fullest inspiration: to perfectly recall the history of Christ's ministry; to give God's interpretation of the person and work of Christ; to set forth new laws regarding church government, discipline, etc.

Second, there are specific passages which prove that the New Testament is divinely inspired and totally authoritative. Paul said to the Ephesians, "For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles—if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets" (Eph. 3:1-5). God by His Spirit communicated directly to Paul truths that before were unknown to men. Paul commended the Thessalonian church, saying, "For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe" (1 Th. 2:13). Like the Old Testament prophets who spoke the words of Jehovah, Paul could say that Christ was speaking in me (2 Cor. 13:3). The things that Paul taught did not originate with man's wisdom but were the teachings of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:14).

A passage (written about 30 years after Pentecost) that places the then (still in formation) embryonic New Testament canon on the same level as the Old Testament Scriptures is 2 Peter 3:15-16: "as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures." This is an amazing claim. "Peter here places the writings of the Apostle Paul, and therefore his own writings, on an equality with the Old Testament Scriptures."²⁵

Earlier Peter had taught that the apostles have the same authority as the writers of the Old Testament. "Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle...that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior" (2 Pet. 3:1-2). Why did the New Testament apostolic writings have the same authority over the church as the sacred writings of the Old Testament? The answer is that both were inspired or God-breathed and thus both were equally God's word. To assert anything otherwise is to argue that the apostles' commandments were arbitrary and that Christianity is a sham, a mere human invention.

Only a full inspiration can account for the statements of absolute authority in the epistles. Paul said, "[K]eep the traditions as I delivered them to you" (1 Cor. 11:2). Note, the divine authority behind the apostle's statement: "And so I ordain in all the churches" (1 Cor. 7:17). Note also how Paul sets forth absolute authoritative law regarding divorce: "But to the rest I, not the Lord [i.e., Jesus during His earthly teaching ministry, cf. 1 Cor. 7:10-11], say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her....But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace" (1 Cor. 7:12, 15). Paul gave orders to all the churches: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you

²⁵ D. M. Lloyd-Jones, *Expository Sermons on 2 Peter*, p. 212.

must do also” (1 Cor. 16:1). Examples could be multiplied, however, the point has already been established. The epistles have a “Thus saith the Lord” authority. Therefore Paul’s warning to the Thessalonian church applies to all Modernists who reject the teachings of the Bible as the words of man. “Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit” (1 Th. 4:8).

10. The doctrine of the inspiration, inerrancy and authority of the Bible rests upon the doctrine of God. If God is absolutely sovereign (Gen. 14:19; Ex. 18:11; Dt. 10:14, 17; Jer. 27:5; Rev. 19:6, etc.); knows everything (Heb. 4:13; Rom. 11:33) and cannot lie (Heb. 6:18) or change (Ps. 102:27; Jas. 1:17), then everything that He says must be absolutely true. The idea that God exists but that He cannot reveal Himself to mankind in propositional form; or, that God does not have the ability to control the human element of writing the Scriptures in such a manner so as to produce inerrant autographs, is simply a denial that the God of the Bible exists.

The modernist position (logically) has only two alternative views of God that fit in with their position on Scripture. They can argue that God never sovereignly intended to produce an inspired, inerrant Bible. This position retains the biblical teaching that God is sovereign yet cannot maintain the veracity of God. Why? Because the modernist God did not use His sovereign power to stop the prophets and apostles from saying the Bible is inspired and inerrant. This position asserts that God purposely deceived His own covenant people. Such a God is a liar and cannot be trusted. The other position that Modernists can take is that God cannot lie but He is not sovereign and therefore cannot be held responsible for the claims of Scripture regarding itself. Such a God, however, is finite. The modernist dilemma is that their position regarding biblical inerrancy cannot be divorced from idolatry. They have had to create false gods to maintain their position. Dear reader, you must reject modernistic idolatrous speculations and follow Christ who said: “Thy word is truth” (Jn. 17:17 KJV).

Conclusion

From this brief consideration of modernism and the inspiration and authority of sacred Scriptures we have learned two very important things. First, modernism has been exposed as a counterfeit version of Christianity. Modernists have followed their father the devil in challenging the veracity and authority of God’s word. When Satan wanted Adam and Eve to sin against God, the first thing he did was attack God’s word. His subtle seed of doubt—“Has God indeed said?” (Gen. 3:1) led quickly to an outright denial—“You will not surely die” (Gen. 3:4). Satan’s primary tactic in seeking to destroy Christianity has been to attack the Bible. This has been done by open assault and persecution where Bibles are confiscated and destroyed. It has been done by heretics and cult leaders who add or detract from Scripture. It has been done by major religions that set the Bible aside in favor of human traditions. Modernism is the capstone, the greatest and most subtle achievement of Satan in his attack on sacred Scriptures, for modernism destroys the Bible in the name of science, objectivity, scholarship and truth. Satan has successfully passed off modernism which is subjective, irrational, mystical, apostate, unbelieving and damnable as a champion of Christianity. Unfortunately, many people who would rather be loved by the world rather than by God, who wallow in self-righteousness, who are in love with their sins, embrace this counterfeit Christianity. Christian liberalism, however, brings with it, its own judgment, for its view of Scripture leaves men with no hope, no assurance and no good news. “Where there is no vision, the people perish” (Pr. 29:18, KJV). Modernists worship an unknown and unknowable God. The salvation offered modernism is vague speculation based on wishful thinking. Our *only*

hope is Jesus Christ and the *only* way that we learn of, believe on, and trust in the precious Savior is by first learning and believing in Christ's words—the Bible.

Second, we have learned that the Bible is inspired (God-breathed), infallible (i.e., inerrant) and authoritative. The Bible is absolutely true in everything of which it speaks (spiritual, historical, scientific, etc.). "Because the Bible is *God's Word*, it is the final court of appeal in all things pertaining to doctrine, duty and deportment [conduct]."²⁶ The perfect, infallible, inspired Scripture is the result of God's perfect goodness and mercy. Jehovah did not give His people a defective, fraudulent book. He gave us a book that merits our whole trust. "It is the 'seed' of which we are born again (1 Pet. 1:23), the 'light' by which we are directed (Ps. 119:105), the 'food' upon which we feed (Heb. 5:13, 14) and the 'foundation' upon which we are built (Eph. 2:20)."²⁷ Because the Bible is what it is, it is absolutely necessary for salvation, for in it the Son of God is infallibly revealed to mankind. It is absolutely necessary for sanctification, for in it are the moral precepts of God. Because the Bible is what it is, it has absolute authority over us. To ignore God's word is to ignore God Himself. The Bible should be our constant companion. We should study it diligently and heed all of its precepts. "The Bible is the Book to live by and the Book to die by. Therefore read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, practice it to be holy."²⁸ "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever" (Isa. 40:8).

Copyright 2003, 2010 © Brian Schwertley, Iola, WI

[HOME PAGE](#)

²⁶ A. W. Pink, *The Divine Inspiration of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1996 [1976]), p. 104.

²⁷ Francis Turrentin, *Institutes of Elentic Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1992 [1696]), 1:55.

²⁸ A. W. Pink, *The Divine Inspiration of the Bible*, p. 108.

The Historicity of Adam

Introduction

One of the most maligned, disbelieved and perverted sections of the Bible is the first three chapters of Genesis. If one were to attend any secular university, or any modernistic or liberal church, one would be told that the early chapters of Genesis do not record actual events. The secular humanist college professor and modernist pastor would argue that these early narratives are myth, legend, saga or parable. In other words, there was not a literal Adam and Eve or a literal space-time fall in history. Given the current and widespread denial of a historical, literal Adam and Eve (and the connection of a historical Adam to the New Testament exposition of the gospel), it is very important to understand the Bible's teaching regarding the historicity of Adam.

In the examination of the historicity of Adam, one needs to consider the following topics. First, one must consider the fact that the modernistic and neo-orthodox rejection of the historicity of Adam is founded upon unbelieving and apostate axioms.¹ Christian Liberals and Bartians have come to their positions on Adam *not* because of a careful exegetical study of the Bible, but because of their unbiblical, rationalistic, modernistic presuppositions. One must never forget that these men are not formulating their theories in a detached, objective manner. They have an axe to grind. Therefore, they ignore the clear and abundant biblical proof that Adam was a real, literal, historical figure. Second, one must briefly examine the arguments used to deny the historicity of Adam. It will be proven that these arguments are fallacious. The arguments against the historicity of Adam are either founded upon blatant lies (e.g., macro-evolution, higher critical views of the

¹ Bartian or Neo-orthodox writers assign Adam and the fall to the realm of the supra-temporal or supra-historical. Thus, Adam and the fall do not occur within space and time. That is, Adam is not a historical person in the normal, traditional sense of the term. The fall and creation narratives (they argue) are parabolic or spiritual in nature. (Emil Brunner used the term "myth," while Karl Barth preferred the term "saga.") Harrison writes, "It was to the credit of the neo-orthodox theologians that they repudiated the puerile view of the fall that regarded the Genesis account as a conglomeration of narrative material merely designed to explain certain circumstances of human society and animal behavior. However, they were unable to accept the concept of the fall as an historical event, a matter upon which Barth in particular was quite evasive. Instead, they insisted that existential method was incompatible with the view of the fall as an occurrence in the remote past, maintaining that it was something that everyone commits. For this reason it was of paramount theological importance for anyone who was prepared to take a realistic view of human nature. For neo-orthodox thinkers the tradition of the New Testament as enshrined in Augustine and Calvin invited a conflict with modern scientific opinion." (*Introduction to the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1969], p. 458). In accord with their existential understanding of Christianity, Neo-orthodox theologians regarded the fall of Adam as representing the experience of the fall into sin of every man. Edward J. Young has refuted such intellectual nonsense. He writes, "When Adam sinned, he fell from an estate of being good into an estate of being evil. He was created by God as a creature of whom it could be said that he was 'very good.' From this estate in which he was created by God he fell into an estate of sin and misery and by his disobedience plunged all men into that same estate of sin and misery. Furthermore, by my sin I did not fall from an estate of being 'very good' into an estate of evil. I and all men like me were born into that miserable estate of sin, and when we sinned we simply showed that we were in such an estate. By sinning Adam became a sinner; by sinning we do not become sinners, we are already sinners. Sin does not cause us to fall from the estate wherein we were created, for we were born into a fallen estate. With Adam, however, the case was quite different. His sin brought him into a fallen estate. By disobedience he fell; by disobedience we simply show that we are already fallen. Hence, the experience of Adam was unique; it is his experience alone and not that of myself or of every man." (*Genesis 3* [Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1966], pp. 60-61).

Pentateuch, etc.) or upon pure human speculation. Third, one must consider the overwhelming biblical proof that Adam really existed. One will see that the historicity of Adam and a literal space-time fall are so theologically interwoven with the teaching of the gospel and the second Adam (Jesus Christ), that to deny the historicity of the first Adam logically leads to a denial of the very heart of the gospel itself.

Some General Principles of Liberal Theology

Before setting forth the biblical evidence for the historicity of Adam one must consider the following question: If the biblical evidence of a literal, real, historical, first created man named Adam is so strong, then why is this truth rejected by so many theologians and scholars in the twentieth century? The answer to this question is very simple. A time came in history (the late nineteenth through twentieth centuries) in which most scholars rejected the inspired, inerrant, and infallible revelation (the Bible) of the one living and true God. If one examines the church fathers, the medieval scholastic theologians, the Protestant Reformers (Luther Zwingli, Calvin, Knox), the Reformed confessions and all the great Puritan and Presbyterian theologians of the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, one will see perfect unanimity regarding the historicity of Adam. Modern critical theories regarding Adam grew up in the soil of unbelief. There was an *a priori* rejection of divine revelation in favor of first, a hyper-critical, secular-autonomous, rationalism, and second, an evolutionary understanding of the world. Thus one could argue that the two different views of Adam (i.e., literal-historical verses mytho-poetry) are in essence expressions of two diametrically opposed world views. The first view believes and receives the Bible as God's word. Therefore, it lets the Bible itself determine its own presuppositions, methodology and interpretation of various texts. This believing approach to Scripture is called "traditional" or "pre-critical." It dominated the theological scene for over eighteen hundred years.

The second view (Modernism or Christian Liberalism) believes that the starting point for truth is human autonomy. This position, therefore, assumes that the Bible is fallible and must be treated as any other human document. In other words, men must apply "scientific" techniques to these fallible human documents to discover the "real" authorship, various myths, redactions, historical and scientific errors and so on. One must keep these facts in mind when considering the historicity of Adam since the Modernist case for a mythical or parabolic Adam is not based on standard biblical exegesis. Christian Liberals simply impose their higher critical paradigm upon the text. Higher critical scholars are unbelievers who, with no objective evidence, force the Scriptures into their naturalistic, apostate mold.

To understand the higher critical paradigm that leads scholars to believe in a mythical Adam, one briefly must consider the basic theory regarding the Pentateuch of Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918). Wellhausen's views of the Pentateuch have completely dominated modernistic Old

Testament biblical scholarship from the 1880's to the present.² “[H]e occupied a position in the field of Old Testament criticism analogous to that of Darwin in the area of biological science.”³ “He is to modern biblical scholarship what Abraham is to the Jew, the father of the faithful. More lucidly and compellingly than any other, he gave what many have considered the definitive formulation of the documentary hypothesis.”⁴ What is the documentary hypothesis? Wenham gives an excellent summary of this theory. He writes,

According to this view, the Pentateuch is composed of four distinct sources: J (10/9th century), E (9/8th century), D (7th century), P (6/5th century). These sources were successfully amalgamated, culminating in the composition of the existing Pentateuch in about the fifth century B.C. as far as Genesis is concerned, it was compiled from three main sources: J (comprising about half the material), E (about a third), and P (about a sixth). These sources were distinguished on five main criteria: different names of the deity (J speaks of Yahweh, the LORD, E and P of Elohim, God); duplicate narratives (e.g., different accounts of creation, Gen. 1 and 2; repetition within the flood story, Gen. 6-9; doublets within the patriarchal narratives, cf. 12:10-20 with chap. 20); different style (J and E contain vivid narrative, P is repetitious and fond of genealogies); and finally, different theologies (according to P, God is remote and transcendent; in J and E, God is anthropomorphic, etc.).⁵

There are a number of reasons why the documentary hypothesis approach to the Pentateuch leads directly to the denial of the historicity of Adam. First, the biblical idea of special revelation is rejected in favor of evolutionary presuppositions. “Wellhausen combined his dating of the various alleged documents with a particular evolutionary reconstruction of Israel’s history, a reconstruction which was based upon the Hegelian philosophy.”⁶ Once special revelation and the historical character of Genesis is denied, Adam and Eve become nebulous figures who can arbitrarily be placed into any conception of primeval history that one desires. Second, the documentary hypothesis presents the Pentateuch as a gigantic fraud. The Bible explicitly declares that Deuteronomy and what the Modernists call “priestly legislation” was spoken and written down by Moses (cf., Ex. 24:4-8; 34:27; Nu. 33:2; Deut. 4:1ff; 31:9-24; Josh. 1:7-8; 8:31-32; 23:6-7; 2 Kg. 14:6; etc.). Modernists assert that power-hungry, conniving priests attributed various laws to Moses to gain a hearing for their own version of the law. Once one accepts the idea that much of the Pentateuch is fraudulent, it is logical to assume that Adam and the fall are merely folklore or a literary device. Third, the documentary hypothesis detaches the theologian or exegete from the biblical text and places the bulk of study and investigation squarely upon the

² Although Wellhausen’s theories (the documentary hypothesis) are still generally accepted in all university and modernistic seminaries, since the late 1960’s many liberal O. T. scholars have openly challenged and disagreed with some of Wellhausen’s views. These disagreements among source critics, however, are merely differences of opinion within the Wellhausen paradigm. Scholars are disagreeing over the source of various passages (e.g., J instead of P). “The typical OT introduction or critical commentary on Genesis tends to assume the JEDP theory in a fairly traditional form, and it still forms the heart of most lecture courses on the Pentateuch. No new consensus has evolved to replace Wellhausen’s theory, so it still continues to be assumed by many scholars, though there is now widespread recognition of the hypothetical character of the results of modern criticism” (Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* [Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987], pp. xxxiv-xxxv).

³ Roland Kenneth Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1969), p. 21.

⁴ Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1-17* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), pp. 13-14.

⁵ Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, p. xxvi.

⁶ Edward J. Young, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1960 [1949]), p. 137.

subjective, arbitrary, and speculative theories of unbelieving men.⁷ The arrogance and stupidity of the modernistic understanding of the Pentateuch is truly astounding. In the name of objectivity and science, the Modernist has rushed headlong into a number of theories that are totally speculative, subjective and unprovable. In fact, as archeological discoveries keep advancing, more and more Modernist assertions are proven to be fallacious. “[I]t is quite evident that his [Wellhausen] theory of Pentateuchal origins would have been vastly different (if, indeed, it had been formulated at all) had Wellhausen chosen to take account of the archeological material available for study in his day, and had he subordinated his philosophical and theoretical considerations to a sober and rational assessment of the factual evidence as a whole.”⁸ When

⁷ The absurdity of the documentary hypothesis becomes evident when it is applied to documents which are known to have one author. If, for example, a book contained varying names of God (Jehovah, God), repetition, changes in vocabulary, duplicate narratives and so on, the consistent source critic would have to argue that such a book had multiple authors or redactors. However, the truth of the matter would be that a single author used different words and subtle variations in order to make the story more interesting to hold a reader’s attention. Good writers use variation on purpose. Further, historical narratives often use repetition to emphasize or to examine an event from a different perspective. Why don’t source critics apply their techniques to Plato, Aristotle, or Shakespeare? The answer is simple. Such works do not require faith in God and obedience to His law word. G. Ch. Alders adds another pertinent criticism of the documentary hypothesis. He writes, “When we study the literature which relates to the Pentateuch, it becomes apparent that the theory of splitting sources leads to an almost unending exercise in making new distinctions and recognizing portions. It has been correctly pointed out that the extremes to which the application of this approach has led have finally caused the entire method of splitting sources to appear absurd. Every sober, scholarly researcher must ask himself the question whether we are actually dealing with valuable reality or nothing more than a display of sharp ingenuity. It would be easy to give examples of those who have driven this theory to such extremes that they have lost touch with simple and obvious realities.” (*Genesis* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981] 1:18).

⁸ Roland Kenneth Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 509. If, as Modernists assert, the Bible is a mixture of truth and error, then none of the Bible can be trusted on its own authority. But what is this higher authority? Is it itself infallible, objective and totally reliable? No. The higher authority is merely the latest popular theory taught in modernist institutions. Higher criticism is not a hard science. An archeologist can uncover a pavement stone or ancient monument and can say that Pontius Pilate really existed and ruled when the Bible says he ruled. The modernist scholar, however, says things like: “Based on my analysis of the Hebrew grammar, there are two different authors of the book of Isaiah.” Does the modernist scholar really know whether two different men wrote the book of Isaiah? No. He has a theory. He has an educated guess based on his own modernistic presuppositions. The professing Christian in a modernist church cannot place his trust in any portion of Scripture without first consulting with the latest modernist authorities to make sure he is not believing in some foolish myth, or a redaction by a power hungry priest, or a legend from a second century Christian community bent on molding the human Jesus in their own image. When the sure foundation of the infallible Bible is replaced by the perverted opinions of secular humanists masquerading as Christian teachers, then (according to their own teaching) the Bible cannot be trusted at any single point.

Modernists are no different than Romanists, for the foundation of their theology is not Scripture alone but rather human tradition. Roman Catholics look to the church fathers and the theological inventions of the Middle Ages (e.g., purgatory, Mariolatry, transubstantiation, celibacy for priests and nuns, the papacy, etc.) while Christian Liberals follow the traditions of secular philosophers (e.g., Hobbes, Spinoza, Hume, Kant, etc.) and apostate theologians (e.g., Schleiermacher, Ritschl, Bushnell, Bultmann, etc.). For both Romanists and Modernists, the ultimate authority is not the Bible but the church. In Roman Catholicism, the Pope and church hierarchy determine doctrine, while among Christian Liberals it is seminary professors and the church bureaucracy. Basically, in modernist denominations whoever has the power determines the doctrine. The only limiting factor in modernist denominations is public opinion. Those in power hold back on the more radical views until the people in the pews who pay their salaries are won over to the new views. Jesus’ rebuke to the scribes and Pharisees equally applies to all Modernists: “Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.... They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch” (Mt. 15:6, 14). Paul warned us of such evil men: “Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ” (Col. 2:8). Isaiah warned: “To the law and to the testimony! If

men reject the inspired, perfect, sufficient solid rock of Scripture for the *a priori*, spurious, imaginary deductive system of the Modernist theologians, they have rejected both God and truth.

they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Is. 8:20). The Modernist, by pulling the rug out from under objective truth, is left with an anthropological religion. By making man the ultimate reference point for truth the Christian Liberal is left with rank subjectivism and silly, mystical slogans. Once one understands the overall modernist position in its world view context one should never again fall for the argument that Christian Liberals are rational, objective and scientific while orthodox Christians are fideistic blind followers of authority. Biblical Christianity, which rests on biblical infallibility, is the only rational, defensible position. It is the only position that avoids subjectivism, relativism and mysticism.

Arguments Against the Historicity of Adam

Having considered the general foundational principles of liberal theology which have resulted in the rejection of an historical Adam, one must also briefly examine the specific arguments used to reject the orthodox Christian position. There are five main arguments that are commonly used against the historicity of Adam.

1. The Talking Snake

The first argument is based on the fact that snakes are not able to speak. It is argued that the record of the temptation and fall obviously cannot be taken as a literal historical account because one not only encounters a talking snake (which is impossible and incredible), but Eve and Adam

do not even regard a talking snake to be unusual. Thus, one must regard the whole account, and in turn Adam himself, as mythical or symbolic. The snake symbolizes evil and the account of the fall is merely a mythical or symbolic way for the primitive author and/or redactor to explain the presence of evil in the world. There are a number of reasons why this argument is fallacious and must be rejected. (1) The fact that a snake spoke and tempted Eve is not impossible or absurd when considered in the overall context of Scripture. In Numbers 22:28, Jehovah spoke through the mouth of a donkey. In the Gospel narratives, one encounters demons speaking through possessed human beings (e.g., Mt. 8:29, 31; Mk. 5:12; Lk. 4:41; 8:28). There also is the account of Satan entering into Judas immediately prior to his betrayal of Jesus (cf. Jn 12:27). If demons can possess and speak through fallen human beings, then Satan (the prince of demons) can certainly make use of a simple creature such as a snake. The idea that a snake spoke in Genesis 3 is only impossible if one rejects the supernatural character of Scripture. (2) In Genesis 3:14, God proclaims a curse against the snake and then, in verse 15, sets forth the conflict between God's people and Satan's people coupled with a prediction of victory by Christ over the devil. The idea that God cursed a poetic metaphor or an imaginary symbol is absurd. "The unusually vigorous condemnation pronounced by God in verses fourteen and fifteen seems almost pointless if the whole account is merely the story of an inward struggle on the part of Eve."¹ Furthermore, in verse 14, the snake is condemned to go upon its belly. "If the reference is to the devil or to some power higher than a snake, why this condemnation in verse fourteen?"²

A clever Modernist could argue that verse 15 actually proves his whole contention (that the narrative of the fall is mythical or symbolic) by pointing out that the sentence "He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel" is a very non-literal prophecy regarding Christ's victory over Satan. This argument falls to the ground, however, when one considers that subsequent revelation says very plainly that Adam's fall into sin was a literal, historical event (e.g., Rom. 5:12-21; 1 Tim. 2:13 ff.; 1 Cor. 11:8ff.) and that the crushing of the serpent's head *represents* victory over Satan (e.g., Rom. 16:20). "[I]t cannot be denied that there is poetry, symbol, and allegory in Scripture. But this does not warrant arbitrarily relegating a given portion of Scripture to the level of poetry, symbol, or allegory. The real issue is, what did the sacred text itself intend? When the Scripture intends to record history, we may not simply declare it to be poetic or symbolic or allegorical."³ In other words, one must submit to the Bible when it identifies one portion of Scripture as a literal, historical narrative and another as truth expressed in poetic language. If one is not willing to submit to the clear teaching of Scripture on important matters of biblical interpretation, then one is no longer a true theologian but rather a mere speculative philosopher.

But (says the Modernist) isn't it strange that Eve is not surprised or startled that a brute creature such as a snake can speak and make logical inferences? Although men and women

¹ Edward J. Young, *Genesis 3: A Devotional and Expository Study* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1966), p. 15.

² *Ibid.*

³ G. Ch. Alders, *Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 1:45. "That Genesis intended to give history is not difficult to establish. There is not one substantial argument which can be advanced that would prove the contrary. All the reasons that have been given from time to time for questioning this intent of the book are, at best, tenuous. The entire design of the book indicates that the positive intent was to present actual history. This is in keeping with the nature of the entire Pentateuch, of which Genesis is a part, and which is unmistakably a work of history. This is confirmed by its own self-designation as *tôledôt*—'history' or 'account' in Genesis 2:4; 6:9; 11:27; 37:2. This is in keeping with the general impression the entire book gives. Also, there is a constant use of a verb form which, in Hebrew, serves to describe historical events" (*Ibid.*).

today would obviously be shocked by a talking snake, one must keep in mind the naivete of Eve who although sinless, good and intelligent, had only existed for a day or two before the temptation. How was Eve to know that such an occurrence was out of order apart from prior empirical observation, or personal training by Adam or God. The fact that Eve was not surprised is not a significant objection at all.

2. *Common Creation and Flood Stories*

The second argument against the historicity of Adam is based on the supposed parallels and striking similarities between the creation and flood accounts in Genesis and the ancient Mesopotamian creation and flood narratives (i.e., the *Enuma elish* and the Epic of Gilgamesh). This argument should also be rejected for the following reasons.

(1) Although there are some similarities between Genesis and the *Enuma elish* (e.g., Both narratives begin with something analogous to a watery chaos and end with the Creator at rest. There are also similarities in the sequence of creation.), the differences are much greater and significant. “Since a careful comparison with pagan mythology reveals only the most casual parallels between Mesopotamian and Hebrew accounts of creation, and in view of the fact that none of the characteristic elements of the Babylonian myths appear in Genesis narratives, it would seem unwise to employ the term ‘myth’ in order to describe the biblical accounts of creation, the fall, and so on...”⁴ Furthermore, both accounts flow from very different, antithetical worldviews. Harrison writes,

While the biblical writers showed a distinct interest in nature, they did not regard it as necessarily constituting the life of God, who was invariably considered as an independent Being. As distinct from the gods of Mesopotamian and Egyptian polytheism, the God of the Hebrews demonstrated His personality and sense of purpose by means of significant continuous acts in history. Man himself was a creature of God, furnished with a sense of destiny and cautioned to formulate the pattern of his life within the context of divine promise and fulfillment in history. Thus the Old Testament can never be regarded as a typical mythology in part or in whole, because it proclaimed God as the Lord of History in contradistinction to the polytheistic patterns that made life and history in general dependent upon the rhythm of natural forces.⁵

(2) There is almost a universal tendency among Modernist and Neo-orthodox theologians to assume, with absolutely no evidence, that the biblical creation and flood narrative were in some manner based on the Mesopotamian myths instead of vice-versa. Thus, once again Modernists exhibit their anti-supernaturalistic bias. The idea that the author of the creation narrative in Genesis borrowed from near-eastern pantheistic mythology is a gratuitous assumption that betrays the clear teaching of Scripture.

3. *Evolutionary Theories*

The third argument against the historicity of Adam is that the creation account in Genesis totally contradicts the teachings of science, in particular macro-evolution. If evolution was true,

⁴ Roland Kenneth Harrison, Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 456.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 457.

this would be a good objection. However, since evolution is both thoroughly unbiblical and unscientific (properly defined) this argument is easily rejected. Why is evolution unscientific? Why is evolution an imaginative, atheistic myth? Note the following reasons: (1) Evolution is a biochemical impossibility. Not only was the idea of spontaneous generation disproved over one hundred years ago, but as scientists learn more about simple one-celled organisms, it is evident that the first step of evolution is about as likely to occur as the creation of a nuclear submarine in a junk yard during a tornado.⁶ (2) The geologic column disproves uniformitarianism and contradicts the continuance sequence charts found in all secular science textbooks. (3) The fossil totally disproves evolution. Not only are fossils found in the “wrong” areas of the geological column (the supposed *stratigraphic leaks*); but they always appear fully formed with the *complete absence of transitional forms*. “This fact is absolutely fatal to the general theory of organic evolution. Even the great champion of evolution himself, Charles Darwin, acknowledged this fatal flaw.”⁷ One could multiply proofs against evolution; however, space restraints require one to move on. Evolution is a religious faith based on a subjective, imaginary philosophy of origins. It is a factitious, atheistic scam.

4. *Genesis as Poetry*

The fourth argument is based on the idea that the early chapters of Genesis are poetry, not straightforward prose. Poetry (it is argued) indicates a non-literal, symbolic story. Therefore, one should accept the doctrine of these chapters, yet not make the mistake of receiving them as real history. Although one can find poetic elements in the early chapters of Genesis (e.g., Adam’s statement in 2:23 regarding his new wife, Eve), there is no real evidence to support the contention that these chapters are poetry. Hebrew scholar Edward J. Young writes,

We confess to becoming a little tired of reading dogmatic assertions about how Genesis three is to be interpreted when these assertions are accompanied by no evidence. The mere declaration that we misunderstand the chapter if we think that Adam was a real person who lived in a garden is not sufficient argument to lead us to agree. And the constantly reiterated error that ultimate truth cannot be given to man in propositional statements should, at least occasionally, be supported by evidence.

On the other hand, there is sufficient evidence to show us that we should read the third chapter of the Bible as prose and not as poetry. For one thing the characteristics of Hebrew poetry are missing in this chapter. If the writer, whom we believe to be Moses, wanted to write poetry, why did he not do so? Why did he make his writing look so much like prose that men thus naturally interpret it? Hebrew poetry is characterized by parallelism, in which two lines or parts of lines bear a parallel relationship one to another. Such parallelism is lacking for the most part in chapter three.... Everything in the chapter leads to the conclusion that the writer is giving straightforward prose. He believes that he is writing about certain things that did actually take place.⁸

⁶ See Michael J. Behe, *Darwin’s Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

⁷ Scott M. Huse, *The Collapse of Evolution* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1983), p. 41.

⁸ Edward J. Young, *Genesis 3*, pp. 54-55.

Furthermore, there are no examples in the whole Old Testament of Hebrew poetry being used to set forth mythological stories. Although Old Testament poetry *contains* metaphorical, non-literal descriptions of God (e.g., having wings) and His activities (e.g., riding on the clouds), such poetic imagery is very easy to identify. The only reason that modern scholars refer to Genesis 3 as poetry or parable (with no textual evidence) is the simple fact that they themselves do not believe the events of this chapter to be real or factual. They are attempting to justify their unbelief.

The Biblical Evidence for the Historicity of Adam

Having noted that the typical arguments against the historicity of Adam are not based on sound reasoning, solid biblical exegesis or factual evidence, it is now time to examine the abundant evidence for the historicity of Adam. There are several arguments that need to be considered.

1. Biblical Genealogies

The first argument is based on the biblical genealogies. All the biblical genealogies trace the human race back to one man—Adam (cf. Gen. 5:3 ff.; 1 Chron. 1:1 ff. Lk 3:38). Although a careful analysis of the biblical genealogies has conclusively proved that genealogies in the Bible are frequently abbreviated by the omission of unimportant names, the men that are listed were without a doubt regarded as real historical people by the divinely inspired writers.⁹ There are a number of reasons why the genealogies support a historical Adam. (1) As noted, the men discussed were obviously meant to be regarded as real historical figures. In Genesis chapter 5 one is even told the age at which sons were born and the numbers of years the father lived after

⁹ See William Henry Green, “Primeval Chronology” in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 47 (1890), pp.285-303.

the birth of his son. Even the father's age at death is recorded. (2) The lists which set forth the godly line and the origin of confessional Yahwism are given (in part) to focus attention on God's grace and to highlight the significant contribution of this line to the world. This purpose would be meaningless and dishonest if these men were mythical figures. (3) If the genealogical list in Luke chapter 3 which traces the lineage of Jesus all the way to Adam is fraudulent, then the book of Luke and the gospel itself is based on myth or lie. Such a view would, at bottom, be a repudiation of the gospel itself. Note also how the account in Luke says "the son of Adam, the son of God" (3:38). Luke, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, makes it crystal clear that no human being preceded Adam; he came directly from the creative work of God. "Luke (like Paul in Rom. 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:22, 45-49) obviously thought of Adam as a historical person."¹⁰

2. An Explicit Statement by Paul

The second argument for the historicity of Adam is based on the explicit teaching of the Apostle Paul. When Paul preached and wrote under divine inspiration he taught a literal, historical Adam. To the Athenian philosophers (who rejected the original unity of mankind) Paul declared, "And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26).¹¹ When Paul preached the gospel to pagans who had no familiarity with the Old Testament, he first pointed them to God the creator of all and in particular the creator of all mankind through the making of one man. Out of one man or one blood came every nation upon the earth.¹² Paul is telling the Athenians that their pagan concept of arising from the native soil and their view of racial superiority that is founded upon such a myth is completely false. Because all nations arise from one man created by the One living and true God, all men are responsible to obey this God and treat each other as equals created in the image of God. If one argues that Paul begins his presentation of the gospel with a myth, why should Paul be believed when he presents the resurrection (cf. Acts 17:31) in the same sermon? To teach that one (the creation of Adam) is a myth and the other (the resurrection) is true, is illogical and arbitrary.

3. The Comparison of Adam to Christ

Another passage which explicitly teaches the historicity of Adam is Romans 5:12-21. This section of Scripture is a primary passage for the doctrine of original sin. Paul compares and contrasts Adam and Christ (the second Adam). "[T]he two Adams are the heads of the two covenants. The one the representative of all who are under the covenant of works, communicating his image unto them; the other the representative of all who are under the

¹⁰ Robert H. Stein, *Luke* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1991), p. 142.

¹¹ Critical texts which generally speaking are based on the Alexandrian or Egyptian type of texts omit the word blood from verse 26. The verse would read from "one" (NASB, RSV) or "one man" (NIV) instead of "one blood" (KJV, NKJV). The meaning in both cases is essentially the same.

¹² John Stott notes that the findings of science support the teaching of Scripture on this issue. He writes, "All human beings share the same anatomy, physiology and chemistry, and the same genes. Although we belong to different so-called 'races' (Caucasoid, Negroid, Mongoloid and Australoid), each of which has adjusted to its own physical environment, we nevertheless constitute a single species, and people of different races can intermarry and interbreed. This homogeneity of the human species is best explained by positing our descent from a common ancestor. 'Genetic evidence indicates,' writes Dr. Christopher Stringer of London's Natural History Museum, 'that all living people are closely related and share a recent common ancestor.'"

covenant of grace, and communicating His image unto them. By the one man's disobedience many were made sinners, and by the obedience of the other many shall be made righteous."¹³ Throughout this section Paul bases his whole argument regarding the reality of sin and death in the world to the one trespass of the one man Adam. "[T]he apostle places his imprimatur upon the authenticity of this account [Genesis 3]. The importance he attached to this incident of Genesis 3 is attested by the fact that the subsequent development of his argument turns on it. That sin entered through one man is our integral element of the comparison or parallel upon which is to be built Paul's doctrine of justification."¹⁴ On six different occasions Paul explicitly asserts that sin and death reign over all because of the *one sin* of the *one man* Adam: "through one man sin entered the world" (v. 12), "by the one man's offense many died" (vs. 15), "the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation" (vs. 16), "by the one man's offense death reigned through the one" (vs. 17), "through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation" (vs. 18), "by one man's disobedience many were made sinners" (vs. 19).

There are a number of reasons why modernists cannot sidestep the fact that this portion of Scripture unequivocally teaches that Adam was a real historical person. (1) Paul, writing by divine inspiration, assumes the historicity of Adam in his argumentation. If one does not accept the Genesis 3 narrative as genuine history, then Paul's whole argument regarding Christ as the covenant head of those for whom He dies falls to the ground. "Inasmuch as the New Testament is the Word of God, whatever it asserts is the truth, and when the New Testament speaks of Adam and Eve as historical, the question is settled."¹⁵ (2) The point of this section of Romans is to show that Christ's work remedies the fall of Adam and even gives blessings far beyond what Adam's sin has done in the production of evil. "[T]he gospel of the grace of God has proved itself much more efficacious in the production of good, than sin in the production of evil."¹⁶ Paul's argument (the obedience of the One versus the disobedience of the one) is wrong and misleading if Adam and the fall are myths. "You do not need an historical atonement to undo a mythological fall or a mythological transgression. All you need is another myth. But if Christ needed to be real to save us, then Adam was real, too. It is because Adam was real that Christ also had to be real to make atonement."¹⁷ Because of Adam's sin real guilt and moral pollution passed to the human race. But, Christ (the second Adam) by His historical act of obedience (His suffering, death and resurrection) removed the guilt, penalty and pollution of sin for the believing sinner. "This section insists upon our accepting the story in Genesis as literal actual fact and history. You do not really understand the need of salvation unless you believe that history, and understand what happened in Adam, and our relationship to Adam. So it is a most important section, and it is only those who have understood its teaching who have not allowed certain

¹³ Robert Haldane, Romans (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1958 [1874], p. 213.

¹⁴ John Murray, The Epistle to the Romans (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1968), 1:181.

¹⁵ E. J. Young, Genesis 3, p. 57.

¹⁶ Charles Hodge, Romans (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1989 [1835]), p. 177.

¹⁷ James Montgomery Boice, Romans (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker 1992), 2:583. Boice adds this important point, "I am convinced that the major reason why the liberal scholars want to regard the opening chapters of Genesis as mythology is that they do not want to face the reality of the fall of the race in Adam or the guilt that flows from it. If there was no fall, then all this business about Adam and Eve and the serpent and the Garden of Eden is meant to only describe our unfortunate but inevitable human condition. It is meant to only say that we live in an imperfect world and must therefore continually struggle against imperfection. Rather than involving guilt, a framework like that actually gives us cause for pride and an imagined heroic stature. We are to not be blamed for anything. We have simply inherited imperfection and are, if anything, to be praised for how well we are struggling against it. In fact, we can be said to be doing better and better all the time." (Ibid.).

scientists to stampede them into accepting the theory of evolution.”¹⁸ How can one have faith in Christ as the second Adam, the Head of a new humanity when the first Adam is regarded as a myth or poetic metaphor? The issue of a historical Adam cannot be regarded as unimportant for its denial effects the very heart of the gospel.

4. Adam and the Resurrection

Paul also teaches the historicity of Adam when he discusses the resurrection in 1 Corinthians. He writes, “But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.... It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, ‘The first man Adam became a living being.’ The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man” (1 Cor. 15:20-22, 44-49). Paul, in a lengthy discussion of the importance and reality of the resurrection, contrasts Adam and Christ. He notes that there is a causal relationship between the death of Adam and the death of his descendants. There is also a causal relationship between the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of His people. Then Paul points out that union with Adam is the cause of death and union with Christ is the cause of life. Both Adam and Christ are heads and representatives of groups of people. All who remain in Adam are condemned and all who are in Christ are justified and receive the resurrection unto life. Paul continues the contrast between the first and second Adam in his discussion of the nature of the resurrection. Note the parallels: living being—life-giving spirit; made of dust—the Lord from heaven. Before the resurrection Christians bear the image of the man of dust, but after the resurrection, they will bear the image of the heavenly man.

One cannot regard Adam as a mythical figure without also completely destroying Paul’s argumentation. Would Paul use a myth or lie as a foundation to establish the necessity of believing in a literal bodily resurrection for salvation? Perish the thought! If one half of the parallel is not really true or historical, why should anyone regard the other half as true (or a future reality). Further, if Paul is wrong concerning Adam, would it not be logical to conclude that he also is wrong concerning Christ and the resurrection? If Adam was not a literal, historical figure, then Paul was deluded. If Paul was deluded, then the doctrine of justification and the resurrection are not proper or worthy objects of faith. If the modernist scheme is true, Christianity is finished. “Remove Adam and his historicity from these verses and all the profound truths that Paul is teaching go by the board. They are then not truths at all and Paul’s words must be abandoned. Adam is gone, but so is Christ.”¹⁹

5. Paul’s Teaching Regarding Women

There are other important doctrines that are based upon a literal, historical understanding of the creation and fall narratives. When Paul discusses women in public worship, he presupposes a

¹⁸ D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Romans, Exposition of Chapter 5* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1971), p. 181.

¹⁹ Edward J. Young, *Genesis 3*, p. 60.

literal, historical view of Genesis 2 and 3. Paul writes, “For man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man” (1 Cor. 11:8-9). “And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression” (1 Tim. 2:12-14). Regarding the wearing of head coverings and the need to learn in silence, Paul appeals to two facts recorded in the history of creation. First, Eve was formed out of the man; she originated from him. This is a direct appeal to Genesis 2:21-23. Adam was created first, out of the dust of the ground. Eve was created for the man to be a helpmeet unto him. “Paul explicitly specifies that the woman was ‘taken out of’ (*ek*) the man and created to help, or to be ‘for’ (*dia*), the man.”²⁰ Hodge writes, “In this way does the New Testament constantly authenticate, not merely the moral and religious truths of the Old Testament, but its historical facts; and makes those facts the grounds or proofs of great moral principles. It is impossible, therefore, for any Christian who believes in the inspiration of the apostles to doubt the divine authority of the Old Testament Scriptures, or to confine the inspiration of the ancient writers to their doctrinal and preceptive statements. The whole Bible is the word of God.”²¹

When discussing women’s role in the church in the Timothy passage, Paul appeals to the fall as an historical event that demonstrates the dire consequences of a reversal of leadership roles. The apostle “shows by a negative example the importance of heeding the respective roles established by God in the creation of Eve from Adam.”²² “If we are to follow Paul’s reasoning, we must recall that like other exegetes, Jewish and Christian, he regards Adam and Eve as historical persons, but also as archetypes of the human race.”²³ If one argues that Paul was mistaken in his understanding of the creation and fall narratives, or, that Paul regarded these events as myths but deliberately mislead his readers to make a theological point, then (as noted above) one must logically deny the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures.

6. *The Testimony of Christ*

Not only does the apostle Paul teach a literal, historical Adam when he analyzes various doctrines, but Jesus Christ Himself bases His teaching regarding divorce on a literal, historical understanding of Genesis 1:27; 2:24. Our Lord said, “‘Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate’” (Mt. 19:4-6; cf. Mk. 10-6-8). Christ argues against the very loose understanding of the grounds for divorce among the Jews by appealing to the original institution of marriage. At the creation God made only *one* male (Adam) and *one* female (Eve). These two were joined together in marriage by God. It is clear that Jesus viewed Genesis 2:24 (in combination with Gen. 1:27) as a creation ordinance.²⁴ Our Lord viewed the creation of Adam and Eve and their union in

²⁰ George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), p. 143.

²¹ Charles Hodge, *I and II Corinthians* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1974 [1857, 59]), p. 210.

²² George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles*, p. 144.

²³ J. N. D. Kelly, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Peabody, MA: Hendrikson, 1960), p. 68.

²⁴ Creation ordinances are ethical norms which are based upon the work of God in creation. They “depict ‘the constitution of things’ as they were intended to be from the Creator’s hand. They cover and regulate the whole gamut of life: bearing children, superintending the earth as a responsible steward before and under God, responsively ruling the creatures of all creation, finding fulfillment and satisfaction in work, labor, resting on the

marriage as literal, historical events that set the proper biblical pattern for all subsequent marriage relationships.

If one does not accept the historicity of Adam, then one is left with only two alternatives regarding Jesus' teaching in Matthew 19:4-6 and Mark 10:6-8. One can argue that Christ was merely human and was simply mistaken when He regarded Adam as a literal, historical, first created man. In other words, Jesus was finite, limited in knowledge and subject to errors in judgment just like everyone else. This view is blatantly unscriptural, anti-Christian and wicked. Another approach is to argue that Jesus was accommodating Himself to the culture and society in which He lived. He knew that the Scriptures were full of mistakes, lies and myths, but He *pretended* they were inerrant because He didn't want to upset His first century audience. These arguments (which are typical examples of Modernist unbelief) must emphatically be rejected by all professing Christians. The idea that Jesus Christ (who is God [Mt. 1:23; Jn. 1:1-3, 14; Rom 9:6], who cannot lie [Tit. 1:2; Heb. 6:18], who is omniscient [Heb. 4:13; Rom. 11:22]) would appeal to a lie, or a myth, or to a redaction of evil, con artist priests to establish a doctrine or ethical teaching and present that teaching as God's word which is absolutely true, is an explicit denial of Christianity. If Jesus was *unaware* of the mythological nature of the creation account or purposely lied to the people (to cater to erroneous Jewish teachings regarding Adam), then He could not be the Messiah or the Son of God. A Jesus who was not God, who was a lying, sinful man cannot be an atonement for the sins of the elect. One must either believe the words of Christ or cast Christianity aside. There is no middle ground on this issue.

Sabbath, and enjoying marriage as a gift from above" (Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward Old Testament Ethics* [Grand Rapids, MI: Academic Books, 1983], p. 31).

Conclusion

The biblical evidence for the historicity of Adam is so clear, abundant and interwoven with the teaching of Paul and Christ that it is impossible to circumvent this teaching without also redefining and rejecting the doctrines of Christ and the gospel. The literal, historical understanding of the account of Adam and his fall is rejected today not because of the biblical or

even the *real* scientific evidence, but because men are unwilling to believe the clear teaching of Scripture. Why are men so willing to abandon the word of God in favor of speculative theories that are founded only upon human opinion? The answer lies in the fact that many people are unwilling to lay down the weapons of their warfare and submit to Christ. Men do not want to face the reality of sin and its consequences, death and hell. Men regard the early chapters of Genesis as myth, legend, saga and so forth in order to retain human autonomy. They want to define for themselves what is good and what is evil. Such men are on the broad path that leads to destruction. Bible-believing Christians are not taken in by such rubbish. They know that Adam was just as real as they are. They also know that Jesus Christ, the second Adam, the covenant head of redeemed humanity has conquered Satan, sin and death. “But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man’s offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. For if by the one man’s offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)” (Rom. 5:15-17).

