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Issues in biblical inspiration: Sanday and Warfield

van Bemmelen, Peter Maarten, Th.D.

Andrews University, 1987

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ISSUES IN BIBLICAL INSPIRATION:
SANDAY AND WARFIELD

A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Theology

by
Peter Maarten van Bemmelen

June 1987

ISSUES IN BIBLICAL INSPIRATION:

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ABSTRACT

ISSUES IN BIBLICAL INSPIRATION:
SANDAY AND WARFIELD

by

Peter M. van Bemmelen

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ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

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Title: ISSUES IN BIBLICAL INSPIRATION:
SANDAY AND WARFIELD

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This study attempts to clarify the issues involved in formulating a doctrine of Biblical inspiration. It does so through a careful analysis and comparative evaluation of two contrasting concepts or models of inspiration. William Sanday and Benjamin Warfield were selected as prominent representatives of a liberal and a conservative approach to the problem.

A brief introductory chapter, delineating the aims, method and limitations of the study, is followed by a survey of the history of the doctrine of Biblical inspiration from the sixteenth century onwards. This survey focuses chiefly on the English-speaking world and especially the Anglican and Presbyterian traditions to which Sanday and Warfield belonged. It is seen that the institutions where

they taught, Oxford University and Princeton Theological Seminary, respectively, were centers of two opposing trends at the culmination of the debate about Biblical inspiration in the late nineteenth century.

The analysis of the two models in the third and fourth chapters deals in each case with the starting-point adopted, the methodology used, and the criteria applied in formulating the respective concepts, as well as the conclusions reached concerning the mode, the extent, and the effects of Biblical inspiration.

Sanday, concentrating on the Biblical phenomena, concludes that there are distinct divine and human elements in the Bible and that inspiration is a matter of degrees. Warfield, focusing on Biblical affirmations and especially on the teachings of Christ, infers that Scripture is the product of a concursum of the divine and the human and that Biblical inspiration is best qualified as plenary and verbal. To him the evidence suggests that Scripture is infallible in every aspect, whereas for Sanday infallibility can only be attributed to its spiritual purpose.

The comparative evaluation in the final chapter shows that despite apparent similarities--both scholars intend to let Scripture speak for itself and both claim to use the inductive method--the two approaches diverge from the outset. In the conclusion a number of suggestions are presented stressing the need for a Biblical conceptual framework and a clearly defined methodology in order to formulate an adequate doctrine of Biblical inspiration.

To Cobie, my beloved wife, and to
Jackie, Petra and Mary

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To God alone be the glory.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary Concern about the Doctrine of Biblical Inspiration

From the earliest times in the history of the Christian Church belief in the divine inspiration of the Scriptures was tightly woven into the texture of Christian faith and doctrine.¹ It was in modern times, more particularly from the seventeenth century onward, that increasingly questions were raised and doubts expressed which tended to tear this texture of traditional belief apart. In the English-speaking world--on which this study will focus--the modern debate about Biblical inspiration can be said to have started around 1690.² Since then it has continued with fluctuating intensity during the last three hundred years. In both Britain and North America this debate reached a peak in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and it seems to have gained momentum once more in recent times.

The conviction expressed by a contemporary scholar, Paul

¹This point is widely admitted and there are many detailed studies which provide evidence in confirmation of it. However, there is in the English language no thorough survey of the doctrine of Biblical inspiration from apostolic times till the present. Probably most significant in this respect is Jack B. Rogers and Donald K. McKim, The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible: An Historical Approach (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979). Unfortunately this work suffers from the fairly rigid mold which the authors impose upon the historical data and it is far from comprehensive.

²This fact will be further elucidated in the second chapter.

Achtemeier, "that some form of doctrine concerning the inspiration of the Scripture is a key issue for the Christian faith,"¹ is undoubtedly shared by many, and is an important motivating factor for this present study. Recent works on Biblical inspiration have focused on two opposing views--the liberal and the conservative--and found both wanting. Achtemeier thinks that these views are flawed because both hold on to a prophetic model of inspiration, that is to say to the idea "that Scripture as it now stands is the work of individual authors, who produced the various literary works that now comprise our Bible."² He proposes instead a social model of inspiration in which inspiration is seen as pertaining to the entire community of faith rather than to select individuals. William Abraham, who discusses these views in terms of the inductive approach [the liberal approach] and the deductive approach [the conservative, evangelical approach] to Biblical inspiration, thinks that the latter is mistaken because it conceives of inspiration in terms of divine speaking, while the former approach is too vague in its conceptual understanding of inspiration. He argues in favor of a sensitive conceptual analysis which "must draw on general considerations about

¹Paul J. Achtemeier, The Inspiration of Scripture: Problems and Proposals (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980), p. 13. Cf. the remark by Clark H. Pinnock that "Biblical inspiration and authority are important issues on the agenda of twentieth-century theology." Clark H. Pinnock, "Three Views of the Bible in Contemporary Theology," in Biblical Authority, ed. Jack Rogers (Waco, Texas: Word Books, Publisher, 1977), p. 49.

²Achtemeier, p. 75. Achtemeier continues to say: "It is just that model of inspiration, however, shared in large measure by conservative and liberal alike, which has been called into question by scholarly discoveries made over the past few decades about the way Scripture was produced." Ibid.

the nature of religious language to indicate how divine activity like inspiration should be understood."¹

These and other attempts to redefine Biblical inspiration suggest that previous definitions or concepts are now considered inadequate. Especially plenary inspiration--the concept that the Bible in its entirety is the inspired word of God--,² and verbal inspiration--the concept that every word in the Bible is given by divine inspiration--,³ are frequently singled out as obsolete concepts in need of redefinition or elimination. The present urge for change is highlighted in the experience of Clark Pinnock, a well-known evangelical scholar, who originally defined Biblical inspiration as plenary and verbal, but who more recently seems to move away from

¹William J. Abraham, The Divine Inspiration of Holy Scripture (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 57.

²There is no generally agreed definition of "plenary inspiration." However, there seems to be agreement among those who adopt the term on this one point: that the Bible is inspired in its entirety. The term has been claimed as a description for quite varied concepts of inspiration. In the eighteenth century it was used by those who taught a doctrine of degrees of inspiration, while since the nineteenth century it has often been used as practically synonymous with the concept of verbal inspiration. See further Ian S. Rennie, "Plenary Inspiration," Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, ed. Walter E. Elwell (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1984), pp. 860-61. Rennie sees the term as author oriented rather than text oriented. Some evangelical scholars might not agree with him in that opinion.

³There seems to be a fairly wide agreement among adherents of this concept in regard to its meaning. It is most commonly used to indicate that "all the words and all the verbal relationships are inspired by God," and thus "the totality of Scripture partakes of uniform verbal inspiration." Ian S. Rennie, "Verbal Inspiration," Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, p. 1139. Rennie points out that the term verbal inspiration is not understood as involving dictation. This observation would certainly be true for all its modern proponents. Rather, it is opponents of this concept who frequently describe it as referring to some kind of verbal dictation.

these terms stressing the need for a redefinition of the concept of inspiration.¹ The call for redefinition is of course nothing new. In 1963 Dewey Beegle, another evangelical scholar, expressed the need for a reexamination of the issue of inspiration by pointing out that "the findings and convictions of the past, valid as they may have been, cannot be the answer for this generation unless they can withstand reexamination in the light of new information gained during the last forty years or so."²

In opposition to those who are urging the need for a change in the concept of Biblical inspiration, other scholars not only see no need for such a change but on the contrary contend that the concepts of verbal plenary inspiration and Biblical inerrancy are true Biblical concepts. In their estimate, any change or redefinition which would undermine these concepts would at the same time impair the divine authority of Scripture both for the individual

¹In 1971 Pinnock clearly defined inspiration as being "plenary." This meant to him that "Scripture is an organism, inspired in the whole, not merely in its parts. It is truthful in the soteric and nonsoteric, in the doctrinal and the historical, in the primary and the secondary features." He also defined inspiration as being "verbal." He commented, "Although many still denounce verbal inspiration as a detestable theory, it is the only scriptural and meaningful one. Precisely because inspiration has to do with graphie, it has to do with words and language." Clark H. Pinnock, Biblical Revelation: The Foundation of Christian Theology (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971), pp. 86-87, 89. In his recent book The Scripture Principle (San Francisco: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1984) one hardly finds any reference to these concepts at all. In the previously quoted 1977 article, speaking about Biblical inspiration and authority, Pinnock observed that "the church is being compelled to define and redefine her convictions about them." "Three Views of the Bible," p. 49. Pinnock's latest book is apparently his response to the issues compelling the church to redefine her convictions about Biblical inspiration.

²Dewey M. Beegle, The Inspiration of Scripture (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), p. 9.

Christian and for the Church in general. This concern probably has found its most significant contemporary expression in the so-called Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy.¹

For one who studies the subject from a historical perspective it cannot escape the attention that the present debate about Biblical inspiration shows remarkable similarities with the debate in the late nineteenth century. Then, as now, there was the call for a redefinition of the doctrine of inspiration, and the reasons given for this appeal appear to be similar in both cases. Bruce Vawter correctly observes that in the demand for a new look at the idea of Biblical inspiration, "the major role was played by the truly higher criticism that made its impact in the nineteenth century: the literary and historical criticism of the sacred text."² Considerations of literary and historical criticism are still being urged as a major reason in the quest for a new concept of inspiration in the late twentieth century.

Purpose and Method

In order to obtain a deeper grasp of the issues involved in the ongoing debate about Biblical inspiration it is important to make a careful study of the subject from a historical and a dogmatic

¹The complete text of this statement is reproduced in Norman L. Geisler, ed., Inerrancy (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979), pp. 493-502. Characteristic are the following assertions: "Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching;" and again: "We affirm that the whole of Scripture and all its parts, down to the very words of the original, were given by divine inspiration." Ibid., pp. 494 and 495.

²Bruce Vawter, Biblical Inspiration (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1972; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972), p. 86.

perspective. Despite the fact that much has been written and published on inspiration during the last thirty years, there is no comprehensive survey of the history of the doctrine,¹ and there is a lack of detailed analytical studies of the views of individual scholars in this field. It is the aim of this study to make a modest contribution to both needs, especially to the latter.

Our main purpose is to compare and contrast the so-called liberal and conservative views of inspiration. Different methods might be used in pursuing this objective. The method selected for this study is to subject the concept or model of Biblical inspiration of one outstanding representative of each view to a thorough analysis. The scholars chosen for this purpose are William Sanday and Benjamin B. Warfield; a choice which will be explained below.

As much as possible each scholar will be allowed to speak for himself. This means that categories of thought and lines of argumentation will normally be presented in their own terms, though often in a condensed form. Every care will be taken, however, in an effort not to misrepresent or distort their views. Each analysis will focus on the starting-point adopted, the methodology used, and the criteria applied in formulating each model, as well as on conclusions reached concerning the mode, the extent, and the effects of Biblical inspiration.

A careful comparison of the two models will then be conducted on the basis of the results of the preceding analyses. The same

¹Vawter's volume covers the entire Christian era but cannot be considered and does not claim to provide a comprehensive history of the doctrine of inspiration.

issues will be taken up again, but whereas the analyses are predominantly descriptive, the comparison is intended to be evaluative. Each model will be assessed in terms of faithfulness to its starting-point and methodology, logical coherence as well as consonance with the Biblical data. Special attention will be given to the question of methodology in view of the fact that both scholars claim to apply the same method, the so-called inductive method,¹ and nevertheless reach very different conclusions.

Because the views of Sanday and Warfield are part of a historical development it is important to place them in the context of the past and present debate about Biblical inspiration. Our study will begin, therefore, with a delineation of crucial developments and issues in the nineteenth-century debate--or perhaps we could better say conflict--about inspiration in Anglo-American Protestantism.

First, the antecedents of this conflict in the three preceding centuries will be traced from the time of the Reformation through the Age of Reason. Understandably such a review cannot provide much more than a bird's eye view, and will focus mainly on

¹The inductive method received its classical formulation from the English philosopher Francis Bacon (1561-1626), who held that nature should be interpreted by the induction of facts rather than the use of deductive syllogisms. The method has therefore also been designated as the Baconian method. In the nineteenth century the inductive method was adopted and defended by many theologians as the only true method for the formulation of a "scientific theology." See, e.g., Theodore Dwight Bozeman, Protestants in an Age of Science: The Baconian Ideal and Antebellum American Religious Thought (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1977). The appeal to the inductive method, as will become evident from our study, was found among theologians of very different convictions.

developments in the two ecclesiastical traditions to which Sanday and Warfield belonged, respectively the Anglican and the Presbyterian. The same emphasis will be continued in the survey of issues and developments in the nineteenth century. Special attention will be given to factors which contributed substantially to the evident escalation of the conflict during this period. Finally we will concentrate on the role of Sanday and Warfield, and the institutions where they taught, in the culmination of the debate about Biblical inspiration during the latter part of the century.

Despite its obvious limitations, we hope that this brief delineation of the history of the doctrine of inspiration in the English-speaking world will not only provide an understanding of the context in which Sanday and Warfield came to formulate their concepts of inspiration but also contribute to a clearer perception of the course of this history per se.

The evaluative comparison at the end of this study will provide opportunity to set the views of Sanday and Warfield in the context of the current debate about inspiration. It is in this context that we can best see how their investigations into the subject are still relevant for us today. The comparison also will enable us to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their models of inspiration and to perceive more clearly the pitfalls to avoid and the method to be applied in our own efforts to formulate a truly Biblical concept of inspiration. To that end some suggestions will be included in our final conclusion.

Warfield and Sanday

The choice of Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield (1851-1921)¹ as an outstanding representative of the conservative view of inspiration presents itself nearly as self-evident. In contemporary discussions of inspiration his name recurs again and again. By many conservative scholars Warfield is considered as the most prolific and the most profound author ever to write on the doctrine of Biblical inspiration. John Gerstner, in speaking about Warfield's contribution to the doctrine of Biblical inspiration, estimates that "it may well be the greatest contribution to the theme ever made by any Christian scholar before or since."² James Barr, one of the most outspoken critics of conservative views of Biblical inspiration, highlights Warfield's prominence when he remarks that "a conservative bibliography will almost certainly have Warfield's name on its list of authorities for the doctrine of scripture: and any other names there are will in all probability have got their thoughts from Warfield."³ However, Warfield's name does not only appear frequently in conservative publications. There is hardly a scholar, critical of such concepts as verbal inspiration, Biblical infallibility,

¹Warfield was professor of systematic theology at Princeton Theological Seminary from 1887 till his death in February 1921. Fuller biographical information on Warfield and Sanday can be found in Chapter 2.

²John H. Gerstner, "Warfield's Case for Biblical Inerrancy," in God's Inerrant Word: An International Symposium on the Trustworthiness of Scripture, ed. John Warwick Montgomery (Minneapolis, Minn.: Bethany Fellowship, 1974), p. 115.

³James Barr, Fundamentalism (London: SCM Press, 1977), p. 262. A perusal of Barr's book shows that Warfield's name looms larger on its pages than that of any other scholar.

or inerrancy, who would fail to include Warfield's name in connection with his criticisms. Beegle refers to Warfield and Louis Gaussen (1790-1863) as "the most influential advocates of the verbal plenary view of inspiration during the nineteenth century."¹ As far as Warfield is concerned Beegle's remark might be applied to the twentieth century as well.

Warfield's continuing influence provides ample reason to subject his concept of inspiration to a careful analysis and evaluation. It is true that previous dissertations have focused on Warfield's doctrine of Scripture from different perspectives.² Yet, after carefully going over Warfield's writings, especially everything in them that pertains to the doctrine of Scripture, the writer of this study was persuaded by the evidence that there is still scope for a fuller delineation of Warfield's concept of Biblical inspiration.

The selection of a typical representative for the liberal view of inspiration is perhaps not as clear-cut as the choice of Warfield for the conservative view. Yet one name seems to be mentioned more frequently in this connection than other names:

¹Beegle, p. 117.

²So Clyde Norman Kraus, "The Principle of Authority in the Theology of B. B. Warfield, William Adams Brown, and Gerald Birney Smith" (Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 1961); Woodrow Behannon, "Benjamin B. Warfield's Concept of Religious Authority" (Ph.D. dissertation, South Western Baptist Theological Seminary, 1963); John Jacob Markarian, "The Calvinistic Concept of the Biblical Revelation in the Theology of B. B. Warfield" (Ph.D. dissertation, Drew University, 1963); and Robert James Hoefel, "The Doctrine of Inspiration in the Writings of James Orr and B. B. Warfield: A Study in Contrasting Approaches to Scripture" (Ph.D. dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, School of Theology, 1983).

William Sanday (1843-1920), professor at Oxford University from 1863 till his retirement in 1919.¹ It is true that only during the last years of his career Sanday openly identified himself as a liberal,² but Cuthbert Hamilton Turner (1860-1930), disciple and friend of Sanday for thirty-five years, thinks that "there was no doubt a good deal in his early days that was in keeping with his final development."³

Sanday's views on inspiration, especially as set forth in a series of Bampton Lectures delivered in 1893, had a far-reaching influence. William Abraham discusses Sanday's theory of inspiration as a prominent example of the so-called inductive approach and suggests that "the major break-through at this point" may be due to Sanday.⁴ J. K. S. Reid refers to "Sanday's deservedly famous Bampton

¹The last twenty-four years of his active teaching career Sanday occupied the chair of Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity, one of the most prestigious chairs in theology in England.

²One of Sanday's last published works was entitled The Position of Liberal Theology (London: Faith Press, 1920). He called this book his Nunc dimittis.

³Cuthbert H. Turner, "Dr. Sanday: A Fragmentary Sketch," Constructive Quarterly 9 (1921):353. Turner adds that Sanday "had hesitated (so one has been told) about taking Holy Orders because of the difficulties he felt in regard to miracle. And he had come back to Oxford in 1883 rather definitely as a 'liberal,' and all through he ranked as an academic liberal and mixed with academic liberals at a time when it was not customary for theological professors to do so."

⁴Abraham, p. 56. Earlier in his book Abraham explains his choice of Sanday's theory of inspiration for examination, because "Sanday is one of the few to examine our theme with a view to finding a position that would be compatible with serious historical investigation of the Bible. In this he deserves our attention, not least because he enabled a whole generation to live with this problem, although he himself failed to provide a satisfying account of inspiration." Ibid., p. 10.

Lectures" as the classical exposition of the theory of degrees of inspiration. Reid mentions that the delivery of these lectures "constituted a severe shock to the orthodoxy of their day," but that "it could hardly then have been foreseen how influential the view which they expounded was to become, . . ."¹ James Barr reckons that "Sanday was perhaps the most influential single person in persuading the Church of England to abandon exactly the position which fundamentalists now seek to reinstate."²

To submit Sanday's concept of inspiration to a careful analysis and to compare it with Warfield's concept of inspiration renders some special benefits. Despite the importance of Sanday's views no doctoral dissertation or comparable in-depth research seems ever to have been devoted to his doctrine of inspiration,³ a lacuna we hope will be filled by this study. Another benefit lies in the fact that Sanday and Warfield were contemporaries.⁴ They were

¹John K. S. Reid, The Authority of Scripture: A Study of the Reformation and Post-Reformation Understanding of the Bible (London: Methuen and Co., 1957), p. 165. Reid, like Achtemeier, does not think that Sanday's theory of inspiration is adequate, but is nevertheless of the opinion that it rendered a great service, at least temporarily, "in making compatible for ordinary Christian believers a high doctrine of Scripture with acceptance of the assured results of biblical critical study." Ibid.

²Barr, p. 348, n. 33.

³In view of Sanday's influence this fact is rather surprising. Besides numerous references to or brief discussions of Sanday's views on Biblical inspiration, like those by Abraham and Reid, there seems to be only one article specifically dealing with the subject by R. Laird Harris, "Sanday and the Scriptures," in Inspiration and Interpretation, ed. John F. Walvoord (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957), pp. 179-88. And this article deals only partially with Sanday's concept of inspiration.

⁴Warfield was eight years younger than Sanday, but they died exactly five months apart.

confronted by the same questions, addressed the same issues, and broadly speaking operated in the same historical, but not the same geographical or ecclesiastical, context. Although there is little evidence of any personal contact between these two scholars, they were aware and even appreciative of each other's scholarly work.¹

In regard to the doctrine of Biblical inspiration, however, they decidedly disagreed. Warfield upheld and defended the concept of verbal plenary inspiration; Sanday rejected this concept and endeavored to replace it with what he called a more scientific or inductive concept. Warfield maintained the infallibility and inerrancy of the Bible; Sanday held such qualifications to be untenable in view of what he considered the established results of Biblical criticism and in the light of modern historical and scientific knowledge. Nevertheless, both scholars were convinced that their concept of Biblical inspiration was derived from Scripture. And both claimed to reach their conclusions by the inductive method.

¹In 1889 Sanday mentions Warfield's name among a number of American scholars who are making a worthwhile contribution to theological research. William Sanday, "The Future of English Theology," Contemporary Review, July 1889, p. 51. In another place he refers to Warfield's book The Lord of Glory, which had been published in 1907, as "an able book from the other side of the Atlantic." William Sanday, Christologies Ancient and Modern (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), p. 115, n. 1. Warfield, on the other hand, speaks of Sanday's "excellent classification of New Testament quotations as to their form" in Sanday's book Gospels in the Second Century. Warfield in Archibald A. Hodge and Benjamin B. Warfield, Inspiratica (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, [1881]; reprint ed., with an Introduction by Roger R. Nicole. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1979), pp. 66-68. The only evidence of personal contact our research has brought to light so far is a letter from Warfield to Sanday dated July 17, 1895, to congratulate his Oxford colleague on his appointment as Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity.

In 1977 Pinnock expressed his conviction that, although the issue of inspiration and authority was forced upon us by recent intellectual history, we might see in this development a call of God to a deeper appreciation for and understanding of his written word. In this context he commented: "Warfield made a great contribution, but his is not the last word. It was the inception of a long process of theological reflection that has not finished yet."¹ Warfield would undoubtedly have agreed with this judgment and he would have encouraged an ongoing and ever deepening theological reflection on the vital issues of Biblical inspiration and authority.

However, in order to go beyond the contributions of scholars such as Sanday and Warfield the onus rests upon us to make sure that we have fully grasped and assessed the foundations, the methodology, and the many ramifications of their models of Biblical inspiration. Then, standing as it were upon the shoulders of their attainments, we will be better prepared to avoid any weaknesses we may detect in their concepts and methods, to formulate more precise definitions and to construct sounder models of inspiration than they were able to do. Not only should this lead us to a deeper appreciation for and understanding of God's written word, but above all to a fuller trust in and commitment to him who could say of himself, "I am the way, the truth and the life," and who never stopped to appeal to the Scriptures as the word of truth which testified of him and his great work for our salvation.

¹Pinnock, "Three Views," p. 71.

Limitations

Certain limitations have been enjoined to keep this work within reasonable bounds. First of all the focus of our study is on the concept of Biblical inspiration and only in a restricted sense on related concepts, such as revelation, illumination, authority, canonicity, the witness of the Holy Spirit, and others. Sanday and Warfield certainly were concerned with these subjects as well as with inspiration, but the centrality of the latter concept in their theological work is generally recognized and constitutes a prominent reason for the fact that their views continue to exercise their influence till the present.

Another limitation pertains to the scope of our research. Only the published works of Sanday and Warfield have been examined. These are so abundant in the case of both scholars that they provide sufficient material for the purpose of this study, namely, to ascertain and evaluate their models of Biblical inspiration through careful analysis and comparison. It is doubtful that an examination of their unpublished manuscripts would have made a significant additional contribution to that purpose. Even the published works have not been read exhaustively, but a sustained effort has been made to examine everything bearing on the subject.

Thirdly, Sanday's and Warfield's concepts of Biblical inspiration, rather than their applications of these concepts, constitute the central concern of this study. There is an element of truth in the observation by Bernard Ramm that "there is no absolute correlation between what a theologian thinks about Scripture and how

he uses it,"¹ but at the same time it would be difficult to deny that there is a substantial correlation. So, although we cannot enter into the issue how they used the Scriptures, it will become evident that at least in the case of Sanday and Warfield there seems to be a clear connection between their concepts of Biblical inspiration and the authority they are willing to attribute to the Scriptures as a standard for Christian life and doctrine.

¹Bernard Ramm, "Is 'Scripture Alone' the Essence of Christianity?" in Biblical Authority, ed. Jack Rogers (Waco, Texas: Word Books, Publisher, 1977), p. 115.

CHAPTER II

CONCEPTS OF INSPIRATION IN THE THE NINETEENTH CENTURY AND THEIR BACKGROUND

No century since the Reformation saw such far-reaching changes in Protestant theology as the nineteenth century.¹ This is markedly true in regard to the change in understanding of the nature of the Bible and its inspiration. That change caused a continuous conflict between traditional and newer concepts of Biblical inspiration which manifested itself in Anglo-American Protestantism during the second half of the century in a growing divergence between opposing theological trends. It is the purpose of this chapter to trace the antecedents of this conflict in the three preceding centuries, to delineate significant factors contributing to the controversy, to portray some of its distinctive features, and to provide an insight into the background and the careers of Sanday and Warfield, especially in relation to the conflict concerning inspiration.

¹See Claude Welch, Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century, 2 vols. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972-85), 1:1. Welch speaks here about "dramatic and far-reaching changes in the patterns and styles of Protestant theology."

Developments from the Reformation to
the End of the Eighteenth Century

The Reformers and Protestant Dogmaticians
on Biblical Inspiration

When Martin Luther (1483-1546) on April 18, 1521, before the august assembly at Worms appealed to the testimony of Scripture as the final authority by which he should be convinced, sola Scriptura was affirmed as a basic principle of the Protestant Reformation. For Luther this appeal to "Scripture only" was based on his conviction that Scripture is the word of God.¹ It is evident that the expression "the word of God" was used by the Reformer preeminently in reference to Christ, the eternal Word of God; yet it is equally clear that he identified the Scriptures as "God's Scriptures and God's Word."² As such, he said, they were "necessarily . . . clearer,

¹In modern times a protracted debate has been pursued as to whether Luther identified Scripture as the word of God. John K. S. Reid thinks that, "For Luther, Scripture is not the Word, but only witness to the Word." The Authority of Scripture: A Study of the Reformation and Post-Reformation Understanding of the Bible (London: Methuen and Co., 1957), p. 72. Cf. Emil Brunner, Revelation and Reason: The Christian Doctrine of Faith and Knowledge, trans. Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1946), p. 145, n. 23. Other scholars, however, on the basis of extensive evidence from Luther's writings have reached the conclusion that Luther does consider Scripture to be the very word of God. So, e.g., Michael Reu, Luther and the Scriptures (Columbus, Ohio: Wartburg Press, 1944), pp. 17-18, and passim; A. Skevington Wood, Captive to the Word. Martin Luther: Doctor of Sacred Scripture (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1969), p. 150.

²Martin Luther, Luther's Works, 55 vols., ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut Lehmann (Saint Louis, Mo.: Concordia Publishing House, 1955-76), 22:7-14; 34:227 (hereafter designated Luther's Works). A balanced presentation of Luther's doctrine of "The Word" is found in William M. Landeen, Martin Luther's Religious Thought (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1971), pp. 89-97. Cf. Paul Althaus, The Theology of Martin Luther, trans. Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), pp. 35-53. Althaus thinks that Luther had a double concept of the word of God in

simpler and more reliable than any other writings," and "the true lord and master of all writings and doctrines on earth."¹

For Luther this emphatic view of Holy Scripture as the authoritative word of God had a distinct concept of divine inspiration as its correlate. He never wrote a treatise on the doctrine of inspiration,² but his writings are permeated with phraseology expressing his belief in the divine inspiration of the Scriptures. Conspicuous in this connection are his frequent references to the Holy Spirit asserting explicitly or implicitly the Spirit's authorship of the Scriptures. This idea is summed up in expressions like "Holy Scripture is spoken by the Holy Spirit," or "We attribute to the Holy Spirit all of Holy Scripture."³ The fact that Scripture in its entirety must be attributed to the authorship of the Holy Spirit implied for Luther that it does not err or lie and

regard to Scripture, namely, that it is "the word of God," not only when it speaks to us in law and gospel and thereby convicts our heart and conscience but also--and this is a matter of principle--in everything else that it says." *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51. Althaus is of the opinion that the latter concept attributes a false legalistic authority to the Bible and does conflict with the other concept--the true Reformation concept--, which finds the authority of the Bible in the fact that it is the bearer of the living word of God. Luther himself apparently saw no such conflict.

¹Luther's Works, 32:11-12.

²This was not only true of Luther, but also of Lutheran theologians during the greater part of the sixteenth century. See Robert D. Preus, The Inspiration of Scripture: A Study of the Theology of the Seventeenth Century Lutheran Dogmaticians, 2d ed. (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1957), p. 26.

³Luther's Works, 15:280 and 275. Luther's writings bristle with expressions attributing certain portions of Scripture to the authorship of the Holy Spirit. See, e.g., *ibid.* 3:316; 12:10, 18, 278, 279.

that there is nothing superfluous in it.¹ It may be that Luther occasionally questioned the canonicity of certain Biblical books and that he attached greater value to some of them than to others,² but this never led him to deny or doubt the divine inspiration and truthfulness of the Scriptures as a whole. The Reformer also recognized the human element in Scripture, for instance, when he observed that "every apostle has his peculiar way of speaking, as has every prophet also,"³ but this did not mean that for Luther Scripture was of human origin. "The Scriptures, although . . . written by men, are neither of men nor from men but from God."⁴

For John Calvin (1509-64) likewise Scripture was the authoritative word of God, the final court of appeal, the ultimate standard of truth and doctrine. He wanted it to be established as a firm principle that "no other word is to be held as the Word of God, and given place as such in the church, than what is contained first in the Law and the Prophets, then in the writings of the apostles,"

¹Ibid., 32:11; 2:233; 15:280; 34:227.

²Well-known are the remarks in his "Preface to the New Testament" which he concludes with the observation that "St. John's Gospel and his first epistle, St. Paul's epistles, especially Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians, and St. Peter's first epistle are the books that show you Christ and teach you all that is necessary and salvatory for you to know, even if you were never to see or hear any other book or doctrine. Therefore St. James' epistle is really an epistle of straw, compared to these others, for it has nothing of the nature of the gospel about it." Ibid., 35:362.

³Martin Luther, Dr. Martin Luther's sämtliche Werke, 67 vols., ed. Johann Georg Plochmann and Johann Konrad Innischer (Erlangen: C. Heyder, 1826-57), 52:341; quoted in Francis Pieper, "Luther's Doctrine of Inspiration," Presbyterian and Reformed Review (hereafter abbreviated as PRR) 4 (1893):252.

⁴Luther's Works, 35:153.

and that "the only authorized way of teaching in the church is by the prescription and standard of his Word."¹ Elsewhere Calvin asserted that "Scripture is the true touchstone by which all doctrines must be tested," and that therefore it must stand as a firm axiom "that no doctrine is worth believing except such as we perceive to be based on the Scriptures."² It is true that for Calvin the expression Verbum Dei refers primarily to "the everlasting Wisdom, residing with God, from which both all oracles and all prophecies go forth."³ But Christ, the eternal Word of God, is revealed in the written word, and "cannot be properly known from anywhere but the Scriptures."⁴

Although a number of chapters in his Institutes are devoted

¹John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, bk.4, ch. 8, sec. 8 (hereafter the abbreviations bk., ch., and sec. will be omitted; references to Calvin's Institutes will just give three numbers of which the first refers to the book, the second to the chapter, and the third to the section). The text of the quotations given here is taken from Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battle, Library of Christian Classics, vols. 20 and 21 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960).

²Calvin's Commentaries on Acts 17:11. Quotations from Calvin's Commentaries are taken from two different editions. New Testament quotations are taken from Calvin's Commentaries, 12 vols., ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1959-72); Old Testament quotations from Calvin's Commentaries, 45 vols. (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1844-55). In footnote references only the text or passage of Scripture commented on by Calvin from which a certain quotation is taken will be mentioned. Readers who have access to the two forementioned editions of Calvin's Commentaries will easily find the text of Calvin's comments quoted or referred to.

³Institutes 1:13:7.

⁴Calvin's Commentaries on John 5:39. Some modern scholars claim that Calvin did not identify Holy Scripture with the word of God, because his understanding of that phrase had a much wider connotation. See, e.g., John T. McNeill, "The Significance of the Word of God for Calvin," Church History 28 (1959):133, which states categorically: "God's Word and the Bible are not convertible terms in

to the authority and credibility of the Holy Scriptures, nowhere in Calvin's writings do we find a delineation of a distinct doctrine of inspiration. A. Polman correctly observes, however, that even if Calvin does not discuss the subject, he presupposes it.¹ Like Luther, Calvin considers the Holy Spirit to be the true Author of Scripture. The phrase "which the Holy Ghost foretold" in Acts 1:16 teaches us, according to Calvin, that "David and all the prophets spoke solely under the direction of the Spirit, so that they themselves were not the source of the prophecies but rather the Spirit who used their tongues as an instrument."² Such terminology has engendered a lively debate among modern scholars as to whether

Calvin's thinking." In a similar vein speaks Wilhelm Niesel, The Theology of Calvin, trans. Harold Knight (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956), p. 36; Reid, p. 38; and Richard C. Prust, "Was Calvin a Biblical Literalist?," Scottish Journal of Theology 20 (1967):314-15. However, this contention is questionable and gives the impression of an anachronistic imposition of a modern dilemma on the Reformer. John Murray seems closer to the truth when he concludes "that for Calvin there is no incompatibility between Christ as being himself the incarnate Word of God, . . . on the one hand, and Scripture as the Word of God, invested with the oracular quality of God's mouth, on the other." John Murray, Calvin on Scripture and Divine Sovereignty (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1960), p. 39. In pp. 33-43 Murray, responding to Niesel and others, lucidly discusses the relation of the written Word to the incarnate Word in Calvin's theology.

¹A. D. R. Polman, "Calvin on the Inspiration of Scripture," in John Calvin, Contemporary Prophet, ed. J. T. Hoogstra (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1959), p. 102.

²Calvin's Commentaries on Acts 1:16. Cf. his remark that "the Holy Spirit everywhere declares that He has so spoken to us by the mouth of the prophets, that He wishes to be heard in their writings." Ibid., on Ephesians 2:20. Forstman observes that Calvin's writings are liberally sprinkled or rather filled with statements indicating that Calvin thinks of the Scriptures as the writings of the Spirit. H. Jackson Forstman, Word and Spirit: Calvin's Doctrine of Biblical Authority (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1962), p. 50. See also Polman, pp. 98-100.

Calvin held a mechanical theory of inspiration. It is true that he frequently used the verb "dictate" (Latin: dictare) and its related noun to describe the work of the Holy Spirit in the production of Holy Scripture,¹ and that he referred to the human authors as "clerks," "penmen," "scribes," or "organs" of the Spirit.² Some scholars hold that Calvin used these terms in a literal sense, whereas others think that he employed them figuratively. Although it may not be possible to reach a definitive conclusion, it seems doubtful that Calvin used the word "dictate" in describing the activity of the Holy Spirit in a merely mechanical meaning.³ He recognized the presence of distinct individual styles and personal

¹For examples of this use we refer to Forstman, p. 53. Cf. Kenneth S. Kantzer, "Calvin and the Holy Scriptures," in Inspiration and Interpretation, ed. John F. Walvoord (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957), pp. 137-41. John Mickelsen has pointed out that Calvin used dictation terminology both in the Institutes and in his commentaries. John K. Mickelsen, "The Relationship between the Commentaries of John Calvin and His Institutes of the Christian Religion, and the Bearing of That Relationship on the Study of Calvin's Doctrine of Scripture," Gordon Review 5 (1959):161-62.

²Characteristic is, e.g., Calvin's remark in the introduction to his comments on Psalm 77 that "whoever was the penman of this psalm, the Holy Spirit seems, by his mouth, to have dictated a common form of prayer for the Church in her afflictions, . . ." Elsewhere he refers to the apostles as "sure and genuine scribes (Latin: amanuenses) of the Holy Spirit." Institutes 4:8:9.

³It is not possible in this brief survey to do justice to the very extensive debate on the significance of Calvin's dictation terminology and his concept of the process of inspiration. A brief yet helpful résumé of different positions is found in Forstman, pp. 4-6. A well-informed discussion of the whole issue is J. I. Packer, "Calvin's View of Scripture," in God's Inerrant Word: An International Symposium on the Trustworthiness of Scripture, ed. John Warwick Montgomery (Minneapolis, Minn.: Bethany Fellowship, 1974), pp. 95-114.

preferences in vocabulary in the different Biblical books.¹ He also emphatically rejected the idea that inspiration superseded the conscious involvement of the inspired writers in such a fashion as the pagans supposed to happen to their diviners when they were thrown into ecstasy by a heavenly afflatus.²

In regard to the truthfulness of the Scriptures Calvin held a position similar to that of Luther. He expressed his conviction "that the faithful ought thus to embrace the word of God, as they know that they have not to do with men, the credit of whom is doubtful and inconstant, but with him who is the true God, who cannot lie, and whose truth is immutable."³ But if Scripture in its entirety is the word of God, how can we account for the presence of the obvious human frailty of that word? Calvin found the answer to that question in

¹Calvin remarks, e.g., that "Ezekiel is verbose in this narration," and that because he "was sent to men very slow and stupid, he therefore used a rough style," adding further that "he had acquired it partly from the custom of the region in which he dwelt." Calvin's Commentaries on Ezekiel 12:4-6. It must be observed, however, that in and through all the individual styles Calvin perceives the majesty of the Spirit, who is the true author of all the Scriptures. See Institutes 1:8:2. Cf. Calvin's Commentaries on Psalm 78:3.

²Calvin's Commentaries on Numbers 23:4-6. Kantzer has summarized Calvin's concept of the method of inspiration quite well when he writes that "in Calvin's thought, the prophet . . . is by no means an instrument which simply passes on words mechanically given to him. Rather, because of God's sovereign control of his being, he is an instrument whose whole personality expresses itself naturally to write exactly the words God wishes to speak." Kantzer, p. 141.

³Calvin's Commentaries on Micah 4:5. The question whether Calvin believed in the inerrancy of the Bible or not has sparked off a scholarly debate that has continued for at least a century. Some very helpful observations on this subject are made by Packer in his earlier quoted article "Calvin's View of Scripture." Packer is probably correct when he observes that "the reason why Calvin never argued this point [the total truth of Scripture] is not that it was not important to him, but that it was not denied." Packer, p. 98.

the idea of a divine accommodation to human capacity. God in communicating with man, "accommodates himself to the ordinary way of speaking, on account of our ignorance, and sometimes even, if I may be allowed the expression, stammers."¹ Nevertheless, though the language of Scripture may be crude, it clearly bears the evidence of its divine majesty, and, Calvin maintained, inwardly taught by the Holy Spirit "we affirm with utter certainty (just as if we were gazing upon the majesty of God Himself) that it has flowed to us from the very mouth of God by the ministry of men."² It is the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit which seals the word of God in the hearts of the believers and this testimony, according to Calvin, is more excellent than human reason for God alone is a fit witness of himself in his word, the Scriptures.

The successors of the Reformers, the Lutheran and Reformed dogmaticians of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, faced the trying task of maintaining and defending the authority of Scripture as the unique word of God against the criticism of Roman Catholics. The Council of Trent (1545-63) decided that every saving truth and instruction of the Gospel was contained in the Scriptures

¹Ibid., on John 21:25. Cf. Institutes 1:13:1. The importance of the idea of divine accommodation to human capacity in Calvin's theology has been recognized by a number of scholars. So, e.g., Edward A. Dowey, Jr., The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1952), pp. 3-17; Ronald S. Wallace, Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957), pp. 2-5; Forstman, pp. 13-14. A useful discussion of Calvin's principle of accommodation is found in Ford Lewis Battles, "God Was Accommodating Himself to Human Capacity," Interpretation 31 (1977):19-38; cf. Dirk W. Jellema, "God's 'Baby-Talk': Calvin and the 'Errors' in the Bible," Reformed Journal 30 (April 1980):25-27.

²Institutes 1:7:5.

and in the unwritten traditions, and that therefore both Scripture and tradition were to be held in veneration with an equal affection of piety and reverence.¹ The Reformers and their spiritual successors repudiated this Roman Catholic doctrine and took a decided stand on the sola Scriptura principle. In response to the arguments of Roman Catholic scholars such as Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621), Thomas Stapleton (1535-98), and others, the Protestant dogmaticians maintained the authority of Scripture and its sufficiency, perspicuity, and efficacy as the only source and standard of Christian doctrine and morals.²

The teachings of the so-called "radical" or "left-wing" Reformers posed another threat to the Protestant doctrine of Scripture. While the more extreme among them exalted the Spirit over

¹This position was set forth in the "Decree Concerning the Canonical Scriptures," which was approved during the fourth session of the Council on April 8, 1546. The text of this decree is given in Philip Schaff, ed., The Creeds of Christendom, 3 vols. (New York: Harper and Row, 1931; reprint ed., Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1983), 2:79-83. For an extended discussion of the Roman Catholic doctrine of Scripture and tradition before and at Trent, see George H. Tavard, Holy Writ or Holy Church: The Crisis of the Protestant Reformation (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), pp. 111-209.

²No modern scholar has done more to elucidate the doctrine of Scripture of the seventeenth-century Lutheran dogmaticians than Robert D. Preus. The results of his research have been published in the earlier quoted work The Inspiration of Scripture, and in his more comprehensive work The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism, 2 vols. (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970-72), 1:254-403. There is no equivalent published work for the Reformed dogmaticians. The most significant study in this area is probably the doctoral dissertation of John F. Robinson, "The Doctrine of Holy Scripture in Seventeenth Century Reformed Theology," (Thèse de Doctorat ès Sciences Religieuses, University of Strassbourg, 1971). Of published works on the subject we would refer to that of Heinrich Heppe, Reformed Dogmatics, ed. Ernst Bizer, trans. G. T. Thomson (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1950; reprint ed., Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1978), pp. 1-46.

the Scriptures, the majority acknowledged the authority of the Bible, but tended to devalue the Old Testament.¹ Particularly significant for future developments was the attitude of rationalists such as Sebastian Castellio (1515-63) and Faustus Socinus (1539-1604).² Though formally professing the authority of Scripture, they in reality made human reason the criterion by which the statements of Scripture were to be judged. Such an attitude paved the way for a rationalistic criticism of the Scriptures not only in regard to

¹The predilection of the radical Reformers for the New Testament over the Old and their hermeneutical problems with the latter are pointed out in George Huntston Williams, The Radical Reformation (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), pp. 815-32. More recently Reventlow has analysed this tendency in a thorough discussion of the "left wing of the Reformation" and its attitude to the Bible in Henning Graf Reventlow, The Authority of the Bible and the Rise of the Modern World, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1984), pp. 49-72. Reventlow in summing up the results of his investigation writes, "The attitude of the 'left wing of the Reformation' to the Old Testament is predominantly negative In controversy with the Reformers, the 'left wing' strongly contests that the Old Testament is a directly binding force in the shaping of the life of the church and of politics." Ibid., p. 62. In his book Reventlow presents a sustained argument to show that this tendency to denigrate the authority of the Old Testament is part of a wider tradition, which he traces from mediaeval Spiritualism through Erasmus, the 'left wing' Reformers, and Martin Bucer to the English scene, where he detects a similar attitude among the Puritans and the rationalistic thinkers of the seventeenth century, finally issuing in the devastating criticism of the authority of the Bible and especially of the Old Testament in English Deism.

²For the views of Castellio and Socinus in regard to the Bible, see Williams, pp. 750-51, 826-27. For Castellio, see also Reventlow, pp. 70-72. Although Reventlow sees the basic attitude of the rationalists among the "left wing of the Reformation" as particularly significant for later developments, *ibid.*, p. 69, he does not discuss Socinus in his chapter on this subject. This omission seems strange. It may be that the influence of Castellio in England was greater than that of Socinus, but the impact of the latter and his followers on the rise of the rationalistic approach to Scripture in Europe as a whole certainly appears to be as powerful as that of Castellio. See Klaus Scholder, Ursprünge und Probleme der Bibelkritik im 17. Jahrhundert (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1966), pp. 34-55.

matters of language and history but also concerning issues of morality and doctrine.¹ This approach to the Scriptures received further impetus in the course of the seventeenth century through the upsurge of rationalistic philosophy under the influence of such thinkers as René Descartes (1596-1650) and Benedict de Spinoza (1632-77). By making the truth of Scripture subject to the critical scrutiny of reason, reason was given priority over Scripture.²

In opposition to the exaltation of reason, the Protestant dogmatists asserted that reason is required to understand Scripture but that it cannot and should not sit in judgment on Scripture.³ In response to the critical approach of Socinians and others, they maintained the truthfulness of the Bible in all its statements.⁴

¹For some relevant observations in regard to the far-reaching implications of the rationalistic approach to the Scriptures of the Socinians, see Preus, Theology, 1:189-90.

²Scholder describes the effect of Cartesianism on the authority of Scripture in these words: "Descartes hat die Frage der doppelten Wahrheit . . . für die Neuzeit im Sinne der universalen Herrschaft der Vernunft entschieden. Mit dieser Entscheidung übernimmt die Philosophie an Stelle der Theologie die Gewährleistung der Einheit des Denkens. Widersprüche zwischen Vernunft und Offenbarung, bisher grundsätzlich durch die höhere Autorität von Schrift oder Kirche aufgehoben, werden jetzt vor den Richtstuhl der Vernunft gebracht und in ihrem Sinne gelöst." Scholder, p. 134. For a similar effect of Spinoza's philosophy, see P. C. Craigie, "The Influence of Spinoza in the Higher Criticism of the Old Testament," Evangelical Quarterly 50 (1978):23-32. The influence of rationalism and Biblical criticism on the concept of Biblical inspiration in the latter part of the seventeenth century will be briefly discussed below.

³The position of the dogmatists on the function of reason in relation to Scripture is discussed in Preus, Inspiration, pp. 9-12; Theology, 1:261-63; and Heppe, pp. 8-10.

⁴A thorough treatment of this subject is given in Preus, Inspiration, pp. 76-87; Theology, 1:339-62. Cf. Robinson, pp. 36-41. Preus shows that the dogmatists were more emphatic and specific in

They held the inspiration of Scripture to be plenary and verbal, that is to say that inspiration pertains to all of Scripture and to the very words used by the sacred writers. They were convinced that this doctrine of inspiration was true and Biblical.¹ Many scholars in modern times hold this doctrine of plenary, verbal inspiration to be a novel and rigid theory introduced by the Protestant dogmaticians of the post-Reformation era in contrast to the dynamic doctrine of Scripture held by the Reformers.² But it is doubtful that such a sharp distinction between the Reformers and the later dogmaticians in regard to the doctrine of Scripture and its inspiration can be maintained. The evidence suggests that the continuity between them is greater than modern critics of the dogmaticians' doctrine of

regard to the complete veracity of Scripture than the Reformers, because they had to face much more deliberate and sophisticated criticisms of the truthfulness of Scripture. Theology, 1:347-48.

¹Preus, Inspiration, pp. 33-47; Theology, 1:278-86. Robinson's treatment of the Reformed dogmaticians on this point is not very detailed, but the evidence seems to suggest that there was no significant difference in regard to the doctrine of inspiration between Lutheran and Reformed scholars. See John W. Beardslee III, ed., Reformed Dogmatics (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 23.

²So, e.g., Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, 4 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934-69), 1:2:522-26; Emil Brunner, Truth as Encounter, trans. Amandus W. Loos and David Cairns (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), pp. 76-78, 176-77; Bruce Vawter, Biblical Inspiration (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1972; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972), pp. 81-83; Reid, pp. 72-102; and Jack B. Rogers and Donald K. McKim, The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible: An Historical Approach (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979), pp. 147-99. The orthodox dogmaticians have been charged with bibliolatry and making a paper Pope out of the Bible. Reid catches his indictment of Protestant orthodoxy in one phrase: "Rigor scholasticus." Reid, p. 72.

inspiration will admit.¹ This affirmation does not overlook the fact that some of the dogmaticians on occasion defended untenable views of inspiration,² but it recognizes that their basic concern for the sola Scriptura principle and the main elements of their doctrine of inspiration were in line with the teaching of the early Protestant Reformers.

The Doctrine of Inspiration in Britain from
Reformation to Restoration

The Reformation in Great Britain differed in some features from its Continental counterparts. Most significant were perhaps the controlling influence of political events, the varying attitudes of

¹Geoffrey Bromiley detects certain shifts of emphasis, certain unfortunate tendencies among the Lutheran and Reformed dogmaticians of the seventeenth century, but nevertheless asserts that in such beliefs as that "inspiration applies to the whole Scripture, and not merely to particular parts," that it "extends to the very words in which the statements are clothed, and includes passages which deal with historical and scientific as well as doctrinal and ethical matters," these dogmaticians "are in line with the main teaching of the Reformers themselves." Geoffrey W. Bromiley, "The Church Doctrine of Inspiration," in Revelation and the Bible, ed. Carl F. H. Henry (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1959), p. 213. Cf. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Historical Theology: An Introduction (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1978), pp. 327-28; John D. Woodbridge, Biblical Authority: A Critique of the Rogers/McKim Proposal (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), pp. 76-80.

²An oft-quoted example is the fact that a number of dogmaticians maintained that the vowel points of the Masoretic text of the Old Testament were a part of the inspired original Hebrew text. Under the influence of Francis Turretin (1623-87) and John Henry Heidegger (1633-98) this belief was even incorporated in one of the Reformed confessions--the Formula Consensus Helvetica of 1675. But it would be incorrect to judge Protestant Orthodoxy and its doctrine of inspiration by a few extreme positions which were not generally received. The acceptance of the Formula Consensus Helvetica was very limited in geographical scope and it soon lost its influence as a confessional statement. See Vawter, p. 82. Helpful discussions of the controversy about vowel points are found in Preus, Inspiration, pp. 140-46; Robinson, pp. 106-20.

successive monarchs, and the lack of a dominant leader like Luther or Calvin decisively to mold the theology of succeeding generations.¹ Despite such differences, the principle that Holy Scripture "was supreme in all things, and it alone the source of authority" was accepted by the English Reformers,² and was clearly expressed in the Thirty-Nine Articles, which became the official creed of the Church of England.³ Over against Roman Catholicism the Anglican divines maintained that Scripture takes precedence over tradition and that the church is confirmed through Scripture rather than Scripture by the church.⁴

For the English as for the Continental Reformers of the sixteenth century the doctrine of Biblical inspiration was hardly an issue. The plenary inspiration of Scripture was everywhere presupposed but not explicitly discussed, because it was not questioned.⁵ The authority, sufficiency, and perspicuity of the

¹See Justo L. González, A History of Christian Thought, vol. 3: From the Protestant Reformation to the Twentieth Century (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1975), p. 162.

²Ralph S. Werrell, "The Authority of Scripture for the Anglican Reformers," Evangelical Quarterly 35 (1963):79. Cf. L. Elliott-Binns, The Reformation in England (London: Duckworth, 1937), pp. 199-200.

³The first paragraph of Article Six of the Thirty-Nine Articles reads, "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." Schaff, 3:489.

⁴Werrell, pp. 84-86. Cf. Charles H. George and Katharine George, The Protestant Mind of the English Reformation 1570-1640 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 341-44.

⁵So Philip Hughes, "The question of the divine inspiration of Holy Scripture was scarcely a live issue four hundred years ago,

Scriptures were the issues at stake, and theological treatises would focus on them rather than on the question of inspiration.¹ This is also true for the Thirty-Nine Articles, which affirm the sufficiency and authority of Scripture but contain no explicit reference to its inspiration.

During the second half of the sixteenth century, also known as the Elizabethan era, two diverging trends began to develop in the Church of England, which were marked by differing attitudes towards the scope of the authority of Scripture. All Anglicans accepted the supreme authority and inspiration of the Bible, but many divines considered the patristic writings of the first four centuries as complementary to the Scriptures.² Numerous practices in life and liturgy which could not be found in Scripture were observed on the basis of ancient traditions of the church. It was argued that Scripture contained all things necessary for salvation, but that many ancient practices were not contrary to Scripture and should be received and maintained even if not strictly necessary to salvation.

for it was not in dispute." Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, "The Inspiration of Scripture in the English Reformers Illuminated by John Calvin," Westminster Theological Journal 23 (1960-61):129. Cf. W.H. Griffith Thomas, The Principles of Theology: An Introduction to the Thirty-Nine Articles, 6th rev. ed. (London: Vine Books, 1978), p. 118, n. 1.

¹This is evident, for example, in the "Treatise of the Holy Scriptures" by John Jewel, which was gathered out of certain sermons which he preached in Salisbury in the year 1570. John Jewel, The Works of John Jewel, 4 vols., ed. John Ayre, Parker Society series (Cambridge: University Press, 1845-50), 4:1162-88.

²This point has been stressed by A. M. Alchin, "An Anglican View on Scripture and Tradition," Dialog: A Journal of Theology 2 (1963):295-99. Cf. Elliott-Binns, p. 201. The Catholic scholar Tavad sees the inconsistency of the Anglican conception in the fact that it restricts the harmony between Scripture and the tradition of the Church to the first centuries. See Tavad, pp. 238, 242, 243.

Other divines rejected this position and held that all customs and traditions not distinctly based on Scripture should be abandoned. Their ideal was to purify the Church of England from all unscriptural practices and to remodel it after the pattern of the Reformed Church in Geneva. They were called Puritans.¹

Although Puritan and Anglican divines had rather different views concerning the scope of the authority of Scripture, the evidence suggests that both received the Bible in its entirety as the word of God and believed the Holy Spirit to be its true author. Richard Hooker (1554-1600), the most significant opponent of Puritanism in the Elizabethan era, held a concept of inspiration which most modern scholars would characterize as mechanical. According to Hooker the prophets "neither spake or wrote any word of their own, but uttered syllable by syllable as the Spirit put it into their mouth, no otherwise than the harp or the lute doth give a sound according to the discretion of his hands that holdeth and striketh it with skill."² Hooker did see a difference, however, between prophets and musical instruments, because harps and lutes have no

¹There is no unanimity among scholars in determining who should be counted as Puritans. We are here thinking primarily of those in the Church of England who wanted to remain in the fold of the national Church, but at the same time considered it necessary that the Church be purified from all unscriptural practices. When we contrast Puritans with Anglicans it is with the understanding that technically speaking both were Anglicans. For helpful observations on defining the term Puritan, see James I. Packer, Foreword to Introduction to Puritan Theology: A Reader, ed. Edward Hindson (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1976), pp. 9-11; Ernest F. Revan, The Grace of Law: A Study in Puritan Theology (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1976), pp. 17-20; Reventlow, pp. 91-99.

²Richard Hooker, The Works of That Learned and Judicious Divine, Mr. Richard Hooker, 3 vols., 3d ed., ed. John Keble (Oxford: University Press, 1845), 3:662.

understanding of what is piped or harped but prophets felt the power and strength of their own words.¹

The most significant Anglican treatise on the doctrine of Scripture in the sixteenth century, entitled Disputatio de Sacra Scriptura,² was written by William Whitaker (1548-95), a leading Cambridge scholar with distinct Puritan leanings. This work, which was directed against the Roman Catholic polemicists Bellarmine and Stapleton, dealt with six major issues concerning the doctrine of Scripture: the canon, the authentic edition and versions, the authority, the perspicuity, the interpretation, and the perfection of Scripture. Whitaker stands squarely in the Reformed tradition and his views on Scripture are very similar to those of Calvin. There are, however, as a result of the polemic confrontation with Rome distinctive developments which resemble those found in Continental Orthodoxy.

As is usual for sixteenth-century discussions on Scripture, Whitaker's book does not deal with the doctrine of inspiration under a special heading. But it is evident that he holds a view of

¹Ibid., p. 663.

²Whitaker's work Disputatio de Sacra Scriptura appeared originally in 1588, but an English translation was not published until more than two and a half centuries later under the title A Disputation on Holy Scripture against the Papists Especially Bellarmine and Stapleton, trans. and ed. William Fitzgerald (Cambridge: University Press, 1849). References in footnotes are from this translation. Whitaker's works enjoyed a wide readership in Europe and the Dictionary of National Biography tells us that "No English divine of the sixteenth century surpassed Whitaker in the estimation of his contemporaries. . . . Bellarmine so much admired his genius and attainments that he had his portrait suspended in his study." James Bass Mullinger, "Whitaker, William," Dictionary of National Biography, ed. Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee (London: Oxford University Press, 1921-22), 21:22.

inspiration not unlike that of Calvin. Whitaker is of the conviction that "all the books of the Old and New Testaments were written not merely by the will and command, but under the very dictation of Christ."¹ He believes the Holy Spirit to be Christ's agent in this process but, again like Calvin, he does not explain how we should conceive of the divine dictation. There is no doubt, however, about its result. Whitaker is sure that as the sacred writers were moved by the Holy Spirit they "could not be deceived, or err, in any respect,"² and because "God inspired the prophets with what they said, and made use of their mouths, tongues, and hands," Scripture "is even immediately the voice of God."³ There is no reason to believe that Hooker would have disagreed with Whitaker's views on Biblical inspiration; nor would any Anglican divine likely have done so in that period. The decisive point of difference "between Puritans and Anglicans in the sixteenth century," as has been rightly observed, consisted "in their different attitudes to the authority of the Bible and especially of the Old Testament."⁴

The diverging tendencies in regard to the function and authority of Scripture became more pronounced in the first part of

¹Whitaker, p. 528.

²Ibid., p. 37. Whitaker in this passage opposes the opinion of Erasmus that the sacred writers at times may have suffered a lapse of memory. This is unthinkable for Whitaker, because all Scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit and no infirmity could be attributed to Him. Therefore, "it becomes us to be so scrupulous as not to allow that any such slip can be found in Scripture." Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 296. He adds, "The prophets and apostles were only the organs of God."

⁴Reventlow, p. 147.

the seventeenth century. The so-called Caroline divines (later also known as the High Church party) continued in the tradition of Hooker and rejected the claim of the Puritans that Scripture is not only an infallible guide in regard to the fundamentals of faith but also in regard to the accessories of religion.¹ Hooker did maintain the supreme authority of Scripture when confronting the Romanists, but over against the Puritans he stressed that there are many things in human life and in the church which man has to find out by the light of natural understanding and reason.² For Hooker, Scripture, tradition, and reason formed an inextricable pattern of authority. It is this threefold pattern which is considered as the keystone of Anglican theology.³ Among Hooker's spiritual successors of the seventeenth century, however, the emphasis would fall progressively on the authority of reason and this emphasis would be strengthened by

¹See Paul Elmer More, "The Spirit of Anglicanism," in Anglicanism: The Thought and Practice of the Church of England, Illustrated from Religious Literature of the Seventeenth Century, ed. Paul Elmer More and Frank Leslie Cross (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1935), pp. xxiv-xxix. Fuller discussions of the different positions of Puritans and Anglicans in regard to scriptural authority are presented in John S. Coolidge, The Pauline Renaissance in England: Puritanism and the Bible (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), pp. 1-22; Reventlow, pp. 105-84.

²Hooker devotes the whole of the second book of his famous work Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity to the position of the Puritans "that Scripture is the only rule of all things which in this life may be done by men."

³See John E. Booty, "Hooker and Anglicanism," in Studies in Richard Hooker: Essays Preliminary to an Edition of His Works, ed. W. Speed Hill (Cleveland and London: Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1972), pp. 230 ff.; Richard H. Wilmer Jr., "Hooker on Authority," Anglican Theological Review 33 (1951):107-8; for a more extended discussion see Henry R. McAdoo, The Spirit of Anglicanism: A Survey of Anglican Theological Method in the Seventeenth Century (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965).

the growing influence of rationalistic philosophy during that period. Yet, during the first half of the new century there still seems to be considerable unanimity among Anglicans and Puritans in regard to the inspiration of Scripture.

For the Puritans, however, the authority of Scripture and its divine inspiration were very important issues. When during the time of the revolution Parliament in 1643 called together an assembly of divines, who were first asked to revise the Thirty-Nine Articles and later redirected to draw up a completely new confessional statement, it became clear that they put greater stress on the doctrine of Scripture than the framers of the Articles had done. The so-called Westminster Assembly, consisting predominantly of Presbyterian divines, drew up the Westminster Confession of Faith, which is distinctly a Reformed creed.¹ This confession became in 1648 the official statement of belief for the Church of Scotland, but was after the Restoration rejected by the Church of England, which from then on maintained the Articles as its confessional basis.

A comparison of the Articles with the Confession shows many basic points of agreement, but also salient differences. The articles deal first with the doctrine of God and of Christ's incarnation, life, death, and resurrection on our behalf, then in articles six and seven with Holy Scripture as the rule of faith. The Confession, like a number of other Reformed creeds, begins with a

¹A useful introduction to the historical context of the Westminster Assembly and the character of the Westminster Confession is that of John H. Leith, Assembly at Westminster: Reformed Theology in the Making (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1973).

chapter concerning the Holy Scripture.¹ It seems evident that the authors of the Confession wanted to stress the preeminence of the Scriptures as the sole source and standard of doctrine and practice. A very strong emphasis on the all-sufficiency and necessity of the Scriptures as the rule of faith and life pervades that first chapter of the Confession.²

In regard to the divine inspiration of Scripture the Westminster Confession is more elaborate and explicit than the Thirty-Nine Articles. This can be noticed throughout the first article but probably nowhere so emphatically as in paragraph eight, when it says,

¹An observation by J. K. S. Reid that "Of all the Reformed confessional documents, only WCF gives scripture such formal priority," in "Foundation Documents of the Faith: 7. The Westminster Confession of Faith," Expository Times 91 (1979-80):197, is rather astounding. A cursory study of the Reformed confessional documents of the sixteenth century shows that many of them either begin with an article on Holy Scripture, like the Tetrapolitan Confession of 1530, the First Helvetic Confession of 1536, the Geneva Confession of 1536, the Second Helvetic Confession of 1566, or have it immediately after an initial article on God like the French Confession of 1559 and the Belgic Confession of 1561 (in the Belgic Confession articles two through seven deal with the Holy Scriptures). At times they submit the whole confession to the judgment of Scripture either in the preface as in the Scottish Confession of 1560 or in the conclusion as in the First Confession of Basel of 1534. John Leith has correctly observed that "The Assembly apparently had no difficulty deciding how the Confession should begin. The Reformed tradition favored, though not unanimously, an opening chapter on the Holy Scripture." Leith, p. 75.

²See "The Westminster Confession" in Creeds of the Churches, ed. John H. Leith (Chicago: Aldone Publishing Co., 1963), pp. 192-230; esp. paragraphs 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7. Both the Articles and the Confession lay stress on the sufficiency of Scripture for the knowledge of salvation, but the Confession seems to give a wider scope to that sufficiency than the Articles, when it affirms that "The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: . . ." Ch. 1, par. 6, in Leith, Creeds, p. 195.

The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic; . . .¹

The phrase "being immediately inspired by God" is a phrase used by Puritan writers in the seventeenth century to stress the divine authorship of the Scriptures.² The fact that the Westminster divines used this phrase as well as other expressions emphasizing the divine inspiration, authority, and truthfulness of the Scriptures, provides a clear indication that they accepted the Old and New Testaments in their entirety as the authentic word of God. That is to say that they considered the original text of the Bible in Hebrew and Greek as constituting the word of God written.³ With Calvin,

¹Ibid., p. 196.

²Samuel Rutherford (1600-1661), one of the Scottish commissioners at the Westminster Assembly, expressed the conviction that "in writing every jot, tittle, or word of Scripture, they [the prophets and apostles] were immediately inspired, as touching the matter, words, phrases, expression, order, method, majesty, stile and all: So I think they were but Organs, the mouth, pen and Amanuenses: God as it were immediately dyting, and leading their hand at the pen." Samuel Rutherford, The Divine Right of Church-Government and Excommunication (London: [n.p.], 1646), p. 66; quoted in Jack E. Rogers, Scripture in the Westminster Confession. A Problem of Historical Interpretation for American Presbyterianism (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1966), p. 299. Earlier John Ball (1585-1640) had given a definition of the phrase "to be immediately inspired" in his famous Catechism, which was often reprinted and widely used in the seventeenth century. "To be immediately inspired" as referring to Scripture means according to Ball "to be as it were breathed, and to come from the Father by the Holy Ghost without all means," and he adds that "Thus the holy Scriptures were inspired both for matter and words." John Ball, A Short Treatise: Containing All the Principal Grounds of Christian Religion (London: Edward Brewster and Robert Bird, 1629), pp. 5-6.

³This can be seen from paragraph eight of the first chapter of the Confession, quoted above. Over the last hundred years the doctrine of inspiration of the Westminster divines has been a subject

however, they held that our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority of Scripture could only come "from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts."¹

It is evident that the Westminster Confession is far more explicit in regard to the inspiration of the Scriptures than the Thirty-Nine Articles. Although it may not be possible to draw stringent conclusions from this fact, later theological developments in the Presbyterian and Anglican traditions suggest that the latter tradition, based on the Articles and the theological tradition of Hooker and his successors, more easily allowed latitude in regard to the doctrine of Biblical inspiration than the Reformed Presbyterian tradition, strongly rooted in the Westminster Confession and the theology of Calvin.

The Beginnings of the Modern Debate about Inspiration: The Age of Reason

A significant historical break in English history occurred with the Restoration of 1660. In the words of Gerald Cragg, "The return of Charles II was at once the overthrow of the Puritan party and the defeat of Puritan theology."² From henceforth those who refused to conform to the liturgy and faith of the Church of England

of debate, especially among Presbyterian scholars. This debate, in which Warfield was strongly involved, is briefly dealt with in chapter 4.

¹Westminster Confession of Faith, ch. 1, par. 5, as given in Leith, ed., Creeds, p. 195.

²Gerald R. Cragg, From Puritanism to the Age of Reason: A Study of Changes in Religious Thought within the Church of England 1660 to 1700 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950), p. 13.

were known as Nonconformists or Dissenters.¹ The dominant influence of Puritanism in English religious thought had come to an end.

The period reaching from the Restoration to the close of the eighteenth century, and more narrowly just the eighteenth century itself, has been characterized as the Age of Reason.² This designation stems from the fact that it was an age in which human reason, more than ever before, was exalted as the ultimate standard of man's understanding of himself, of nature, and of God. The rationalism on the continent as exemplified in the philosophy of Descartes and Spinoza found its counterpart in seventeenth-century England in the thought of such philosophers as Edward Herbert (1583-1648), Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), and John Locke (1632-1704).

These three thinkers are seen as precursors of English Deism. Although Locke was definitely not a Deist,³ his teaching that man's reason is the final arbiter of the truth of revelation and his

¹The terms Nonconformists or Dissenters came to refer to Protestant bodies--such as Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, Quakers, and Methodists--which were independent from the established or state church.

²A good general survey of the whole era can be found in Gerald R. Cragg, The Church and the Age of Reason 1648-1789, Pelican History of the Church series, vol. 4 (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1960); other helpful studies are idem, Reason and Authority in the Eighteenth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964); R. W. Harris, Reason and Nature in the Eighteenth Century (London: Planford Press, 1968), and Roland N. Stromberg, Religious Liberalism in Eighteenth-Century England (London: Oxford University Press, 1954).

³For the significance of Herbert, Hobbes, and Locke in relation to Deism, see John Orr, English Deism: Its Roots and Its Fruits (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1934), ch. 3, "The Rise of English Deism (1624-1695)," pp. 59-113. Reventlow discusses this same relationship in greater depth. Reventlow, pp. 185-285, and shows that Locke stands in the liberal Anglican tradition. Ibid., p. 245.

assertion that nothing contrary to the dictates of reason can be accepted as being revealed by God were skilfully used by some Deists to discredit any need for divine revelation, especially any need for a divinely inspired book. Locke himself, however, stressed man's need for such revelation.

A factor which contributed significantly to the exaltation of human reason above Biblical revelation was the emergence of modern science in the latter part of the seventeenth century. The discoveries and theories of Nicolas Copernicus (1473-1543), Galileo Galilei (1564-1642), and others had already raised questions about the nature and authority of Scripture.¹ But especially the mechanization of the concept of the universe under the impact of the discoveries of Isaac Newton (1642-1727) and other scientists was interpreted by many as evidence of the superiority of human reason and of the unscientific if not plainly erroneous character of the Biblical statements about nature and the universe.²

¹Many theologians considered Copernicus' heliocentric system as contradictory not only to Ptolemy, but also to the Scriptures, because the language of the Scriptures seemed to favor a geocentric view of the world. This issue was diligently debated in seventeenth-century England. See John Dillenberger, Protestant Thought and Natural Science: A Historical Interpretation (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1960), pp. 104-12, 129. Cf. R. Hooykaas, Religion and the Rise of Modern Science (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972), pp. 126-35.

²So, for instance, the French philosophes of the eighteenth century who exalted Newtonian physics and the supremacy of reason but denied the fact of revelation and dispensed with the Holy Scriptures. Cragg, The Church and the Age of Reason, p. 237. It was not the intention of Newton nor of most other scientists of the seventeenth century to "push God out of the universe" and they did not subscribe to the conclusions drawn by Deists and others from this new understanding of the cosmos. See E. J. Dijksterhuis, The Mechanization of the World Picture, trans. C. Dikshoorn (London: Oxford University Press, 1961; Oxford University Press paperback,

The assertion of human reason was perhaps most markedly manifested in the rise of a new critical approach to the Scriptures in the latter part of the seventeenth century. The publication in 1678 of Histoire critique du Vieux Testament by Richard Simon (1638-1712), a French Catholic priest, has been characterized as the inauguration of modern Biblical criticism.¹ In this work Simon questioned the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, the reliability of the chronology of various parts as well as other literary and historical aspects of the Old Testament. He drew the criticism of both Protestant and Roman Catholic scholars and was expelled from his order. At the command of Bishop Jacques Bossuet (1627-1704) copies of his work, with a few exceptions, were destroyed. But soon other editions appeared and in 1682 an English translation was printed in London.

Jean LeClerc (1657-1736; also known as Clericus), an Arminian theologian and Biblical scholar, reacted sharply to Simon's work in 1685 in his Sentiments de quelques théologiens de Hollande sur l'Histoire critique du Vieux Testament, part of which appeared in 1690 in an English translation under the title Five Letters

1969), pp. 490-91; Edwin Arthur Burtt, The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1954), pp. 297-302; Reventlow, pp. 335-341. Reventlow is of the opinion that "of necessity the way led from him [Newton] to the positivistic view of the world held by the French Enlightenment and in the nineteenth century, which in the end could dispense with God even as prima causa," but he agrees that this certainly came about contrary to Newton's own intentions. Ibid., p. 338.

¹Emil G. Kraeling, The Old Testament since the Reformation (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), p. 43; Norman Sykes, "The Religion of Protestants," in The Cambridge History of the Bible: The West from the Reformation to the Present Day, ed. S. L. Greenslade (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), p. 194.

Concerning the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. This book is probably the first book in the English language which deals explicitly with the subject of inspiration. In it LeClerc argues that for large parts of the Scriptures, such as historical narratives and hymns of praise, the writers had no need of any special inspiration.¹ Locke, after reading the original edition of this book, expressed his dilemma in regard to the inspiration of the Scriptures in a letter to his friend Philip van Limborch, a colleague of LeClerc, in a deeply penetrating question,

If everything in holy writ is to be considered without distinction as equally inspired of God, then this surely provides philosophers with a great opportunity for casting doubt on our faith and sincerity. If, on the contrary, certain parts are to be considered as partly human writings, then where in the Scriptures will there be found the certainty of divine authority, without which the Christian religion will fall to the ground?²

¹Typical is, for instance, the following remark of LeClerc: "To relate faithfully a matter of fact, which a man has seen and well observed, requires no inspiration. The apostles had no need of inspiration to tell what they had seen, and what they had heard Christ say. There needs nothing for that but memory and honesty." Five Letters Concerning the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures (N.p., 1690), p. 31. A summary of LeClerc's view of inspiration is given in Ben Alvin Sawatsky, "A Historical Survey of the Doctrine of Inspiration in English Speaking Reformed Theology: John Owen to Benjamin B. Warfield" (Masters thesis, Regent College, Vancouver, 1978), pp. 147-64. Sawatsky's thesis of nearly five hundred pages gives probably the best survey of the history of the doctrine of inspiration in the English-speaking world from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries, although he professedly limits his study to scholars in the Reformed tradition. My own research on the history of this doctrine was mainly done before I became acquainted with Sawatsky's work, but it was gratifying to see the extent to which the results of our research coincided. For some insights I gladly acknowledge my indebtedness to Sawatsky.

²The letter was written on September 26, 1685, and can be found in John Locke, The Correspondence of John Locke, 2 vols., ed. E. S. De Beer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 2:748; quoted in Woodbridge, p. 198, n. 97.

The dilemma, so clearly expressed by Locke, was no doubt agitating other minds in his age and has haunted Christian believers from that time till the present. If one accepts the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, how is one going to deal with philosophical and scientific knowledge and theories that contradict or seem to contradict the Scriptures; on the other hand, if one accepts a partial inspiration of the Scriptures, does one not then limit and undermine their divine authority by human reason?

In the second half of the seventeenth century the early stirrings of the science of textual criticism gave rise to questions about the authenticity of the Biblical text which also contributed to a certain uneasiness concerning the inspiration of the Bible. Between 1653 and 1657 appeared in six volumes the famous Biblia Sacra Polyglotta, edited by Brian Walton (1600-1661), consecrated Bishop of Chester at the time of the Restoration just one year before his death. The London Polyglot contained side by side the text of the Bible in nine different ancient languages from manuscripts that were then available. Walton prefixed his work with a critical introduction pointing out the existence of many variants in different manuscripts. This work aroused quite some reaction and brought upon its editor among other accusations the charge that it would lead to atheism.¹ It raised the question how one could depend upon an

¹Walton's work was especially criticized by John Owen (1616-83), a Puritan divine who later embraced the views of the Independents. Owen defended the purity of the originals or autographs of the Biblical text and the authenticity of the Hebrew vowel points. He charged Walton with playing into the hands of Popery and atheism by drawing attention to the multiplicity of textual variants. Walton did not fail to give a pointed rebuttal to Owen's criticisms. For a discussion of this controversy, see F. F.

uncertain text of the Bible as the infallible and divinely given word of God.

The plethora of critical questions in regard to the Bible-- its text, its authorship, its history, its cosmology, its inner consistency-- which was raised in the latter part of the seventeenth century, coupled with the assertion of the autonomy of human reason, constitutes the cradle of the modern debate about inspiration.¹ But in a special sense LeClerc's Five Letters functioned as a catalyst to set that debate in motion in the English-speaking world. This is apparent from the books published on the subject of inspiration in the years subsequent to the appearance of LeClerc's work. Reactions came from both Anglican and Nonconformist writers.

William Lowth (1660-1732), father of the better known bishop Robert Lowth (1710-87), published in 1692 an answer to LeClerc entitled A Vindication of the Divine Authority and Inspiration of the Old and New Testament.² Sawatsky explains the importance of this work for the history of the doctrine of inspiration as representing

Bruce, Tradition Old and New (Exeter, Devon: Paternoster Press, 1970), pp. 156-57, 160-61. Cf. Stanley N. Gundry, "John Owen on Authority and Scripture," in Inerrancy and the Church, ed. John D. Hannah (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), pp. 208-12.

¹Klaus Scholder is so bold as to say that, "In der grossen Auseinandersetzung um Verständnis und Bedeutung der Bibel, die mit dem Aufkommen des neuzeitlichen Denkens im Abendland begann, sind um 1680 die wichtigsten Positionen abgesteckt. Die Aufklärung verändert zwar die historischen Gewichte, aber sie bringt nichts wesentlich Neues." Scholder, p. 171.

²The full title was A Vindication of the Divine Authority and Inspiration of the Writings of the Old and New Testament in Answer to a Treatise Lately Translated out of the French, Entitled, Five Letters Concerning the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures (Oxford: John Wilmot, 1692).

. . . one of the first attempts to systematize the doctrine of inspiration. Prior to LeClerc's Five Letters the doctrine of inspiration was treated only incidentally and often inferentially. From Lowth onward, however, whole volumes are devoted to the doctrine of inspiration.¹

In his work Lowth defines an inspired writing as "a book that is written by the incitation, direction and assistance of God, and designed by him for the perpetual use of the Church," and expresses his conviction that supernatural assistance "attended the apostles in everything of moment."² However, he thinks that there are some things in which the apostles did not write by inspiration, for instance, when they related common occurrences of life, things that have no relation at all to divine truths or matters of merely human prudence. Lowth's concept of partial inspiration, which was moderate compared with LeClerc's views in regard to the extent of inspiration, is representative of similar views expressed by numerous Anglican writers in his own time and in the next two centuries, among them Gilbert Burnet (1643-1715), William Warburton (1698-1779), Richard Watson (1737-1816), Herbert Marsh (1757-1839), and Richard Whateley (1787-1863).³

Two other significant reactions to the Five Letters came from Claude Grostête Lamothe (1647-1713), pastor of the Savoy Church, a French Reformed congregation in London, and Edmund Calamy (1671-1732), a Nonconformist pastor of a church in Westminster. Lamothe, a Protestant pastor who had fled to England upon the revocation of the

¹Sawatsky, p. 171.

²Lowth, pp. 3-15.

³This is documented in an interesting book by James Fitzjames Stephen, Defence of the Rev. Rowland Williams, D.D., in the Archdeacon's Court of Canterbury (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1862), pp. 36-60. Of this work more will be said later.

Edict of Nantes in 1685, responded to LeClerc's work in 1694 with a book entitled The Inspiration of the New Testament Asserted and Explained in Answer to Some Modern Writers.¹ Lamothe objects to the fact that LeClerc's views limit inspiration to relatively small parts of the New Testament. For him all Scripture is inspired and infallible but he distinguishes two methods of inspiration, namely, inspiration of suggestion and inspiration of direction. The former refers to the fact that the Holy Spirit suggested those truths which he imprinted in the souls of the apostles by means of visions, dreams, a voice from heaven, or by secret suggestion. In this the apostles were in a passive disposition like a piece of cloth which receives different colors. However, when the apostles communicated in writing what the Holy Ghost had taught them, the Spirit pushed them forward to write, strengthened and refreshed their memories, and so directed their pens, that they wrote nothing which was not to the purpose, and according to the most exact rules of truth. This latter activity of the Holy Spirit Lamothe calls inspiration of direction.² By subsuming all of Scripture under two kinds of inspiration Lamothe is one of the first in a long line of Protestant writers who have distinguished different degrees of inspiration in Scripture.

¹Claude Grost te Lamothe, The Inspiration of the New Testament Asserted and Explained in Answer to Some Modern Writers (London: Tho. Bennet, 1694).

²Lamothe, pp. 108-9. Lamothe does not perceive this direction as a superseding of the human personality. The sacred authors are actually involved in their work and their style shows great affinity with their genius and education. But all the footsteps of human wit in no way affect the infallibility of their writings since the authors were guided by an infallible Spirit which directed them in composing them.

Especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries some form of this concept of inspiration was adopted by many.¹

In his response to LeClerc, Edmund Calamy stressed that all parts of the sacred oracles--whether prophecies, histories, or doctrine-- must be viewed as the composition of the Holy Spirit, but that there was no need for the same degree of inspiration in writing a history as for making a man a prophet.² Calamy is another early protagonist of the theory of degrees of inspiration and in this he was followed by other Nonconformist divines among whom Philip Doddridge (1702-51) takes a prominent place. Doddridge distinguishes three degrees of inspiration: superintendency, elevation, and suggestion. Of these he considered superintendency the lowest form of inspiration and suggestion "the highest and most extraordinary kind of inspiration," which "takes place when the use of our faculties is superseded, and God does as it were speak directly to the mind; making such discoveries to it as it could not otherwise have obtained, and dictating the very words in which these discoveries are to be communicated to others".³ Doddridge's

¹This is documented by Stephen but there is need for a more comprehensive study of this development. Sawatsky's study is limited by its focus on the Reformed tradition. Some of the prominent representatives of this concept will be discussed in this chapter.

²Edmund Calamy, Inspiration of the Holy Writings of the Old and New Testament Considered and Improved (London: T. Parkhurst, 1710), p. 30. Sawatsky is of the opinion that Calamy's work represents a high point in the formal development and consolidation of the doctrine of inspiration.

³Philip Doddridge, The Family Expositor; or, A Paraphrase and Version of the New Testament with Critical Notes and a Practical Improvement of Each Section (London: William Baynes and Son, 1825),

distinctions recur in the same or in a modified form in the works of a number of writers on inspiration in the next hundred years. For most of these writers the distinction between different kinds or degrees of inspiration was not intended as a denial of the plenary inspiration of Scripture but rather as an affirmation. Such a view of inspiration was generally combined with a clear-cut belief in the infallibility and truthfulness of the Scriptures in historical facts as well as in doctrine.¹

Particularly characteristic of the spirit of the age were the Deists with their emphatic affirmation of the supremacy of reason. Because to them revelation was so subordinate to reason as to be ultimately superfluous,² Deists treated the Bible as any other book

p. 1147. This work of Doddridge originally appeared in six volumes from 1739 till 1756 and was widely used for family devotions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

¹Among English and Scottish scholars who followed Doddridge in accepting different degrees, modes, or kinds of inspiration may be mentioned William Parry (1754-1819), John Dick (1764-1833), John Eye Smith (1774-1851), Daniel Wilson (1778-1858), and Thomas Hartwell Horne (1780-1862). The latter two scholars distinguished four degrees of inspiration instead of three, adding to Doddridge's inspiration of superintendency, elevation, and suggestion, the inspiration of direction. However, Wilson admitted that it is impossible to determine which kind or degree of inspiration operated in producing the different books or portions of Scripture. He wrote: "What the extent of the inspiration was in each case, we need not, indeed we cannot, determine." Daniel Wilson, The Evidences of Christianity, 2 vols. (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1833), 1:284, note.

²The Deist views on the relationship between reason and revelation are summarized in H. D. McDonald, Ideas of Revelation: An Historical Study A.D. 1700 to A.D. 1860 (London: Macmillan and Co., 1959), pp. 35-62. He quotes among other statements the well-known words of John Toland (1670-1722) "that there is nothing in the Gospel contrary to reason, nor above it." *Ibid.*, p. 44. Reventlow referring to the same words points out that for Toland reason "is now no longer just one authority among others but the absolute standard before which Christian doctrine, too, must justify itself."

and subjected it to severe criticism, not in the least from a moral viewpoint. Radical Deists criticized the Bible, and especially the Old Testament, for being full of immoral narratives and crude anthropomorphic concepts of God.¹ By laying down a priori conditions to which a revelation must conform--it must be universal, equally known to all men, in harmony with the natural truths of reason, and without mysteries--Deists thought to prove the Bible could not be a true revelation from God or only in so far as it accorded with natural reason.²

The critical attitude of the Deists in regard to the Scriptures as a unique revelation from God manifested itself in doubting and questioning the inspiration of the Scriptures. In fact, the attitude of some of the more radical Deists can hardly be interpreted otherwise than as a denial of such inspiration. Peter Annett (1693-1769) contrasted any alleged inspiration, which is the

Reventlow, p. 295. To the Deists revelation was nothing but a restatement of the principles of natural religion, which could be derived at independently by human reason. Therefore revealed religion is ultimately superfluous. Ibid., p. 383.

¹Time and again Reventlow shows the critical attitude of the Deists towards the Old Testament, which in the case of a writer like Thomas Morgan (d. 1743) led to the rejection of the Old Testament as a part of the Christian Bible. See *ibid.*, pp. 396-404. Not only were the Deists critical of the Old Testament, with its ceremonies, priestcraft, and anthropomorphic representations of God, but they reduced the religion of Jesus and the apostles to the level of a rational moral religion.

²Some of the Deists characterized the idea that God had singled out one nation to receive the word of God as a form of superstition. Stromberg comments, "The theory of a universal, indirect revelation succeeded in discrediting the classic a priori argument for the Bible, that God must have revealed himself to man, and substituted for it an a priori argument for doubting the Christian revelation, namely, that God must have revealed himself to all men through his works." Stromberg, p. 61.

source of all conceivable religious ills and the most scandalous enemy of virtue and reason, with natural religion based on reason as the only rule for determining truth.¹

Anglican theologians, faced with the Deistic denial of the need for revelation or of mystery in divine revelation, emphasized that revealed religion contained doctrines that could not be discovered by reason. Joseph Butler (1692-1752) in his famous work The Analogy of Religion² pointed out that just as there were mysteries in nature that man could not explain, so one could expect mysteries in revelation. Butler strongly argued that nobody should lay down a priori what divine revelation must be like, but rather investigate its actual nature and characteristics.³ This empirical approach was in harmony with traditional Anglican theological method. Butler's principle was to be taken up again in the controversy concerning Biblical inspiration in the nineteenth century.

In response to the Deistic denial of the inspiration of Scripture, orthodox theologians defended its inspiration and authority by mustering the evidences of prophecies and miracles recorded in

¹Reventlow, p. 373. Matthew Tindal (1656-1733), whose book Christianity as Old as the Creation; or the Gospel a Republication of the Religion of Nature (published in 1730) has been called the "Deistic Bible," is so critical about the Scriptures that it is hard to see how any inspiration can be ascribed to them at all. See Reventlow, pp. 374-83; Orr, pp. 140-44; McDonald, pp. 47-51.

²Butler's book appeared originally in 1736 and its full title was The Analogy of Religion Natural and Revealed to the Constitution and Course of Nature (London: Printed for James, John and Paul Knapton, 1736). There are many different editions of Butler's work and in quoting book and chapter of the original division of the work are given, rather than the page numbers of one specific edition.

³Butler, bk. 2, ch. 3.

its pages. Nevertheless there was a growing latitude in regard to the doctrine of inspiration among Anglican divines in the eighteenth century, many of whom attributed to the Scriptures a partial rather than a plenary inspiration, whereas others adopted the idea of a graded inspiration.¹ Other Anglicans, especially those who came to be known as Evangelicals, upheld the full inspiration and errorlessness of the Bible. "They accepted all its statements without question or dispute. They knew nothing of any part of Scripture being uninspired."² The same was true for John Wesley and his followers.³

The rationalistic influence at work in England also affected the Presbyterian Church in Scotland in the eighteenth century. This influence was greatly strengthened after the Union of Scotland with England in 1707 and manifested itself in the dominance of the Moderates in the Church of Scotland for the larger part of the

¹Gilbert Burnet (1643-1715), bishop of Salisbury, held that there are three different degrees of inspiration: one for prophecies, another for histories, and another for psalms and poetry. William Warburton (1698-1779), bishop of Gloucester, emphatically denounced the idea of divine dictation and universal inspiration and contended that the facts of Scripture [modern writers would probably have spoken of the phenomena of Scripture] were better explained by speaking of a partial inspiration, which would guarantee an unerring rule of faith and manners, yet obviate all those objections to inspiration which arise from the too high notion of it, such as trifling errors in circumstances of small importance. See Stephen, pp. 136, 141-43. Stephen provides other examples of similar views.

²McDonald, p. 212. McDonald presents at length the views of Charles Simeon (1759-1836) as representative of the views of Anglican Evangelicals of his time in general. Ibid., pp. 213-44.

³Helpful summaries of Wesley's views on Scripture and inspiration can be found in Wilber T. Dayton, "Infallibility, Wesley, and British Wesleyanism," in Hannah, pp. 223-54; George A. Turner, "John Wesley as an Interpreter of Scripture," in Walvoord, pp. 156-78 (esp. pp. 159-64); McDonald, pp. 245-65.

eighteenth and the early part of the nineteenth century.¹ They did not oppose the legal requirement of subscription to the Westminster Confession, but their outlook was quite different from that of the framers of the Confession.² As in the Church of England, the Evangelicals in the Scottish Church were the ones who most emphatically maintained the plenary inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures. They wished to remain faithful to the letter and the spirit of the Westminster Confession.

One of the foremost representatives of this Evangelical tradition was John Witherspoon (1723-94), a lineal descendant of John Knox. During his ministry in Scotland he showed himself to be a formidable opponent of Moderatism.³ In 1768 he accepted a call to the presidency of Princeton College, New Jersey, and became one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence for the newly formed United States of America. There is no question that both in theology and philosophy Witherspoon left an indelible imprint on the thinking of successive generations at Princeton. He introduced Common Sense

¹The far-reaching change of the ecclesiastical and intellectual life in Scotland during the eighteenth century is clearly documented in Andrew L. Drummond and James Bulloch, The Scottish Church 1688-1843: The Age of the Moderates (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1973). See also J. H. S. Burleigh, A Church History of Scotland (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), pp. 286-308.

²Their position is summed up in the following words: "The reason for the failure of the Moderates to write any theology of distinction is tolerably plain. They were restricted by the Westminster Confession. They did not hold its doctrines, but could not say so in public." Drummond and Bulloch, p. 104.

³Some of his satirical delineations of Moderatism can be found in John Macleod, Scottish Theology in Relation to Church History since the Reformation (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1974), pp. 205-6; and in Drummond and Bulloch, pp. 104-5.

philosophy, which had been developed by his fellow-countryman Thomas Reid (1710-96), at Princeton College. For nearly a century Common Sense philosophy, connected with a considerable stress on the inductive method (Baconianism), played a prominent role at Princeton as well as in many other educational institutions of the United States.¹ Some modern scholars claim that this philosophy was in a large measure responsible for the emphasis of later Princeton theology on verbal inspiration and Scriptural inerrancy.² The evidence they present in favor of their claim, however, appears inconclusive and their entire procedure gives the impression of imposing a Procrustean mold on the Scriptural evidence to which the Princeton theologians appealed in support of their doctrine of Scripture. They also seem oblivious to the fact that the doctrines of verbal inspiration and Biblical infallibility were the common good of evangelical scholars in a wide spectrum of denominations in the nineteenth century, and not an innovation of Princeton scholars.³

¹Evidence to demonstrate this point has been set forth in the published dissertation of John C. Vander Stelt, Philosophy and Scripture: A Study in Old Princeton and Westminster Theology (Marlton, N.J.: Mack Publishing Co., 1978).

²It is the stated purpose of Vander Stelt to show that there is an incongruity between what conservative Presbyterians intended to accomplish and what they in fact achieved in their effort to frame a theology of Scripture. It is his conviction that the main concepts of this theology can only be understood in the light of the general philosophical perspective of the time which was mainly determined by the basic principles of Scottish Common Sense philosophy. Vander Stelt, pp. 2-3. Rogers and McKim place the Princeton theology in a larger philosophical framework of Aristotelian scholasticism, but seem to agree with Vander Stelt in his estimate of the significance of Common Sense philosophy for the Princeton theology of Scripture. Rogers and McKim, pp. 235-48.

³With the ongoing research of recent years it is becoming clear that the doctrine of Scripture of the Princeton theologians was

In summary we can say that during the Age of Reason for the first time in the history of the Christian Church the doctrine of inspiration became a distinct focus of discussion and debate. The exaltation of human reason over divine revelation on the part of the Deists and the beginning of a critical questioning of the text, authorship, history, and other aspects of Scripture led on the one hand to a denial of inspiration (the Deists) or to a severe limitation of the extent of inspiration (LeClerc), on the other to theories of a partial inspiration, especially among divines in the Anglican Church (Lowth). Others tried to resolve the tension between belief in an infallible, completely inspired Bible and the demands of man's critical reason by positing a theory of degrees of inspiration (Lamothe; Doddridge). Although they usually did not reject the belief that Scripture is inspired in its totality, the idea of degrees of inspiration tended to weaken such a belief. It was mainly among the so-called Evangelicals, both in the Church of England and in the Church of Scotland, that a definite belief in the plenary inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures was maintained. It is clear that by the end of the eighteenth century major trends of thought concerning the doctrine of Biblical inspiration had taken shape. How the next century would bring an intensification of the debate about inspiration is the focus of the next part of this chapter.

neither an innovation nor an isolated phenomenon. See, e.g., "Part 2: The Tradition of the Infallibility of Scripture in American Christianity," in Hannah, pp. 257-357.

Conflict Concerning Inspiration in the
Nineteenth Century

Already in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the traditional concepts of Biblical inspiration and infallibility held by the Reformers and their successors had been questioned. It was in the nineteenth century, however, that the conflict concerning inspiration erupted in unprecedented power and intensity. The debate raged throughout Protestant Christianity and gave rise to an extensive literature, which has not yet been surveyed in its full scope.¹ The purpose of this part of our study is to discuss briefly factors which conspicuously contributed to the conflict and to delineate such events and views as seem most significant in shaping the two opposite schools of thought presented in the last part of the chapter.

¹There does not seem to be a nineteenth-century work which attempts to encompass the history of the conflict about inspiration in the English-speaking world in that century. Some of the more comprehensive works in English from that time are Charles Elliott, A Treatise on the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1877); and George Trumbull Ladd, The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture. A Critical Historical and Dogmatic Inquiry into the Origin and Nature of the Old and New Testaments, 2 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1883). Even today there does not exist a thorough survey of the history of the doctrine of inspiration in the Anglo-American world in the nineteenth century, though there are a number of worthwhile studies which cover that history within the confines of a specific ecclesiastical tradition or for a specific geographical area. So, e.g., L. Russ Bush and Tom J. Nettles, Baptists and the Bible: The Baptist Doctrines of Biblical Inspiration and Religious Authority in Historical Perspective (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980); H. D. McDonald in his book Theories of Revelation: An Historical Study 1860-1960 (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1963), which is the sequel to his Ideas of Revelation, deals quite extensively with the conflict concerning inspiration in Britain in the latter part of the nineteenth century and its continuation into the twentieth century. The best general survey for the Reformed-Synbyterian tradition is found in Sawatsky, but it is far from comprehensive.

Contributing Factors

Many factors contributed to the conflict. Prominent among these were the rise of higher criticism, which investigated the structure, authorship, date, and origin of the Biblical documents; scientific theories--especially in the areas of geology, paleontology, and biology--which brought into question the historicity of the Biblical records of creation and the Noachian flood; and the philosophy of progress, which in contrast to the teaching of the Bible portrayed the history of mankind as a history of progress rather than of degeneration. These and other factors were constantly interacting, and it is difficult to disentangle them in a discussion of their effect on the doctrine of Biblical inspiration. Yet for the sake of clarity they are briefly treated under separate headings.

Higher Criticism

Higher criticism originated in Germany in the eighteenth century, though its antecedents, as we have seen earlier, certainly can be traced back to the seventeenth century. The term itself seems to have been used for the first time in connection with Biblical studies by Johann Gottfried Eichhorn (1752-1827) in 1787 in the preface to the second edition of his Einleitung in das Alte Testament.¹ Eichhorn distinguished literary criticism, the so-called "higher" criticism, from textual criticism, which he gave the name

¹The preface of the second edition (or part of it) is included in the third edition, to which we make reference in this and the following footnotes. In this preface Eichhorn makes the following observation: "Die meiste Mühe musste ich auf ein bisher noch gar nicht bearbeitetes Feld, auf die Untersuchung von der inneren Beschaffenheit der einzelnen Schriften des Alten Testaments durch Hilfe der höheren Kritik (eines keinem Humanisten neuen

"lower" criticism.¹ He saw it as the purpose of higher criticism to study the internal evidence of each Biblical book in order to determine its authorship and authenticity. It was evident in his opinion that many books in the Old Testament were of a composite nature, and on the basis of the internal evidence it was the task of higher criticism to separate that which had been woven together from different times and authors in order to establish as much as possible the date of origin, the historical circumstances, and the authorship of the different parts.² Although no serious student of the Scriptures would have questioned the legitimacy of a critical study of the internal evidence of the Biblical books, the higher critical approach proved to be controversial. In the nineteenth-century debate about Biblical inspiration higher criticism (or German neology as it was originally called in the English-speaking world) became a persistent point of conflict.

The reasons for the controversial nature of higher criticism are not hard to detect. Many scholars who pursued higher critical studies reached conclusions concerning the composition, authorship, and date of certain Biblical books which were in conflict with the

Namens) wenden." Johann Gottfried Eichhorn, Einleitung in das Alte Testament, 3 vols., 3rd ed. (Leipzig: Weidmannischen Buchhandlung, 1803), 1:vi.

¹The distinction between higher and lower criticism is delineated by Eichhorn in these words: "Hat nur erst die höhere Kritik Schriftsteller von Schriftsteller unterschieden, und jeden nach seinem eigenen Gang, seinem Vortrag, seinen Lieblingsausdrücken und andern Eigenheiten im Allgemeinen charakterisirt: so hat dann ihre niedere Schwester, die sich bloss mit Worten beschäftigt und falsche Lesarten ausspählet, Regeln und Grundsätze, nach denen sie einzelne Lesarten prüfen muss." Ibid., 2:330.

²Ibid., 1:61-63.

testimony of the Scriptures to their own origin and which also questioned or denied the historicity of many Biblical narratives. Such scholars approached their critical study with the presupposition that the Bible should be read and studied in the same way as any other book, with the same methods of literary and historical criticism used for the study of other literature, and they often applied these methods on the premise that no a priori assumption in regard to the infallibility or divine inspiration of the Scriptures should in any way influence such criticism or its results.¹

Having come to conclusions in regard to the composition, authorship, and historicity of certain Biblical books, and the historical narratives contained in them which conflicted with the claims of the Biblical writers themselves or with the sequence of events presented by them, many higher critics urged that the traditional doctrines of inspiration and Biblical infallibility should be discarded.² Most critics did not reject the concept of divine inspiration altogether, but they wanted to reinterpret it in harmony with the results of their critical studies.

¹The right of "free enquiry," as it was called, had already been put forth in the eighteenth century by Johann Salomo Semler (1725-91) and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-81). It came to be accepted by many Biblical critics as axiomatic for an unbiased, scientific investigation of the questions which higher criticism attempts to answer. The problem was that in their historical research these critics often excluded a priori any supernatural causation as a valid principle of interpretation. But this cannot be said of all higher critics.

²It was especially "verbal inspiration" or "plenary inspiration" which critics claimed to be untenable in view of the results of criticism. Sometimes they did not concern themselves to explain what they meant by these terms, but more often than not it seems that they thought of it in terms of word-for-word dictation by the Holy Spirit.

It is not surprising that higher criticism became a major focus in the conflict concerning inspiration. To many Christians it was another manifestation of the rationalism and infidelity characteristic of the Age of Reason. These Christians perceived higher criticism as an attack on the trustworthiness and divine authority of the Scriptures and therefore as an enemy of Christian faith. Others, perhaps more cautious, recognized the need to distinguish between the legitimate objectives of higher critical studies--such as ascertaining with all available means the literary structure, time of origin, authorship, and historical setting of different Biblical books--and negative conclusions reached by a number of higher critics. It was also evident to them that the presuppositions and methods adopted in pursuing a critical study of the Bible were of crucial importance for the outcome of such a study.¹ For many conservative Christians, however, higher criticism came to be associated only with methods and conclusions that tended to undermine faith in the divine inspiration and authority of the Bible.

Although it is not necessary in this discussion of higher criticism (as a factor contributing to the conflict concerning the doctrine of inspiration) to trace in detail its historical development in Britain and in the United States, it seems useful to stress some essential points in that development.² The initial

¹Such an attitude was usually found with writers who were mature and recognized scholars. See, for such reactions, McDonald, Theories of Revelation, pp. 125-26.

²The history of Biblical criticism or higher criticism in the English-speaking world of the nineteenth century is recorded in a

impact of higher criticism in the English-speaking world was limited and the so-called German neology met with strong resistance in large sections of Anglo-American Protestantism. Vernon Storr attributes the resistance in England at the opening of the nineteenth century to a general indifference to learning on the part of the clergy, a strong reactionary spirit against the French Revolution, and the rationalism, atheism, and infidelity associated with it, but chiefly to "the traditional view of the Bible as a volume inspired throughout from cover to cover, whose statements, whether they related to science, or history, or religion, were to be accepted without questioning."¹ There were some scholars on both sides of the

number of scholarly studies, but the scope of these studies is usually restricted by geographical, chronological, or ecclesiastical boundaries. For England proper a significant recent study is John W. Rogerson, Old Testament Criticism in the Nineteenth Century: England and Germany (London: SPCK, 1984), but this work is limited to criticism of the Old Testament and excludes developments in other parts of Britain; more comprehensive but less detailed are W. Neil, "The Criticism and Theological Use of the Bible, 1700-1950," in Greenslade, pp. 238-93; Owen Chadwick, The Victorian Church, 2 vols., Ecclesiastical History of England Series, no's 7 and 8 (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1966, 1970), 1:527-44; 2:40-111. From the context of a specific theological tradition comes Willis B. Glover, Evangelical Nonconformists and Higher Criticism in the Nineteenth Century (London: Independent Press, 1954). A balanced presentation of the rise and progress of as well as the opposition to higher criticism is given in McDonald, Theories of Revelation, pp. 99-136. Some scholarly studies on the history of Biblical criticism in the United States are: Ira. V. Brown, "The Higher Criticism Comes to America, 1880-1900," Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society 38 (1960):193-212; Jerry Wayne Brown, The Rise of Biblical Criticism in America, 1800-1870 (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1969); Charles Farace, "The History of Old Testament Higher Criticism in the United States" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1939).

¹Vernon F. Storr, The Development of English Theology in the Nineteenth Century, 1800-1860 (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1913), p. 177. Storr might have added the strong control exercised by church and state over the universities.

Atlantic who attempted to make their students familiar with the new discipline of Biblical criticism, but their efforts had only a limited effect.

A major crisis concerning higher criticism in England was provoked by the publication in March 1860 of the book Essays and Reviews, written by six clergymen and one layman of the Church of England.¹ The writers freely discussed in an affirmative way the methods and results of higher criticism, and some expressed the need for a new understanding of Biblical inspiration. The book generated a heated debate, and reaction to its appearance was so strong that its publication delayed rather than encouraged a wider acceptance of higher criticism in the Anglican Church.² Yet the outcome of the ecclesiastical trials of two of the essayists made it clear that in the future there would be no legal hindrance to the teaching and publication of critical ideas concerning Scripture and its inspiration on the part of Anglican clergymen and scholars. The majority of the latter were still opposed to higher criticism and especially to the theological implications concerning the inspiration and interpretation of the Scriptures associated with it. During the next two decades the controversy seemed to a great extent to have subsided, but fairly quietly and unobtrusively changes in regard to the critical study of the Bible were taking place especially at the

¹See, e.g., Chadwick, 2:75-97; Rogerson, pp. 209-19; Storr, pp. 429-54. The most comprehensive study of the controversy occasioned by this volume is Ieuan Ellis, Seven Against Christ: A Study of 'Essays and Reviews', Studies in the History of Christian Thought Series, vol. 23 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980).

²This is Ellis's conclusion and the evidence presented in his book seems to justify his judgment.

two major universities in England. Similar changes occurred, but not always so quietly, at institutions of higher education in Scotland and in the United States.

From about 1880 onward higher criticism became an issue of widespread discussion both in Britain and in America and found acceptance on a much wider scale than before.¹ It was more than an accidental coincidence that in the next two decennia the controversy concerning Biblical inspiration reached a peak of unprecedented intensity. That there is a definite correlation between the growing impact of higher criticism and the intensification of that controversy is evident from the contemporary literature. This correlation will be clearly seen in our survey of the conflict about inspiration in the nineteenth century.

Scientific Theories

Higher criticism found strong support in certain scientific theories that came to the fore in the nineteenth century and eventually were widely accepted. As a result of these theories the historicity of the Genesis record of creation and the flood first came to be questioned and then to be denied. This is distinctly a nineteenth-century development as far as the English-speaking world is concerned, for in eighteenth-century England the orderly universe understood in terms of Newtonian physics was generally seen as

¹This fact is well-documented by Rogerson, pp. 273-93, for the Anglican community, while Glover earlier proved the same point in his study for the Nonconformist tradition. Glover, pp. 157-62. See also Chadwick, 2:97-111. In the United States the debate led to a much more intense crisis than in Britain, as we will yet see, culminating in the ecclesiastical trials of Charles Augustus Briggs and some other Presbyterian scholars.

evidence of the original handiwork of a good Creator, and there were few who doubted the literal truth of the Biblical account of origins.¹ Before the midpoint of the next century all that would be changing.

The geological theory of uniformitarianism had the greatest effect in changing the estimate of the Genesis record as a factual record of beginnings. A basic premise of this theory was that all geological processes observable in the present time have always operated at the same rate and in the same way in the past. As a result, the numerous evidences of gigantic changes in the crust of the earth came to be attributed to the operation of such processes over very extensive periods, much longer than the Biblical chronology would allow. The foundation for the theory of uniformitarianism was laid by James Hutton (1726-97), but it was brought to maturity by Charles Lyell (1797-1875), who published his famous Principles of Geology in three volumes between 1830 and 1833. Within a couple of decades the theory could claim as adherents many leaders of scientific and religious thought in Britain.²

Such a development was bound to have implications for the

¹Charles Gillispie is of the opinion that as late as 1790, "there was no question about the historical reality of the flood," and that "it was simply assumed that a universal deluge must have wrought vast changes and that it had been a primary agent in forming the present surface of the globe." Charles Coulston Gillespie, Genesis and Geology: A Study in the Relations of Scientific Thought, Natural Theology, and Social Opinion in Great Britain, 1790-1850, Harper Torchbooks (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), p. 42.

²This is evident from Gillespie's study of the period. See also Chadwick, 1:558-68. In the United States acceptance was probably not so widespread as in Britain. Sydney E. Ahistrom, A Religious History of the American People (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), pp. 766-67.

doctrine of inspiration. The theory of uniformitarianism challenged not only the truthfulness and historicity of the Genesis record, but in the eyes of many, the doctrine of the full inspiration of that record as well. Some theologians tried to solve the issue by claiming that inspiration pertained only to matters of faith and morals, and not to matters of a scientific nature. Others argued that the Bible, though inspired, was not meant to be read as a handbook of science, and that the Genesis narratives needed to be reinterpreted in the light of modern scientific knowledge. Not a few, however, though willing to acknowledge that the Bible was not a handbook of science, maintained that the whole Bible was inspired and that Biblical statements concerning the natural world, its origin, and structure were to be accepted according to their obvious literal sense.¹

The conflict about the relation between science and the Bible entered upon a new phase with the publication of Charles Darwin's Origin of Species in late 1859. The theory of evolution by natural selection called further into question the belief that the Genesis account was a factual record of the origin of the world, especially of the origin of plants, animals, and even of man as created

¹It is difficult to classify different views of the relationship between the Genesis narratives and geological data and it would perhaps be best to speak of a spectrum of views. Bernard Ramm gives a classification of nine different views in his book The Christian View of Science and Scripture (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1954), pp. 119-56. A discussion of different views in the nineteenth century can be found in Bernard M. G. Reardon, From Coleridge to Gore: A Century of Religious Thought in Britain (London: Longman, 1971), pp. 285-89. Davis A. Young, Christianity and the Age of the Earth (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), pp. 41-67, covers the entire modern period.

instantaneously by God. Not surprisingly the theory met with strong opposition, but in the last quarter of the century there seemed to be a large-scale surrender of the belief that the early chapters of Genesis presented an authentic account of origins.¹ In the opinion of many theologians Darwin's theory provided further evidence that inspiration is limited to the religious content of the Bible.² Others tried to harmonize the Biblical narrative with the evolutionary theory of origins so that the divine inspiration of the narrative could be upheld. It was obvious, however, that either the full inspiration of the Scripture or its literal meaning and historicity or both were at stake.

The Idea of Progress

Long before Darwin championed a continuous development from lower to higher forms in the biological world the idea of progress as an explanation of the history of mankind had already taken hold of the imagination of many minds in Europe. Though the roots of this idea can be traced in classical antiquity, it began to develop in its modern form during the Enlightenment and came to full fruition in the nineteenth century.³ As an all-inclusive concept it came to be

¹See, e.g., Alhstrom, pp. 767-72; Chadwick, 2:1-35; Reardon, pp. 289-98.

²George T. Ladd reflected the thoughts of many when he wrote: "There are, strictly speaking, no purely scientific contents which can be recognized as entering into the composition of Sacred Scripture. The intention of the Bible is to teach us 'how to go to heaven, and not how the heavens go.'" Ladd, 1:283.

³The classic presentation of the subject is by J. B. Bury, The Idea of Progress: An Inquiry into Its Origin and Growth (New York: Macmillan Co., 1932). Bury believed that the idea of progress originated in modern times, more particularly in the seventeenth

applied to the material as well as to the moral and spiritual aspects of human history. Not only had man's knowledge and technical skill continually extended his control over the physical world, but man's progress also pertained to his spiritual and moral virtues leading toward an ever-greater perfection of human nature.¹

The idea of progressive human perfection in the moral realm--sometimes called meliorism--was difficult to harmonize with Biblical history, which presents mankind as having a perfect beginning followed by man's fall into sin and his consequent deterioration. The so-called "moral difficulties" in the Bible formed a further problem for the refined ethical conscience of an enlightened generation which felt that man had come of age.² In view of such considerations many Christian thinkers in the nineteenth century felt the need for a reinterpretation of Biblical history and of certain traditional tenets of the Christian faith, not least the doctrines of

century. Further research into the history of this idea suggests, however, that it was already an important concept in the ancient world. So Ludwig Edelstein, The Idea of Progress in Classical Antiquity (Baltimore, Md.: John Hopkins Press, 1967). A recent comprehensive discussion of the whole matter can be found in Robert Nisbet, History of the Idea of Progress (New York: Basic Books, 1980).

¹See Nisbet, p. 5. An optimistic concept of man's moral progress was probably more pronounced in the nineteenth than in the twentieth century.

²Howard R. Murphy sees the meliorist ethical bias of the nineteenth century as the primary factor for the rejection of traditional Christian dogma rather than higher criticism and the concept of evolution. See his "The Ethical Revolt Against Christian Orthodoxy in Early Victorian England," American Historical Review 60 (1955):800-817. Cf. M. A. Crowther, Church Embattled: Religious Controversy in Mid-Victorian England (Newton Abbot, Devon: Davis and Charles; Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1970), pp. 15-16.

revelation, inspiration, and infallibility.¹

There is no doubt that the concept of man's moral progress connected with an ethical criticism of the Bible constituted another significant factor in the controversy about inspiration. It is true that higher criticism, with its literary analysis and historical reconstruction of the Bible, played a more conspicuous role in that controversy than any other factor. But it is also true that the ideas of evolution and progress, in the natural as well as in the historical realm, raised ethical, historical and scientific questions concerning the Bible as an infallible divine revelation, and consequently about its inspiration and authority.²

While some Christians rejected the idea of divine inspiration altogether, many felt it only more necessary to reformulate the doctrine of inspiration in order to bring it into harmony with modern scientific theories and the results of higher criticism. They rejected such concepts as verbal or plenary inspiration and proposed a variety of other concepts instead. Others, however, denied that there were compelling reasons for a reformulation, and considered the concept of a fully inspired and infallible Bible as non-negotiable.

¹John Brown, Bampton lecturer for 1806, considered the low standards of the Old Testament a serious stumblingblock to traditional theories of inspiration. Storr, p. 180. Brown was certainly not alone in this conviction.

²Chadwick is of the opinion that "at first the moral objection to the Old Testament was more important than the intellectual." Chadwick, 1:528. There is probably a lot of truth in Chadwick's estimate. The moral criticism of the Bible by Deists disturbed many Christians. The additional weight of scientific, literary, and historical criticism strengthened the already existing uneasiness and led to the conviction on the part of many that the traditional doctrines of a fully inspired and infallible Bible had to be given up.

With such opposing views conflict was unavoidable. To trace the course of this conflict is our next task.

The Course of the Conflict

To trace the historical development of the doctrine of inspiration from a comparatively quiet and uneventful situation at the beginning of the nineteenth century through constantly increasing controversy--mostly on paper, but sometimes in oral confrontations or even in ecclesiastical trials--to the intense and widespread polemics on the subject in the last decades of the century, spilling over into the twentieth, would be quite an undertaking. Not only will we limit our survey to the English-speaking world, but we will have to confine it even further by concentrating mainly on the development in the Established Church in Great Britain and in the Presbyterian Churches in Scotland and North America. Many a time, however, the debate crossed denominational borderlines, which will necessitate a few digressions beyond the limits of these specific communities.

In this section a general survey will cover the course of events until around 1880, while developments during the remaining decades of the century will be taken up in the last part of the chapter with special emphasis on the roles of the University of Oxford and of Princeton Theological Seminary in the proliferating conflict. For the sake of convenience the survey will be further divided into two sections, the first one dealing briefly with some significant developments in the first forty years of the century and the second with the period from 1840 till 1880, which was characterized by a definite intensification of the debate in some

cases resulting in ecclesiastical trials. Generally disputants focused on issues rather than people though at times feelings ran high. This is not surprising in view of the fact that the function and authority of the Scriptures in the life of Christian believers was at the heart of the conflict.

Early Developments: 1800 to 1840

The dawn of the nineteenth century saw Continental Europe in turmoil and Britain on the verge of a time of conflict and isolation. The general mood of Britain was antirevolutionary, and both in England and Scotland a reaction occurred against the rationalism of the preceding era. At the same time there was an upsurge of evangelical Christianity with a renewed emphasis on the Scriptures as the Word of God and therefore the final authority for Christian life and doctrine.¹ It was to defend this conviction that the Scottish revivalist Robert Haldane (1764-1842) initiated a controversy about the doctrine of inspiration, which would have far-reaching effects.

The concept of degrees of inspiration had found widespread acceptance especially through the influence of Philip Doddridge. While Doddridge believed that all Scripture was inspired--though in different degrees, others went beyond him in asserting that for

¹Reardon summarizes this evangelical faith succinctly: "The practical basis of evangelical religion was Bible study. Scripture was the Word of God, indeed the very words of God. It was verbally inspired in the sense that every statement in it was divinely authorized and essentially inerrant," but his evaluation is not favorable when he continues, "The result was a biblicism, not to say a bibliolatry, the effect of which was intellectually numbing." Reardon, p. 29. Cf. Storr, pp. 69-70. Reardon's estimate reflects the opinion of nineteenth-century liberals about the faith of their evangelical contemporaries, as, for instance, the charge of bibliolatry.

some parts of Scripture no inspiration was needed at all. The Nonconformist writer William Parry (1754-1819), for instance, was of the opinion that it was not necessary to suppose that the inspired writers were under any supernatural influence when they refer to common or civil affairs or mention things in an incidental manner, as any other plain and faithful man might do. These sentiments were taken over with apparent approval in a well-known theological handbook by Thomas Hartwell Horne (1780-1862).¹

In 1816 appeared a book from the hand of Robert Haldane on The Evidence and Authority of Divine Revelation in which he denounced the theory of degrees of inspiration as an "unholy invention."² Haldane asserts that the doctrine of verbal or plenary inspiration is the only concept of inspiration countenanced in Scripture and the doctrine commonly accepted by the Church of all ages.³ He

¹William Parry, An Inquiry into the Nature and Extent of the Inspiration of the Apostles and Other Writers of the New Testament (London: T. Conder, 1797), p. 27. Horne quotes extensively from Parry in his widely used An Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, 4 vols., 7th ed. (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1834), 1:480-81. Horne's work was a standard textbook for theological students which went through many editions.

²Robert Haldane, The Evidence and Authority of Divine Revelation, Being a View of the Testimony of the Law and the Prophets to the Messiah with the Subsequent Testimonies, 2 vols., 3rd ed. (London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1839), 1:119. It is evident that Haldane sees Doddridge as the primary representative of the doctrine of degrees of inspiration, but he quotes Parry several times without mentioning his name. Ibid., pp. 123-24 and 226.

³Haldane appears to be the first writer in the English-speaking world who in an emphatic manner used the expression verbal inspiration. To him the terms plenary inspiration and verbal inspiration were practically synonymous. Ibid., pp. 120 and 208. But although the term verbal inspiration may have gained currency through Haldane's influence, the idea that the words of the Bible are

considers this view of inspiration as a most important argument for the truth of the Bible and expresses his surprise that "it has not hitherto been employed for this purpose by any of the writers on the evidences of Christianity, although the testimony it affords is peculiarly forcible." He regrets that "the field has been left in the almost undisturbed possession of those who first introduced novel and unscriptural distinctions on the subject, who have been blindly followed by many excellent men, of whom better things might have been expected."¹ Although Haldane had a somewhat exaggerated idea of the novelty of his work, there is no doubt that his zeal in promulgating the doctrine of verbal inspiration aroused many minds to consider the subject important.

John Eye Smith (1774-1851) presented a number of objections to the doctrine of verbal inspiration in his work The Scripture Testimony to the Messiah, which began to appear a couple of years after the publication of Haldane's book.² Smith understands verbal

inspired can be found throughout the history of the Christian Church. This fact is recognized, for instance, in connection with the church fathers in George Duncan Barry, The Inspiration and Authority of Holy Scripture: A Study in the Literature of the First Five Centuries (New York: Macmillan Co., 1919), p. 10.

¹Haldane, pp. 23 and 24. Haldane seems to be ignorant of the work of the seventeenth-century dogmaticians when he asserts that the plenary and verbal inspiration of Scripture has been held by distinguished Christians both in Britain and in foreign countries, but that "in none of the different systems of divinity, either at home or abroad, has it been discussed and fully developed." Ibid., p. 24.

²John Eye Smith, The Scripture Testimony to the Messiah: An Inquiry with a View to a Satisfactory Determination of the Doctrine Taught in the Holy Scriptures Concerning the Person of Christ, 2 vols., 5th ed. (Edinburgh: William Oliphant and Co., 1859); the first edition was published in 1818 and 1821.

inspiration to mean "an equal and universal dictation of every word and expression, in every part of the Scriptures, by the divine Spirit to the mind of the inspired writers," and finds the evidence of Scripture to be in conflict with such a conception.¹ Haldane had certainly spoken in terms of divine dictation, but it is not clear that he used this expression in the strictly mechanical meaning which Smith seems to attach to it.² Smith, on his part, can speak of "the great principle of the complete inspiration of the apostles," but like Farry seems to see this inspiration primarily as guaranteeing the truthfulness of every declaration on moral duty and religious doctrine. Smith, like Doddridge and Parry, holds a concept of degrees of inspiration and it is not completely clear from his writings whether this inspiration includes all of Scripture or not.³ He stresses the need for an inductive study of the Scriptures and his own investigations lead him to the conclusion that there are many designed alterations in the Hebrew text, especially in the numbers. All such errors, however, do not affect any part of doctrine or duty, but they "must fearfully affect the theory of a

¹Ibid., 1:62.

²Haldane uses the word "dictate" quite frequently. So in Haldane, 1:207, 214, 215, 217, etc. He is of the conviction that the Holy Spirit dictated to the sacred writers his own words in such a way, that they would also be their words, uttered with the understanding, and he holds that we cannot comprehend the mode of such an operation. Ibid., pp. 214-15.

³Characteristic is for instance the following expression: "But the great principle of a complete inspiration of the apostles, warranting our dependence upon the certain truth of every declaration which they have delivered, as a doctrine, duty, elucidation, or application of religion, has been established by abundant proofs (emphasis Smith's)." Smith, 1:57.

servile literalism of inspiration."¹ Summing up his objections against verbal inspiration Smith states that the theory of verbal inspiration is unnecessary, attended with difficulties, detracting from the authority of translations, and giving weight to otherwise nugatory objections against the certainty of the Scriptures from the existence of various readings.²

The debate about inspiration was exacerbated by the so-called Apocrypha controversy.³ The British and Foreign Bible Society had allowed the inclusion of the Apocrypha in Bibles distributed under its name in certain countries of Continental Europe. Many Protestants in Britain, concerned to preserve the integrity and the authority of the canon of Scripture as it had been held and defended by the Reformers, opposed such an inclusion. Robert Haldane took a leading part in the opposition. John Pye Smith made a controversial move by endorsing what was considered to be a rationalistic Preface

¹Ibid., p. 30. Smith expresses his intention to use "a careful induction, rising from the most acknowledged principles" as the manner "which seems most agreeable to the natural proceeding of the mind in the search after knowledge," and with satisfaction refers in a footnote "to find this method of investigation recently vindicated and recommended by a writer who is evidently a man of powerful mind and penetrating judgment." Ibid., pp. 4-5. That man was Benjamin Bosworth Smith (1794-1884), bishop of the Episcopal Church in Kentucky, who had published an article "Theology a Strictly Inductive Science," Literary and Theological Review 2 (1835):89-95. This is a significant example of the emphasis in the nineteenth century on the Baconian method as the truly scientific method, not only for the study of nature, but also for the study of the Bible.

²John Pye Smith, 1:62-63.

³This controversy is at some length described in Alexander Haldane, The Lives of Robert Haldane of Airthrey and of His Brother James Alexander Haldane, 2nd ed. (London: Hamilton, Adams and Co., 1852), pp. 513-81. See also Macleod, pp. 226-27, 260-65; Henry F. Henderson, The Religious Controversies of Scotland (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1905), pp. 95-110.

to the Bible by Isaac Haffner (1751-1831), dean of the theological faculty of the university of Strasbourg. Smith's apology for Haffner's preface and his earlier opposition to verbal inspiration roused Haldane and his fellow Baptist Alexander Carson (1776-1844) to the defence of the authenticity of the canon and the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. Their responses were published shortly one after the other in 1827.¹ In the next ten years these two Baptist ministers continued to publish polemical works in support of verbal inspiration and in opposition to the views of scholars who rose in defense of concepts of graded or partial inspiration.²

Haldane made it clear that although the Holy Spirit inspired the sacred writers with both ideas and words, there was nothing mechanical about this process, for He inspired them in such a way that "the words of Scripture, as used by the writers, were indeed their own words."³ As a result Scripture from one point of view is wholly the production of man, from another it is wholly the Book of

¹The conflict over Haffner's preface is described in Alexander Haldane, pp. 534-40. Robert Haldane responded with The Authenticity and Inspiration of the Holy Scripture Considered in Opposition to the Erroneous Opinions That Are Circulated on the Subject (Edinburgh: John Lindsay and Co., 1827), and Alexander Carson with Review of the Rev. Dr. J. Eye Smith's Defence of Dr. Haffner's Preface to the Bible and of His Denial of the Divine Authority of Part of the Canon, and of the Full Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures (Edinburgh: John Lindsay and Co., 1827). Robert Haldane provided the initial stimulation as well as the financial backing for the publication of Carson's works.

²Lists of the works of Haldane and Carson can be found in Alexander Haldane, p. 709 and p. 549, note.

³Robert Haldane, The Evidence and Authority of Divine Revelation, p. 212.

God. Only such a concept, in Haldane's opinion, will harmonize all the assertions of Scripture.

It may be that Haldane's name is now nearly forgotten, but the evidence suggests that his influence, perhaps more than that of any other in the English-speaking world of the nineteenth century, aroused widespread interest in the doctrine of Biblical inspiration. Thomas Chalmers (1780-1847), the dynamic leader of the Evangelical party in the Church of Scotland, used the books of Haldane and Carson on inspiration as textbooks for his ministerial students in Edinburgh. But the most significant effect of Haldane's views on inspiration probably emerges in the work of his disciple Louis Gaussen, who was one of the participants in the so-called Réveil which started in Geneva under the preaching of Haldane between 1816 and 1819. In 1840 Gaussen published his book Théopneustie which proved to be very influential in spreading the doctrine of verbal plenary inspiration and aroused more opposition than any other work on the subject in the nineteenth century.¹ Gaussen spoke freely of

¹François Samuel Robert Louis Gaussen (1790-1863) was one of the co-founders of the Evangelical Society in Geneva and became in 1834 professor of systematic theology in the independent and orthodox Reformed theological seminary established by him and some other evangelicals, such as Jean Henri Merle D'Aubigné (1794-1872). Gaussen's book Théopneustie; ou, pleine inspiration des Saintes Ecritures (Paris: L. R. Delay, 1840), was translated into several languages and at least two times into English. It was reprinted many times under different titles of which the latest is probably The Divine Inspiration of the Bible, trans. David D. Scott (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel Publications, 1971); (it is this edition to which reference is made here). Dewey Beegle is not far from the truth when he calls Louis Gaussen and Benjamin Warfield the most influential advocates of the verbal plenary view of inspiration during the nineteenth century. Dewey M. Beegle, Scripture, Tradition, and Infallibility (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing

divine dictation, but he made it clear that he did not mean a mechanical process. He emphasized the individuality of the sacred writers, and like Haldane he was convinced that "Scripture is entirely the word of man, and . . . entirely the word of God."¹ Gaussen also strongly maintained the infallibility of the Scriptures.

In the same year that Gaussen published his Théopneustie another book appeared, likewise destined to influence many minds but in an opposite direction. In his posthumously published Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit, which consists of seven letters on the inspiration of the Scriptures, Samuel Coleridge argues that the concept of plenary inspiration by means of a supernatural dictation, word for word, is indefensible.² He believes that part of Scripture was written under such an inspiration, but part of it was not, and when asked why he does not receive this doctrine, held by Jews and Christians in all ages, he answers: "Because the doctrine

Co., 1973), pp. 145-46. For Gaussen's acknowledgement of his indebtedness to Haldane, see Gaussen, p. 311, n. 1; also Alexander Haldane, p. 553.

¹Gaussen, p. 350.

²Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), son of an Anglican clergyman, is probably best known as a poet, philosopher, and literary critic, but he is also called the father of the liberal or Broad Church movement in the Church of England. He wrote several theological treatises of which Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit, ed. Henry Nelson Coleridge (London: William Pickering, 1840; reprint ed., Menston, England: Scholar Press, 1971) was published six years after his death. Coleridge spent a year in Germany from 1798-99, where he made a close study of the writings of Lessing and Eichhorn. From Lessing he adopted the idea of history as a developmental process and from Eichhorn he learned the basic principles of Biblical criticism. As a result of these influences he achieved, according to Bernard Reardon, "a more intelligent grasp of the nature and implications of the biblical problem than was possessed by any other Englishman of his time." Reardon, p. 81.

in question petrifies at once the whole body of Holy Writ with all its harmonies and symmetrical graduations," and turns "this breathing organism . . . into a colossal Memnon's head, a hollow passage for a voice, a voice that mocks the voices of many men, . . ."¹ Coleridge emphatically denies both the plenary inspiration and the infallibility of Scripture, whereby the moral difficulties in the Bible form one important reason for his denial. He stresses the need for making a sharp distinction between inspired revelation, such as we find in the Law and the Prophets, and the actuation of God's Holy Spirit, which is present in all believers, and through which, for instance, the Hagiographa came into being. To treat the whole Bible as equally inspired he calls Bibliolatry. Inspiration is to be recognized in an experiential way as he expresses it in oft-quoted words: "In short whatever finds me, bears witness for itself that it has proceeded from a Holy Spirit"²

In the views expressed by Parry and Haldane, Smith and Carson, Gaussen and Coleridge, the contours appear of the great debate about inspiration. The next forty years would add new dimensions to this debate, when in Britain and in the United States the impact of higher criticism, already well-established in Germany, as well as the sudden elevation and widespread acceptance of the theory of evolution would raise fresh questions about the inspiration, infallibility, and authority of the Bible. But the basic issues remained essentially the same.

¹Coleridge, pp. 31-32.

²Ibid., p. 10.

Intensification of the Conflict:
1840 to 1880

A study of the theological scene in the Anglican Church at mid-century shows us two things in regard to the doctrine of inspiration. First: the prevailing concept is still that of a plenary inspired and infallible Bible; second: there are definite signs that critical ideas in regard to the Scriptures begin to exercise a greater influence.

Two of the most significant books on the subject of inspiration published by Anglican clergymen during this period show that they firmly maintained the plenary inspiration of Scripture. Christopher Wordsworth (1807-85), canon of Westminster and later bishop of Lincoln, published his Hulsean lectures for 1847 under the title On the Inspiration of Holy Scripture, while the Donnellan lectures for 1852 by William Lee (1815-83) appeared under the very similar designation The Inspiration of Holy Scripture.¹ The central thesis of Lee's work is that the human and divine elements coexist throughout the entire Bible to form one vital, organic whole; they are "dynamically united."² Lee rejects any concept of a partial or graded inspiration. He also stresses the need to distinguish clearly

¹The full title of the lectures of Wordsworth is On the Inspiration of Holy Scripture; or on the Canon of the Old and New Testaments, and on the Apocrypha, 2nd ed. (London: Francis and John Rivington, 1851). Lee's book went through a number of editions and was published in England, in Ireland, and in the United States. Reference is here to William Lee, The Inspiration of Holy Scripture, Its Nature and Proof, 4th ed. (Dublin: Hodges and Smith and Co., 1865). The works of Lee and Gausson were probably the most widely read books on Biblical inspiration in the English-speaking world for several decades.

²Lee, p. 26 (emphasis Lee's).

between revelation, by which he understands a direct communication from God to man, and inspiration, which he describes as that actuating energy of the Holy Spirit "guided by which the human agents chosen by God have officially proclaimed His will by word of mouth, or have committed to writing the several portions of the Bible."¹ Lee holds Scripture to be infallible in matters of fact as well as in matters of doctrine.

Wordsworth and Lee can be seen as representing the prevalent view of Scripture among the High Church and Evangelical parties in the Church of England. It was primarily in the Broad Church or Liberal movement that different ideas concerning the doctrine of inspiration came to the fore. Particular evidence for this can be seen in The Doctrine of Inspiration by John Macnaught (d. 1891), an Anglican priest in Liverpool, which appeared in 1856 and went through several editions in a short time. Macnaught argues strenuously that the idea of an infallible Bible is completely untenable and concludes that inspiration in the ancient, Scriptural sense of the word signifies "that action of the divine Spirit by which, apart from any idea of infallibility, all that is good, in man, beast, or matter, is originated and sustained."² The authority of Scripture, consequently, is not to be sought in its presumed infallibility but in the excellence of its teaching and its beneficial influence on countless generations of Christians. Although his work met with the

¹Ibid., pp. 27-28 (emphasis Lee's).

²John Macnaught, The Doctrine of Inspiration: Being an Inquiry Concerning the Infallibility, Inspiration, and Authority of Holy Writ, 3rd ed. (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1857), p. 136.

approval of other Liberal Anglicans, the opposition of the Evangelical party in Liverpool under the leadership of Hugh Macneil (1795-1879), later dean of Ripon, caused Macnaught to resign his position in that city, and he nearly withdrew from the ministry altogether.¹ Macnaught pointed out, however, that his views--even if they were in conflict with the general beliefs of fellow Anglicans--were not in conflict with the formularies of the Anglican Church, including the Thirty-Nine Articles of Faith.

Macnaught's book reveals some acquaintance with the new developments in Biblical criticism, but his arguments against the infallibility of Scripture are mostly arguments which had been used earlier by Deistic writers. This was not the case with another controversial book, The Text of the Old Testament Considered, also published in 1856 and written by Samuel Davidson (1806-1898), a Congregational minister and Professor of Hebrew and Biblical Criticism in Lancashire Independent College, Manchester.² Davidson was well acquainted with the work of German scholars. He knew a number of them personally and had accepted the principles and many of the critical results of higher criticism. The concept of Biblical

¹In a "Preface to the Second Edition" Macnaught mentions specifically Benjamin Jowett, Baden Powell, Roland Williams, and Henry Bristow Wilson among "many who are the chief hope of reasonable religion and intelligent theology within the communion of the Established Church" who had shown general approbation of his work. Ibid., p. viii. These same four names would reappear together in connection with the publication of Essays and Reviews a few years later. (See below).

²The work appeared as the second volume in Thomas Hartwell Horne, ed., An Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, 10th ed., 5 vols. (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1856).

inspiration in Davidson's work limited inspiration to the religious and moral truth of the Scriptures and excluded incidental or trivial matters of a geographical, genealogical, ethnological, numerical, and kindred nature.¹ The publication of these and other views led to an investigation of Davidson's orthodoxy by a commission appointed by the Lancashire College Committee which eventually resulted in his resignation.²

In response to the charge of his critics that he had denied the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures Davidson published a small book in 1857 in which he maintains that the strict view of verbal or plenary inspiration disseminated through the writings of Haldane, Carson, and Gausson is a comparatively novel theory and that the leading fathers of the primitive Church and the Reformers held a more liberal view of inspiration.³ He attributes the origin of the

¹Davidson expresses his view by quoting extensively from a number of scholars including John Eye Smith, Samuel Coleridge, and Thomas Arnold (1705-1842), famous headmaster of Rugby, who also contributed significantly to the rise of the Liberal movement in the Church of England. See Davidson, The Text of the Old Testament Considered, pp. 371-76.

²The details of this episode are portrayed in J. Allanson Pieton, "The College Crisis", chapter 6 in Anne Jane Davidson, ed., The Autobiography and Diary of Samuel Davidson (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1899), pp. 35-70. See also James R. Thrane, "The 'Higher Criticism' and Dissent: Samuel Davidson," Encounter 37 (1976):171-80.

³Samuel Davidson, Facts, Statements and Explanations Connected with the Publication of the Second Volume of the Tenth Edition of Horne's Introduction to the Study of the Holy Scriptures, Entitled "The Text of the Old Testament Considered," Etc., Etc. (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1857), pp. 52-53. Davidson also argues that none of the Lutheran symbols, nor the Tridentine Creed, nor the Westminster Confession, nor the Thirty-Nine Articles contain a definition of the nature of the inspiration of the Scriptures and considers this a judicious moderation which left room for a variety of opinions. *Ibid.*, p. 81.

strict view of inspiration to the post-Reformation Lutheran dogmaticians and is of the opinion that, notwithstanding the fact that this view became the prevailing doctrine in the Lutheran and Reformed Churches from the middle of the seventeenth century onward, it was not held in the Anglican Church during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Davidson, like Coleridge and Macnaught, denies that inspiration implies perpetual infallibility in everything spoken or written by the sacred authors and rejects such a view of Scripture as a major a priori assumption. The only way to determine the Biblical idea of inspiration, according to Davidson, is through the application of the true Baconian or inductive method.¹ This emphasis on Baconian induction as the only correct method for establishing the Biblical doctrine of inspiration was to be reiterated all through the nineteenth century by scholars who held very diverse views concerning Biblical inspiration.

A major crisis concerning Biblical criticism and the doctrine of inspiration erupted in the Church of England as a result of the publication of the book Essays and Reviews by seven Anglican

¹Ibid., pp. 83-85. Davidson articulated the critical methodology better than any other scholar in Britain of his time and anticipated many of the arguments used by subsequent writers in support of a limited inspiration. Eventually he came to hold a theory of degrees of inspiration which was more radical than earlier theories, since it affected moral and religious as well as other aspects of Scripture. In 1868 he wrote: "God's word is in the Scriptures; all Scripture is not the word of God. The writers were inspired in various degrees, and are therefore not all equally trustworthy guides to belief and conduct." Samuel Davidson, An Introduction to the Study of the New Testament, Critical, Exegetical, and Theological, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1868), 1:x.

scholars, six clergyman and one layman, in March 1860.¹ The seven essayists were all Broad Churchmen, five of them from Oxford, and they wanted to break the suppression of open discussion in regard to controverted theological questions. Although the essays had been written independently and each author assumed responsibility only for his own work, the combined thrust of the volume was to assert--and justify--the necessity of a free critical study of the Bible. No contribution proved to be more controversial than the essay "On the Interpretation of Scripture" by Benjamin Jowett, which stressed the need for interpreting the Bible just as one would interpret any other book, without dogmatic presuppositions. The primary object of the interpreter should be to recover the original meaning of the Biblical author. It was Jowett's conviction that modern erroneous theories of inspiration were the result of a dogmatic interpretation of the Bible and that the true nature of inspiration could only be discovered from a study of the Bible itself, taking into account the well-ascertained facts of history and science.

¹The seven authors were Frederick Temple (1821-1902), headmaster of Rugby and later bishop of London and archbishop of Canterbury; Rowland Williams (1817-70), vice principal of the theological college of St. David's, Lampeter in Wales and formerly a fellow and tutor of King's College, Cambridge; Baden Powell (1796-1860), Savilian professor of geometry at Oxford; Henry Bristow Wilson (1803-88), a former fellow of St. John's College, Oxford; Charles Wycliffe Goodwin (1817-78), a jurist and Egyptologist, the only layman among the essayists; Mark Pattison (1813-84), soon to become rector of Lincoln College, Oxford; and Benjamin Jowett (1817-93), tutor and later master at Balliol College and Regius professor of Greek at Oxford. The book Essays and Reviews (London: J. W. Parker, 1860) was reprinted many times between 1860 and 1869 and sold 15,000 copies in the first three months after its publication; it was not only read by clergymen. Helpful summaries and discussions of the seven essays are given by Ellis, pp. 48-101; Reardon, pp. 323-39; Storr, pp. 429-45.

Several other essayists also expressed the need for a new concept of inspiration. Henry B. Wilson in his essay "Séances historiques de Genève--The National Church" argued the need for a national Church concerned with ethical development rather than with speculative doctrines. The Bible should be interpreted "ideally" and not as a statement of literal facts. The Sixth of the Thirty-Nine Articles, according to Wilson, did not hold Scripture to be supernaturally dictated, nor did it define inspiration, and the Word of God was not coextensive with Scripture.¹ The essay "Bunsen's Biblical Researches" by Roland Williams was an unequivocal defense of a higher criticism rather negative in its conclusions, while Baden Powell in his essay "On the Study of the Evidence of Christianity" stressed the uniformity of nature, analogy as the essence of the inductive method, and the inadequacy of miracles as an evidence for supernatural revelation.²

Reaction against Essays and Reviews was widespread and strong and included both High Church and Evangelical Anglicans. Two essayists, Williams and Wilson, were charged with heresy in the Arches' Court of Canterbury, mainly on account of their views concerning eternal punishment and Biblical inspiration. The defense of Williams was conducted by James Fitzjames Stephen (1829-1894), barrister-at-law, who emphasized that Williams's concepts of inspiration were not in conflict with the Thirty-Nine Articles or

¹Essays and Reviews, p. 175.

²Williams made the remark that if the Holy Spirit did not dwell in the Church, "the Bible would not be inspired, for the Bible is, before all things, the written voice of the congregation." Ibid., p. 92. This proved to be a controversial statement.

with any other ecclesiastical standards of the Church of England.¹ He also presented substantial evidence, partly derived perhaps from Samuel Davidson, to prove that prominent Anglican divines over a period of nearly two centuries had held views of partial or graded inspiration and had limited the infallibility of Scripture to matters of faith, doctrine, and morals without being charged with heresy.

When judgment was pronounced against Williams and Wilson in December 1862, both were found guilty on charges of heresy and sentenced to suspension ab officio et beneficio for one year. They appealed their case to the Judicial Committee of Her Majesty's Privy Council, which after lengthy proceedings reversed the verdict of the Court of Arches in February 1864. The judgment of the Judicial Committee maintained that "The proposition or assertion that every part of the Scriptures was written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is not to be found either in the Articles or in any of the formularies of the Church."²

This decision of the Judicial Committee had far-reaching implications, allowing to clergymen of the Established Church a very broad liberty in belief concerning the nature of Scripture, its

¹The charges against Williams and the defense made on his behalf are recorded in the earlier mentioned book by Stephen, Defence of the Rev. Rowland Williams, D.D., in the Arches' Court of Canterbury. Stephen presented significant evidence on the basis of which he argued that the Thirty-Nine Articles had purposely been framed and maintained in such a way as not to rest the authority of the Scriptures exclusively on divine inspiration in contrast with the Westminster Confession. See Stephen, pp. 68-85.

²Quoted in Davidson, Introduction to the Study of the New Testament, 1:xii, where also further statements of a similar nature pronounced by the Judicial Committee are mentioned. Cf. Ellis, pp. 188-89; Storr, pp. 450-52.

inspiration, and its interpretation. Ecclesiastical reaction against the decision was immediate, resulting in a synodical condemnation of Essays and Reviews and a declaration signed by nearly 11,000 members of the clergy affirming "without reserve or qualification the plenary inspiration and authority of the whole canonical Scriptures as the word of God."¹ But the verdict of the Judicial Committee could not be reversed and was indeed further enhanced when the same Committee declared in March 1865 that a sentence deposing John William Colenso from ecclesiastical office for heresy was null and void in law.²

The judgments in the cases of Williams, Wilson, and Colenso, which were the judgments of a civil court, made the newer critical views of the Bible and Biblical inspiration legal in the Church of England. Yet opposition against such views remained strong, not least in Oxford where Edward Bouverie Pusey (1800-1882), leader of the High Church party and Regius professor of Hebrew, wielded considerable influence. Except for Rowland Williams the authors of

¹Quoted in Crowther, p. 123. Ellis gives a somewhat differently framed version. Ellis, p. 193. Despite the great number of signatories the declaration seems not to have received much support from the bishops of the Church.

²John William Colenso (1814-83), who had become bishop of Natal in 1853, published in 1862 the first part of his work The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua Critically Examined in which he denied the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch as well as the historicity of events recorded in the Pentateuch and in the Book of Joshua. Colenso excluded factual statements of an historical, scientific, and numerical nature from the sphere of inspiration. He was urged by forty-one fellow bishops to resign. When he refused to do so he was tried for heresy and deposed by Robert Gray (1807-1872), bishop of Capetown, and two other bishops. But for certain technical reasons the Judicial Committee declared the judgment of deposition null and void in law. Good summaries of Colenso's views and the ecclesiastical controversy in which he was involved are found in Reardon, pp. 340-45; and Rogerson, pp. 220-37.

Essays and Reviews did not write again on the subject of Biblical criticism and the inspiration of the Bible. It was a new generation of younger scholars who would raise the issues again in Oxford and in the wider audience of the national Church, but their time had not yet come. In the next two decades an increasing emancipation of the universities of Oxford and Cambridge from ecclesiastical control and a growing demand for more scientifically trained theology professors would prove to be powerful factors in turning Oxford from a center of High Church traditionalism into a leading center for the study of Biblical criticism in the English-speaking world.

In the Presbyterian Church of Scotland a remarkable revival took place in the early decades of the nineteenth century accompanied by a renewal of evangelical beliefs. Thomas Chalmers (1780-1847), the acknowledged leader of the Evangelical party in the Scottish Church and since 1828 professor of theology at the Divinity Hall in the University of Edinburgh, taught the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures and recommended Haldane's books to his students.¹ When more than 470 ministers left the Established Church in 1843 to form the Free Church of Scotland, Chalmers was elected as moderator of its general assembly and as principal and professor of theology in the newly established theological training school, New College, in Edinburgh.

The younger colleagues and successors of Chalmers continued to teach the same doctrine of inspiration. James Bannerman (1807-1868), professor of Apologetics and Pastoral Theology, wrote a very

¹Macleod, p. 264.

comprehensive work on the subject,¹ in which he upheld the plenary inspiration and historical veracity of the Scriptures and stressed the need to ascertain the doctrine of inspiration from the Scriptural evidence. The Theological Lectures of his friend and colleague William Cunningham (1805-61), which were published posthumously in 1878, presented plenary verbal inspiration as the Biblical doctrine.²

Developments among Presbyterians in North America differed from those in Scotland, because the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, which had been formed in 1788, was not a state church like the Church of Scotland. Consequently there was not the same cleavage as in Scotland between Moderates and Evangelicals, though there were other divisions among North American Presbyterians, notably a temporary separation between the so-called "Old School" and "New School" Presbyterians from 1838 till 1869.³ In 1812 Princeton

¹James Bannerman, Inspiration: The Infallible Truth and Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1865). Bannerman preferred to speak of plenary inspiration rather than verbal inspiration, but he strongly maintained infallible truth and divine authority as the two main characteristics of the entire Scriptures. Bannerman called the whole Bible an inspired revelation and held inspiration and revelation to be coextensive, apparently in contrast with William Lee. However both believed that Scripture in its entirety is the infallible word of God and the difference, as was pointed out later, resulted from defining the word revelation in a different manner. See Francis Landey Patton, The Inspiration of the Scriptures (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1869), pp. 122-32.

²William Cunningham, Theological Lectures on Subjects Connected with Natural Theology, Evidences of Christianity, the Canon and Inspiration of Scripture, ed. Thomas Smith and William H. Goold (London: James Nisbet and Co., 1878).

³A brief informative survey of the history of Presbyterianism in the United States can be found in Walter L. Lingle and John W. Kuykendall, Presbyterians: Their History and Beliefs, 4th rev. ed. (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1978), pp. 64-91. The separation between Northern and Southern Presbyterians during and after the Civil

Theological Seminary was established as the first theological seminary among Presbyterians in North America. The theology espoused by its professors was distinctly Calvinistic and in full harmony, as they believed, with the Westminster Confession of Faith. For more than a century this "Princeton theology" became the dominant theology of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America and its influence reached beyond the confines of that denomination.¹

The doctrine of Biblical inspiration set forth by the Seminary's first professor, Archibald Alexander (1772-1851), manifested some similarity with the doctrine of inspiration held by Philip Doddridge and John Dick. Alexander taught that the inspiration of Scripture was plenary and pertained to both words and thoughts, but he did follow Doddridge and Dick in distinguishing three different kinds or degrees of inspiration.² His colleague and successor in the chair of theology, Charles Hodge (1797-1878), did not accept this distinction between different degrees of inspiration. In other respects, however, the concept of Biblical inspiration presented in Hodge's writings had much in common with

War brought about a more lasting ecclesiastical separation than the Old School-New School controversy, but is of less importance in relation to this study.

¹Probably the best introduction to this theology is the recent anthology by Mark A. Noll, ed., The Princeton Theology 1812-1921: Scripture, Science, and Theological Method from Archibald Alexander to Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1983). The editor introduces the anthology with a balanced and well-documented "Introduction." Ibid., pp. 11-48.

²Archibald Alexander, Evidences of the Authenticity, Inspiration and Canonical Authority of the Holy Scriptures (Philadelphia, Pa.: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work, 1836), pp. 224-25.

that of Alexander. Perhaps one could say that it was marked by greater refinement.

The first major published statement by Hodge on the subject of Biblical inspiration is an article which appeared in 1857. It contained a concise yet comprehensive discussion of the subject to which later writings, especially Hodge's Systematic Theology, did not substantially add.¹ In his article Hodge stresses the intimate connection between faith in Christ and faith in the Scriptures as the word of God; the one necessitates the other. Such faith is not founded on reason but on the inward demonstration of the Spirit. Inspiration is the work of the Holy Spirit who moves the inspired writers in an inscrutable way and guarantees the infallible truth of all they write under inspiration. Such inspiration, according to Hodge, extends to both thoughts and words. It is plenary and verbal, but has nothing to do with mechanical dictation.² Archibald Alexander Hodge (1823-1886), son and successor of Charles, held much the same view of Biblical inspiration as his father.³

¹Charles Hodge, "Inspiration," Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review 29 (1857):660-98; partly reprinted in Noll, pp. 135-41. Cf. Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), 1:151-88. Hodge's article of 1857 was a follow-up on an earlier review of William Lee's work on inspiration and it is evident that there is a basic harmony between the views of these two scholars. The same appears to be the case if one compares Hodge's views with those of Bannerman, Cunningham, and Gaussen.

²This brief summary of Hodge's concept of Biblical inspiration has been extracted from his article.

³Archibald Alexander Hodge, Outlines of Theology (New York: Robert Carter and Bros., 1860), pp. 67-77; more elaborate was Outlines of Theology: Rewritten and Enlarged (New York: Robert Carter and Bros., 1878; reprint ed., Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans

The doctrine of inspiration taught by Alexander, and father and son Hodge was regarded by them as the true Biblical doctrine of inspiration. It was also believed by them that it was the same doctrine as set forth in the Westminster Confession. They were acquainted with the developments in science and in Biblical criticism which a number of scholars claimed to necessitate a change in the doctrine of plenary inspiration and Biblical infallibility. Such claims, however, the Princeton theologians, especially father and son Hodge, repudiated, and in this they were not alone, for so did most other scholars in the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.¹

One might have expected that Presbyterianism, especially in its more evangelical form, with a strong confessional emphasis on the divine inspiration and authority of the Scriptures, would escape a conflict about Biblical inspiration such as occurred in the Church of England after the publication of Essays and Reviews. However, it proved to be merely a matter of time before the same issue affected the Free Church of Scotland. In 1870 the young and promising William Robertson Smith (1846-94) became professor of Oriental languages and Old Testament exegesis at the Free Church College in Aberdeen. From 1875 onward a number of articles from his hand appeared in the ninth edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica in which he set forth

Publishing Co., 1928), pp. 65-81. Better known is the article A. A. Hodge wrote jointly with Benjamin B. Warfield entitled "Inspiration," Presbyterian Review 2 (1881):225-60.

¹See, e.g., Henry Boynton Smith, The Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, a sermon delivered before the [Presbyterian] Synod of New York and New Jersey, October 18, 1855 (New York: Gray, 1855). See also Patton, The Inspiration of the Scriptures.

views of the development of the Biblical literature and history of Israel very similar to the views of Julius Wellhausen. This came as a shock to many of his fellow believers in the Free Church and led to a protracted ecclesiastical trial.¹ The main charge was that Smith's teachings contradicted the doctrine of the immediate inspiration, infallible truth, and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures as set forth in the Westminster Confession, or at least had a dangerous and unsettling tendency in regard to this doctrine. Smith, in defending himself against this accusation, stressed the distinction between the revealed word of God and the text of Scripture. He held that inspiration, infallibility, and authority pertained to Scripture in so far as it records or conveys the word of God, but not to the earthen vessel in which that word was contained. Smith claimed that his doctrine was fully in harmony with the Westminster Confession and his opponents seemed unable to prove the opposite.²

Although the General Assembly eventually voted to deny Smith the right to teach in any Free Church College and Smith consequently withdrew from the ministry, the issues he had raised could not be dismissed so easily. Not only did they resurface in the Free Church

¹The fullest record of Smith's trials is found in the biography of his life by John S. Black and George Chrystal, The Life of William Robertson Smith (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1912), pp. 235-452. See also Henderson, pp. 207-30.

²See Ronald R. Nelson, "Higher Criticism and the Westminster Confession: The Case of William Robertson Smith," Christian Scholar's Review 8 (1978):199-216. Nelson expresses his surprise that the Free Church theologians were unable to show that the teaching of Smith was in conflict with the doctrine of Scripture in the Westminster Confession. *Ibid.*, p. 210. A good summary of Smith's doctrine of inspiration is given in Thomas M. Lindsay, "Professor W. Robertson Smith's Doctrine of Scripture," Expositor, 4th series 10 (1894):241-64.

of Scotland, but from about 1880 onward they began to affect the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.¹ In the conflict that ensued Princeton Theological Seminary was to play a leading role in advocating the doctrine of verbal inspiration and the infallibility of Scripture.

Oxford and Princeton: Centers of
Opposite Trends

From the onset of the modern debate about Biblical inspiration in the last decades of the seventeenth century, two major conflicting trends can be seen to develop. Up till that time practically all Protestants believed that the Bible was the very word of God with full divine authority and free from error, the Holy Spirit being its true author and the human writers his faithful penmen.² With the rise of rationalism, the first beginnings of Biblical criticism and the development of a mechanistic worldview, serious doubts arose in the minds of a number of Christians concerning this traditional belief. To accommodate the different forms of criticism it was seen as a necessity to reformulate the

¹The case of William Robertson Smith seems to have acted as a catalyst in the initial stages of the debate about higher criticism and Biblical inspiration in the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. This is well-documented by Warner M. Bailey, "William Robertson Smith and American Biblical Studies," Journal of Presbyterian History 51 (1973):285-308. Cf. Lefferts A. Loetscher, The Broadening Church: A Study of Theological Issues in the Presbyterian Church since 1869 (Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1954), pp. 28-29.

²That this was the view of Luther and Calvin has been shown in the early part of this chapter. It was also the position of the English Reformers. It is no exaggeration to say that this was the generally accepted view among Protestants till the middle of the seventeenth century. The brief summary in this paragraph is based on the evidence already presented.

infallibility and authority of the Bible and this was effected by limiting its inspiration in some way or another. Some denied a unique divine inspiration altogether, but more commonly inspiration was regarded as a matter of degrees or as pertaining only to certain aspects of Scripture, especially the moral and spiritual. Other Christians, however, maintained the belief that Scripture is inspired in its totality and should be accepted as the authoritative and infallible word of God in every respect.

The conflict between these two ways of viewing the Scriptures became more widespread and more intense throughout the English-speaking world in the nineteenth century under the impact of higher criticism, modern scientific theories, and the idea that the history of mankind is essentially a history of progress. Understandably the conflict was most pronounced in centers of theological education, such as the universities in Britain and the theological seminaries of the New World. When the controversy in the last two decades of the century reached a climax, Oxford University became a foremost center for the study of higher criticism and William Sanday its most articulate spokesman for what he called a modern inductive concept of inspiration. Princeton Theological Seminary, on the other hand, proved to be preeminent among institutions where belief in the doctrine of verbal inspiration was maintained, and nobody was more thorough than Benjamin Warfield in the exposition of this concept of inspiration. As the last stage in our historical survey we will briefly sketch the crucial role of these two institutions and especially of Sanday and Warfield in the controversy concerning inspiration during the final decades of the century.

Oxford and Sanday

It might have seemed in 1880 that at least in Oxford the possibility of another controversy about higher criticism and inspiration was far removed. The tractarian leader E. B. Pusey and his devoted follower Henry Parry Liddon (1829-90) occupied two of the major chairs in Biblical studies.¹ To all appearances there were no likely candidates for another Essays and Reviews on the horizon. In reality, however, significant changes were about to occur in Oxford which would lead within less than ten years to a renewed debate about the doctrine of Biblical inspiration in the Church of England.

A noteworthy change was that in less than three years Pusey and Liddon had been replaced by Samuel Rolles Driver (1846-1914)² and William Sanday,³ both of whom had already established their

¹Pusey held the office of Regius professor of Hebrew for more than fifty years since 1828. Liddon occupied the chair of Dean Ireland professor of exegesis since 1870. He had an intense admiration for Pusey and resigned his professorship after Pusey's death in 1882 in order to write a comprehensive biography of Pusey's life. This work was published in four volumes after Liddon's own death in 1890.

²Pusey died on 16 September 1882 and in October Driver was offered and accepted the vacant Regius professorship of Hebrew which he held till the time of his death in 1914. He had already started to study Hebrew as a high school student at Winchester and from there he passed with a classical scholarship to New College, Oxford. In 1870 he had been elected a fellow of his college followed by a tutorship in 1875. He remained at New College till his appointment as Regius professor of Hebrew.

³Sanday succeeded Liddon as Dean Ireland professor of exegesis after the latter's resignation. Sanday was the eldest son of William Sanday, a well-known breeder of sheep and cattle in Nottinghamshire. From 1858 till 1861 he was educated at Repton School where the headmaster, Steuart Adolphus Pears (1815-75), a former fellow and dean of Corpus Christi College in Oxford, exercised a molding influence on his thinking. Sanday entered Balliol College

reputation as scholars with significant publications.¹ The newly appointed professors were concerned to conduct Biblical studies on a more scientific basis by means of a careful induction of Biblical facts. They acknowledged their indebtedness to Continental scholarship, but they aimed at developing their views independently in a distinctly British context.²

In 1885 Thomas Kelly Cheyne (1841-1915), who in the preceding fifteen years had already started to introduce newer critical theories of the Bible to the English public, was appointed as Oriel

early in 1862, when the agitation about Essays and Reviews was running high. He went to Corpus Christi in 1863 and was elected fellow of Trinity College in 1866. After 1869 he worked as a parish priest in different places until in 1876 he was appointed principal of Hatfield Hall in Durham, where he remained till his return to Oxford. In 1877 Sanday married Marian Hastings, with whom he shared twenty-seven years of an apparently happy married life. He called the year of his wife's death his annus funestus. See his autobiographical remarks in "Entre Nous," Expository Times 21 (1909-10):142.

¹During the years that he was engaged in parish work Sanday produced two books. The first was The Authorship and Historical Character of the Fourth Gospel, Considered in Reference to the Contents of the Gospel Itself (London: Macmillan and Co., 1872), a book which established his reputation as a New Testament scholar. This was followed by The Gospels in the Second Century, An Examination of the Critical Part of a Work Entitled "Supernatural Religion" (London: Macmillan and Co., 1876). Driver produced in 1874 A Treatise on the Use of the Tenses in Hebrew (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1874), which immediately secured for him recognition as being one of Britain's foremost hebraists.

²Sanday expressed his view of the relationship between German and British theology in an article, "The Future of English Theology," Contemporary Review, July 1889, pp. 41-56. In response to a suggestion that British theologians could best popularize the results of German criticism, Sanday wrote, "We can do and we intend to do, something more than this. We shall certainly not neglect what the Germans have done. We shall use it. I hope with due acknowledgement and gratitude, but we shall also test it in using." Then he stated: ". . . I see no reason why we should not have a school of genuine English theology." *Ibid.*, p. 53.

Professor of the Interpretation of Scripture at Oxford, which post he held till 1908.¹ It was especially through the work of these Biblical scholars that Oxford University in the next ten to twenty years developed into a world-renowned center for the study of Biblical criticism.²

Closely connected with the change at Oxford was the introduction of Biblical criticism to the wider audience of the Anglican Church at the annual Church Congress of 1883. Cheyne and Sanday were asked to present papers for the Old and the New Testaments, respectively, on "Recent Advances in Biblical Criticism in

¹Cheyne was a grandson of Thomas Hartwell Horne. He studied at Worcester College from 1859 till 1862 and also studied at Göttingen under Heinrich Georg August Ewald (1803-75), which led him to a critical view of the Old Testament. As early as 1871 Cheyne accepted the theory of Karl Heinrich Graf (1815-69) of four main pentateuchal documents with the priestly source (P) as the latest, which theory was further refined by Abraham Kuenen (1828-91) and Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918). In 1868 Cheyne was elected a fellow of Balliol College where he had the support of Benjamin Jowett. In 1869 Charles Edward Appleton (1841-79), who established in that year a literary journal, the Academy, after the pattern of the German Literarisches Centralblatt, invited Cheyne to take care of the theological department of his journal. It was through this channel that many a theological student in Britain in the 1870's was first made acquainted with the development of contemporary Biblical criticism in Germany. William Robertson Nicoll, "Professor Cheyne," Expositor, 3rd series 9 (1889):60-61. Cheyne asked Sanday to be responsible for the New Testament section of his department in the Academy. "His [Sanday's] New Testament criticism appeared in the Academy along with Cheyne's on the Old Testament. Though the two men came to differ widely in after years, it may be said that Cheyne did much to make his friend known, and the past could not be obliterated." Idem, "Things in General," British Weekly, September 23, 1920, p. 478.

²There were, of course, other scholars who contributed to this reputation, but Cheyne, Driver, and Sanday can fairly be considered as the "leading lights" in the arsa of Old and New Testament criticism at Oxford University. Later on Driver and Sanday distanced themselves to a certain extent from Cheyne because of his extreme views.

Their Relation to the Christian Faith." Biblical criticism was again on the agenda at the Church Congress of 1888, where Cheyne presented another paper, and from then on this subject became a fairly regular feature at these annual meetings.¹

The renewal of the debate about inspiration was not directly due, however, to the influence of Cheyne, Driver, and Sanday, although it was evident that they felt compelled to reject what they considered as obsolete concepts, such as the infallibility and verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. Already in 1876 Sanday had expressed his conviction that the time had come for an attempt to obtain a more scientific definition of the concept of revelation. In 1883 in his inaugural lecture he referred to the theory of inspiration current in the scholastic period of Protestantism, "where the idea of human agency has been well-nigh lost, and each minute detail has been ascribed to direct divine dictation," as an untenable view.²

It was the publication of a volume of essays entitled Lux Mundi by a group of High Church scholars connected with Oxford University that provoked a new conflict about higher criticism and

¹See C. Dunkley, ed., The Official Report of the Church Congress, Held at Reading, October. . . . 1883 (London: Bemrose and Sons, 1883), pp. 85-98; idem, The Official Report of the Church Congress, Held at Manchester, October. . . . 1888 (London: Bemrose and Sons, 1888), pp. 50-58. Chadwick gives a good description of the origin and significance of the Church Congresses in Chadwick, 2:362-64. Cf. his remark that "the agenda of annual Church Congress is a useful guide to the time when subjects became of widespread debate in the Church of England. The critical study of the Old Testament appeared on the agenda at the Reading Church Congress of 1883. Its appearance there distressed some people. But it was late in the day." Ibid., p. 58.

²William Sanday, The Study of the New Testament: Its Present Position, and Some of Its Problems. An Inaugural Lecture delivered on Feb. 20th and 22nd, 1883 (Oxford: Parker and Co., 1883), p. 34.

Biblical inspiration.¹ What caused surprise and shock to many in the Church of England was the fact that a group of scholars from whom it had not been expected suddenly seemed to accept a critical approach to the Scriptures which their Tractarian predecessors such as Pusey had rejected.² Especially the essay "The Holy Spirit and Inspiration" by Charles Gore (1853-1932),³ who had edited the volume, evoked criticism from many quarters. Not only did Gore allow for the critical restructuring of Old Testament literature and the idealizing of its history commonly accepted by higher critics, but he seemed to favor a concept of degrees of inspiration and to confine the inspiration of the Old Testament to fundamental principles of religion and morality. A passage which aroused more opposition than any other was one in which Gore disallowed Christ's use of the Old Testament as an argument against negative conclusions of the critics in regard to the authorship of specific books and the historicity of

¹The book went through ten editions in less than a year. Reference will here be made to Charles Gore, ed., Lux Mundi: A Series of Studies in the Religion of the Incarnation, 15th ed. (London: John Murray, 1904). The eleven contributors, who all had been or still were teaching at Oxford, had met over a period of ten years, because they felt "compelled for their own sake, no less than that of others, to attempt to put the Catholic faith into its right relation to modern intellectual and moral problems." *Ibid.*, p. vii.

²Informative discussions of the effects of the publication of Lux Mundi can be found in S. C. Carpenter, Church and People, 1789-1889 (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1933), pp. 536-64; Chadwick, 2:101-4; L.E. Elliot-Binns, Religion in the Victorian Era, Lutterworth Library, vol. 6 (London: Lutterworth Press, 1936), pp. 238-42; Wilfred L. Knox and Alec R. Vidler, The Development of Modern Catholicism (London: Philip Allan, 1933), pp. 96-125; Reardon, pp. 430-47.

³Charles Gore, "The Holy Spirit and Inspiration," in Lux Mundi, pp. 230-66 (in earlier editions the pagination is different).

certain events in the Old Testament. Gore questioned the argument that,

. . . our Lord's words foreclose certain critical positions as to the character of Old Testament literature. For example, does His use of Jonah's resurrection, as a type of His own, depend in any real degree upon whether it is historical fact or allegory? . . . It is contrary to His whole method to reveal His Godhead by any anticipation of natural knowledge . . . when He speaks of the "sunrising" He is using ordinary human knowledge. He willed so to restrain the beams of Deity as to observe the limits of the science of His age, and He puts Himself in the same relationship to its historical knowledge.¹

Gore's argument sparked off such a widespread and incisive debate about the significance and authority of Christ's use of the Old Testament in relation to Old Testament criticism that this issue can rightly be called "the focus of the conflict."² It was not the only issue, but it certainly was a very crucial one. Both Sanday and Warfield considered it so, as will become clear in succeeding chapters.

The appearance of Lux Mundi brought the issue of Biblical inspiration again to the forefront, as Essays and Reviews had done nearly thirty years earlier. But this time the conflict, though intense, was conducted in the columns of daily papers, religious weeklies, and theological journals, not in ecclesiastical courts. It

¹Ibid., pp. 264-65 (emphasis Gore's).

²This is the title of the fourth chapter in McDonald, Theories of Inspiration, pp. 137-60, where he discusses the most significant literature concerning the issue of Christ's relationship to the Old Testament. Not only did this have an important bearing on the conflict about higher criticism and the inspiration of the Bible, but it raised the much wider issue of the nature and scope of Christ's knowledge in his incarnation.

was a paper war.¹ In this debate Cheyne, Driver, and Sanday were fully involved, on the one hand explaining and defending the methods and (what they and many others considered as) the established results of Old Testament criticism, on the other hand by setting forth a scientific or inductive view of Biblical inspiration.² Sanday presented in the summer of 1890 a series of lectures on the nature and extent of Biblical inspiration, the first of which was entitled "The Present Disquietude." He felt it his duty as a theological professor to help the public mind to clear itself in times of difficulty and perplexity. The lectures focused on the human and the divine elements in the Bible and the relationship between the two. Sanday put much stress on the divine element but believed that divine inspiration could not be attributed to all parts of Scripture. Criticism, he was convinced, had made it impossible to claim infallibility for the text of the Bible, for its history or for Biblical statements of a scientific nature. Afterward the lectures were published as a book under the title The Oracles of God.³

¹See [James Hastings], "Notes of Recent Exposition," Expository Times 3 (1891-92):292.

²Cheyne and Driver focused mainly on Old Testament criticism, Sanday primarily on the question of inspiration, but they all shared the same concerns. In an article on inspiration Driver firmly rejected the doctrine of verbal inspiration and infallibility as based upon a priori conceptions of what an inspired book must be. He stressed "that the only legitimate method of determining what is involved in the idea of inspiration, or under what conditions it manifests itself, is by an examination of the books that are described as inspired and an impartial study of the facts presented by them." Samuel R. Driver, "Inspiration," Magazine of Christian Literature 5 (1891-92):283.

³William Sanday, The Oracles of God (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1891). The subtitle of the book read "Nine lectures on the nature and extent of Biblical inspiration and on the special

Sanday, to be sure, was not the only one to speak out, though his voice did carry considerable weight. At the Church Congress of 1890 one of the topics on the agenda was the "Inspiration of Holy Scripture," especially its relationship to modern criticism. The critical approach to the Bible was seen as a necessity by practically all the speakers, but some maintained that the negative critical views concerning the Old Testament were in conflict with the evidence of the Biblical facts.¹ In the next year Driver published An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament in which he gave all the weight of his scholarship to the exposition and defense of the Grafian theory of the Pentateuch developed by Kuenen and Wellhausen and to critical conclusions in regard to the other books of the Old Testament. He was convinced, however, that such conclusions "do not touch either the authority or the inspiration of the Scriptures of the Old Testament."²

significance of the Old Testament Scriptures at the present time." Sanday dedicated the book to Driver, Cheyne, and David Samuel Margoliouth (1858-1940), who was Laudian professor of Arabic, "in grateful remembrance of all that I owe to them in the past and in confident hope of more which not only I but many others will owe to them in the future."

¹See C. Dunkley, ed., The Official Report of the Church Congress, Held at Hull, October . . . 1890 (London: Bemrose and Sons, 1890), pp. 379-412. G. A. Chadwick, Dean of Armagh, felt bound to say that the concessions made by the writers of Lux Mundi to destructive criticism seemed perilous in the extreme. *Ibid.*, p. 394.

²Samuel Rolles Driver, An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament, 6th ed. (1897; reprint ed., Meridian Books, Cleveland and New York: World Publishing Co., 1956), p. viii. Driver referred to Sanday's book The Oracles of God as "a volume which, with its counsels of wisdom and sobriety, I would gladly, if I might, adopt as the Preface to my own." *Ibid.*, p. ix.

Not everybody shared that conviction.¹

The debate set in motion by the publication of Lux Mundi lasted for several years. Sanday returned to the issue of higher criticism a number of times,² but the most significant work from his hand was his book Inspiration, originally presented as the Bampton Lectures for 1893.³ In these lectures the Oxford professor skillfully blended a survey of the origin of the canon with the early history and origin of the doctrine of Biblical inspiration. Sanday's avowed purpose was to present an inductive or critical view of inspiration in contrast to what he called the traditional view,⁴ a view which in his opinion could no longer be maintained. Sanday's work proved to be a landmark in the debate concerning inspiration,

¹One reviewer asked the question, "If to so many portions of the book [the Old Testament] historical validity is denied, in what sense and on what ground can the authority and inspiration of the volume be asserted?" Talbot W. Chambers, "Driver's Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament," PRR 3 (1892):523.

²His contributions on this subject are discussed in the third chapter.

³William Sanday, Inspiration, 3rd ed. (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1896). Sanday added as subtitle, "Eight lectures on the early history and origin of the doctrine of Biblical inspiration, being the Bampton Lectures for 1893." This work went through three editions and was reprinted a number of times.

⁴Wrote Sanday: "The traditional theory needs little description. Fifty years ago it may be said to have been the common belief of Christian men, at least in this country. . . that the Bible as a whole and in all its parts was the Word of God, and as such that it was endowed with all the perfections of that Word. Not only did it disclose truths about the Divine nature and operation which were otherwise unattainable, but all parts of it were equally authoritative, and in history as well as in doctrine it was exempt from error." Inspiration, p. 392. Sanday did not use the designation traditional theory unadvisedly. He thought that this view of inspiration could be traced back to apostolic times and he spoke about "the extent to which it was recognized in the sayings of Christ Himself." Ibid., p. 393.

and while most works from that time were soon forgotten, his book carried its influence far into the twentieth century.¹

Under the impact of the scholarship of Sanday, Driver, and others, the critical view of the Bible and of its inspiration prevailed at Oxford and to a large extent in the Church of England. The same view became dominant in most other churches in Britain, including the Free Church of Scotland. By the end of the century it was difficult to find any institution of advanced theological training in the British Isles where the doctrine of the plenary inspiration and infallibility of the Bible was maintained. Such institutions could still be found, however, on the other side of the ocean.

Princeton and Warfield

If few would have surmised in 1880 that within ten years Oxford University was to become the focus of a new conflict about inspiration in the Church of England, fewer still would have suspected that, around the same time, an even greater controversy was to disturb the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. In 1872 at the semicentennial celebration of his appointment as professor at Princeton Theological Seminary, Charles Hodge expressed the stability of Princeton's theology in these oft-quoted words, "I am not afraid to say that a new idea never originated in this

¹Elliot-Binns considers Sanday's Bampton Lectures on Inspiration and Driver's Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament as "a landmark to shew the rise of the tide" of the new critical views. Religion in the Victorian Era, p. 190.

Seminary."¹ Whatever one may conclude from this statement, it was certainly true that the doctrine of Scripture taught by successive generations of professors at Princeton Seminary remained remarkably constant during the nineteenth century. There may have been some variation, some development or refinement, but the basic tenets were the same throughout.² And what was true for Princeton theology, was also true for much of North American Presbyterianism, at least until about 1880.

One man who may have had some premonition of things to come was the newly appointed professor of New Testament Literature and Exegesis at Western Theological Seminary, Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield.³ His inaugural address of April 1880 was entitled

¹Quoted in Archibald Alexander Hodge, The Life of Charles Hodge (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1880), p. 521. A perceptive discussion of continuity and development in Princeton theology is given in Noll, pp. 38-40.

²One of the differences between Archibald Alexander and his successors was that he accepted the idea of degrees of inspiration while they did not. But they all firmly maintained that inspiration was plenary and pertained to words as well as thoughts. Although they unanimously ascribed to the Holy Spirit the origin of Holy Scripture, none of them held the idea of a mechanical dictation. They were also in agreement that inspiration preserved the Biblical writers from error and rendered their writings infallible.

³Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield was born on November 5, 1851, near Lexington, Kentucky, to William Warfield, a breeder of horses and cattle, and Mary Cabell Warfield, daughter of Robert Jefferson Breckinridge (1800-1871), a prominent pastor, administrator, and educator of the Old School Presbyterians. His early interest was in science rather than in theology, but during a year of study in Europe--after graduating with highest honors from Princeton College in 1871--he decided to enter the ministry. He entered Princeton Theological Seminary in 1873 and was graduated with the class of 1876. In the summer of that year he married Annie Pearce Kinkead, daughter of a prominent lawyer, sailed with her for Europe where he studied at Leipzig, and returned to America in the summer of 1877. After one year of pastoral work in Baltimore he accepted in 1878 a call to become instructor in New Testament language and

"Inspiration and Criticism." In it he attempted to show that neither the doctrine of verbal inspiration nor of the infallibility of the Bible were endangered by the results of modern Biblical criticism.¹ Was there reason for Warfield to be concerned about these issues? Were there indications that in the Presbyterian Church in the United States the traditional doctrine of Scripture was threatened by the rise of higher criticism?

We may not be able to determine exactly what Warfield had in mind in April 1880 but he cannot have been ignorant of the controversy in the Free Church of Scotland engendered by the teaching of William Robertson Smith.² He probably was aware that Smith's

literature at Western Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In 1879 he was appointed full professor and ordained to the ministry of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. He remained at Western till his transfer to Princeton Theological Seminary in 1887. The most significant biographical sources for Warfield's life are Francis L. Patton, "Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield," Princeton Theological Review 19 (1921):369-91; Ethelbert D. Warfield, "Biographical Sketch of Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield," in Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, Revelation and Inspiration (New York: Oxford University Press, 1927), pp. v-ix; and Samuel G. Craig, "Benjamin B. Warfield," in Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, Biblical and Theological Studies (Philadelphia, Pa.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1952), pp. xi-xlvi.

¹This inaugural address indicates that right from the beginning of his career the doctrine of inspiration was a major concern to Warfield. It has been published as an appendix in Benjamin B. Warfield, The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible, ed. Samuel G. Craig, with an Introduction by Cornelius Van Til (Philadelphia, Pa.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1948), pp. 419-42.

²The case of Smith was widely discussed in Presbyterian circles in the United States. The General Assembly of 1880 urged upon the professors in Presbyterian seminaries in America not to follow the fundamental errors of acknowledged religious teachers, holding high positions in Christian institutions in Europe, who were disseminating doctrines calculated to undermine the authority of the Holy Scriptures. Loetscher, p. 28.

concern for an evangelical criticism of the Bible was shared by some Presbyterian scholars in North America, preeminently by Charles Augustus Briggs (1841-1913), professor of Hebrew at Union Theological Seminary in New York. In his inaugural address in 1876 Briggs had urged that critical study of the Scriptures should not be fettered by traditional or dogmatic views.¹ It is evident that the viewpoints presented in the two inaugural addresses of Warfield and Briggs carried all the potential for conflict. In little more than a decade that conflict would become a fact.

The first public confrontation between the two opposing views took place in the pages of a theological quarterly, the Presbyterian Review, launched in 1880 as a joint effort of Union, Princeton, and four other Presbyterian seminaries. Briggs and A. A. Hodge were chosen as managing editors by the faculties of Union and Princeton seminaries, respectively. As a consequence of the case of Robertson Smith the co-editors finally agreed to run a series of eight articles on the issues raised by higher criticism, especially in their bearing on the doctrine of inspiration.² The first article, entitled

¹Charles Augustus Briggs, "Exegetical Theology, Especially of the Old Testament," Presbyterian Quarterly and Princeton Review, n.s. 6 (1877):5-29. In his inaugural address Briggs defended Smith's liberty of opinion on points of higher criticism. Briggs continued to support Smith and in turn derived inspiration from Smith's work. See Bailey, pp. 290-99. Cf. Charles Augustus Briggs, General Introduction to the Study of Holy Scripture, rev. ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1900; reprint ed. with an Introduction by Charles F. Pfeiffer, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1970), pp. 286-87.

²This series and their historical background are discussed in Loetscher, pp. 30-37. Cf. Noll, p. 219. These articles made it clear that Presbyterians in North America had become divided in their views regarding inspiration, though this did not immediately lead to a rupture.

"Inspiration," was a joint effort by Hodge and Warfield. The authors strongly asserted the plenary and verbal inspiration of Scripture and its freedom from error in the original autographs.¹ Briggs contributed the second article in which he discussed the subject, "Critical Theories of the Sacred Scriptures in Relation to Their Inspiration: The Right, Duty, and Limits of Biblical Criticism." The article contained a sustained attack on "scholastic theology." The other articles were written by different authors, the last one by Francis Landey Patton (1843-1937) who introduced the word "inerrancy" into the debate. He argued that any opinion inconsistent with the inerrancy of Scripture was contrary to the Westminster Confession of Faith.² After the close of the series Briggs continued to assail the Princeton doctrine of Scripture and to defend the right of free Biblical criticism in a number of books, the first of which was published in 1883.³ Briggs opposed the doctrines of verbal inspiration and the inerrancy of Scripture as unscriptural and

¹This article has often been considered as the classical expression of the Princeton doctrine of inspiration. It certainly is a significant expression of that doctrine, but if taken in isolation can easily lead to a misrepresentation of the doctrine of inspiration as held by Warfield and Hodge. For a discussion of the relative significance of this article, see chapter 4.

²Francis L. Patton, "The Dogmatic Aspect of Pentateuchal Criticism," Presbyterian Review 4 (1883):371. Patton was Robert L. Stewart professor of the relations of philosophy and science to the Christian religion in Princeton Seminary from 1881 till 1888 in which year he was elected president of Princeton College. That Scripture was free from error had been taught by many Christians throughout the centuries, but Patton seems to have been the first to use the word inerrancy in this connection. Up till that time the term commonly used was infallibility, which was the word Patton had used in his earlier book, The Inspiration of the Scriptures.

³Charles Augustus Briggs, Biblical Study, Its Principles, Methods, and History (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1883). This

anticonfessional. Sooner or later conflict seemed unavoidable.

Although Warfield did write some articles and one significant tract on the doctrine of Scripture, the major product of his years at Western was a book on New Testament textual criticism.¹ After the death of A. A. Hodge in late 1886, he was called to occupy the chair of didactic and polemic theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, in which capacity he served from 1887 till his death in 1921. In 1888 Warfield was elected by the Seminary faculty as co-editor of the Presbyterian Review to replace Francis Landey Patton, who had become president of Princeton College. By that time, however, the quarterly's future was already highly problematical. This fact, added to an uneasy relationship between Briggs and Warfield as co-editors, led the faculty of Union Seminary to recommend a discontinuance of the Review. Its publication ceased with the issue of October 1889. Under Warfield's energetic leadership another quarterly, the Presbyterian and Reformed Review, was launched in January of the following year. It became a major organ for the expression of theology in the Princeton tradition. In its pages and in the pages of its successor, the Princeton Theological Review, many of Warfield's articles on the doctrine of inspiration and his book

was followed by two other books, American Presbyterianism (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1885) and Messianic Prophecy (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1886).

¹Benjamin B. Warfield, An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1886). This book was reprinted many times and in its time served as a textbook to many a theological student. Because Warfield's writings on Scripture and inspiration are carefully discussed in the fourth chapter, no further reference is made to them in this historical survey.

reviews bearing on that subject appeared.

In the context of a lively debate about whether or not the Westminster Confession of Faith should be revised, Briggs published in 1889 a rather controversial book, Whither? A Theological Question for the Times. In it he urged a revision of the Westminster Confession and repeated his assertion that the doctrines of verbal inspiration and the inerrancy of the autographs as held by "scholastic" theologians were neither the doctrine of the Confession nor of Scripture itself.¹ Briggs's assault on these doctrines found its most forceful expression, however, in an address entitled "The Authority of the Bible" which he delivered on 20 January 1891 at the occasion of his inauguration to the newly created Edward Robinson chair of Biblical Theology in Union Seminary.² He boldly asserted that there were three sources of divine authority--the Church, the Reason, and the Bible³--and then set out to storm what he called the barriers of ecclesiasticism fencing in the authority of Holy Scripture. He listed six obstructing barriers, among which were the dogmas of verbal inspiration, of the authenticity of the Scriptures,

¹Charles Augustus Briggs, Whither? A Theological Question for the Times (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1889), pp. 63-90.

²This inaugural address was published in several forms. References here given are taken from Charles A. Briggs, Llewellyn J. Evans, and Henry Preserved Smith, Inspiration and Inerrancy, with an Introduction by Alexander Balmain Bruce (London: James Clarke and Co., 1891), pp. 39-99.

³Ibid., pp. 41-47. Many felt that Briggs departed from the Protestant principle of sola Scriptura, but this criticism did not deter him from elaborating and reaffirming his position a year later in his book The Bible, the Church, and the Reason: The Three Great Fountains of Divine Authority (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1892).

and of inerrancy, doctrines held not only by the Princeton theologians, but by the majority of Presbyterians in North America at that time.

Faced with such a frontal attack, neither the Princeton theologians nor the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America could remain silent or inactive. Unlike the controversy about inspiration and higher criticism in Great Britain following the publication of Lux Mundi, the conflict engendered by Briggs's address resulted not merely in a paper warfare but also in a series of ecclesiastical trials of Briggs himself and of one of his staunchest supporters, Henry Preserved Smith (1847-1927).¹ In the next three years the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. experienced the trauma of theological and ecclesiastical conflict.² Princeton scholars played

¹It is not necessary for our purpose to enter into the details of this controversy and the resulting trials. Some recent studies on this subject are Carl E. Hatch, The Charles A. Briggs Heresy Trial: Prologue to Twentieth-Century Liberal Protestantism (New York: Exposition Press, 1969), and Max Gray Rogers, "Charles Augustus Briggs: Heresy at Union," in American Religious Heretics, ed. George H. Shriver (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1966), pp. 89-147. The case of Henry Preserved Smith, who was professor at Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati, Ohio, is discussed in Loetscher, pp. 63-68; and by Smith himself in his autobiographical The Heretic's Defense: A Footnote to History (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926), pp. 93-113.

²The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church at its annual meeting of 1892 in Portland, Oregon, issued the following declaration (known as the Portland declaration): "The General Assembly would remind all under its care that it is a fundamental doctrine that the Old and New Testaments are the inspired and infallible Word of God. Our Church holds that the inspired Word, as it came from God, is without error. The assertion of the contrary cannot but shake the confidence of the people in the sacred books." Quoted in Benjamin B. Warfield, "The One Hundred and Fourth General Assembly," PRR 3 (1892):540. Briggs's supporters castigated the Portland declaration as establishing a new standard of faith. This

a prominent part in the conflict.¹ Warfield's contribution was predominantly in the form of publications.²

In response to the assertions of Briggs and other Presbyterian scholars that the doctrines of verbal inspiration and inerrancy were anticonfessional, Warfield published a number of articles on the Westminster doctrine of Scripture in an attempt to prove that the opposite was true. Even greater was his endeavor to show that the contested doctrines were true Biblical doctrines, an effort in which he interacted with a range of scholarship far beyond the confines of his own denomination. During the early part of his professorate at Princeton, when the debate about inspiration was at its height both in Britain and in the United States, many articles

accusation was rejected by the Church. See John DeWitt, "The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America," PRR 4 (1893):470-76.

¹William Henry Green (1825-1900), who was one of the most prominent Old Testament scholars in the United States at that time, was unanimously elected as Moderator by the General Assembly of 1891 and had the difficult task of guiding the Church through the first year of the controversy surrounding Briggs. Four years later he made a significant contribution to the scholarly debate about the critical theories of the Bible with his book The Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1895; reprint ed. with an Introduction by Ronald Youngblood, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1978). More than ten years earlier William Robertson Smith in a letter to Briggs had called Green "the most scholarly by far of my assailants." Quoted in Dwayne Cox, "William Henry Green: Princeton Theologian," Hebrew Studies 19 (1978):20-21.

²Warfield seldom left his wife alone for any length of time because she was more or less an invalid for nearly the entire duration of their married life. During the first year of their marriage her nervous system received a severe shock when they were overtaken by a terrific thunderstorm on a walking trip in the Harz mountains in Germany. She never fully recovered from this experience. As a result Warfield's voice was rarely heard in the meetings of the Church. See Oswald T. Allis, "Personal Impressions of Dr. Warfield," Banner of Truth, February 1971, p. 10.

and book reviews flowed from his pen in which he discussed the issues at stake. It was in some of these publications that he stressed the need for a true as opposed to a wrong inductive study of the Scriptures as the correct method for determining the Biblical doctrine of inspiration. It was only in later years, however, after the controversy had somewhat subsided, that Warfield found opportunity to pursue more fully the way he had pointed out and to produce the thorough exegetical studies which probably form his most lasting contribution to the debate about inspiration.

Concluding Remarks

It is quite easy in tracing the historical development of the conflict concerning inspiration from the late seventeenth century till the end of the nineteenth century to focus too much on personalities, creeds, and ecclesiastical conditions. Although these did change from century to century in various countries and churches, the basic issues remained essentially the same. It is true that with the further development of higher criticism and the rise to prominence of certain scientific theories in the nineteenth century the problems did become more complicated and that new aspects were added to the debate. Most significant among these were probably the issue of Jesus' use of the Old Testament and the question of the correct method for determining the Biblical concept of inspiration. However, such issues as the extent, the nature, and the effects of inspiration proved to be perennial.

Although Sanday and Warfield lived and worked in different ecclesiastical communions, they were sons of the same age and dealt

with the same issues, albeit from opposing viewpoints. Had Princeton scholars such as Patton, Green, and Warfield been in face-to-face confrontation with Oxford scholars such as Cheyne, Driver, and Sanday, both sides would most likely have taken the same stance on the issues of Biblical inspiration and higher criticism as they did in their actual geographical and ecclesiastical settings. There is no question, for instance, about the fact that the Oxford scholars were in sympathy with Briggs and his views of inspiration rather than with those of Warfield and Hodge.¹ Because Warfield and Sanday, each in his own setting, appear to have articulated very fully and clearly the two opposing views of Biblical inspiration, there seems to be ample reason not only for making a careful study of these two views but also for subjecting them to a detailed analysis and

¹Driver, as we have seen, explicitly rejected the doctrines of verbal inspiration and inerrancy. After quoting some statements on inerrancy from the article on inspiration by Hodge and Warfield, he commented, "The sentences which I have quoted are not indeed from the pen of an Anglican divine; but they hardly do more than give pointed expression to a feeling which probably has often been shared by members of our own communion. It is important to observe that for the statements contained in them there is no warrant either in the Bible itself, or in the formularies of our Church. They are the speculations of individual theologians, . . ." Driver, "Inspiration," p. 283. Briggs's inaugural address, on the other hand, appeared to Driver "as harmless as it was excellent." Letter from Driver to Briggs quoted in Loetscher, p. 52. Sanday expressed his feelings about the trial of Briggs in the North American journal The Arena as follows: "... when we hear reports on this side the water of one of the ablest and most learned of American theologians arraigned and condemned by the body to which he belongs, on the ground of his adherence to critical methods, we cannot help expressing our deep regret and concern, not only on the personal ground, though on this our sympathies are strongly enlisted, but still more for the sake of our common Christianity. . . . 'Concern' is the word which expresses the frame of mind in which we in England regard this matter. With us the battle has been fought and to all intents and purposes won." William Sanday, "The Aims and Methods of the Higher Criticism," Arena, December 1893, pp. 32-33.

comparison in an attempt to obtain a deeper grasp of the issues involved. To these objectives we address ourselves in the following chapters.

CHAPTER III

WILLIAM SANDAY'S MODEL OF BIBLICAL INSPIRATION

Context and Corpus of Sanday's Writings on Inspiration

In the total corpus of Sanday's published works his writings on inspiration constitute only a small segment. When one surveys the full extent of his publications,¹ the principal part consists of books and articles on New Testament criticism and exegesis and on the life and person of Jesus Christ,² with a wide range of subjects occupying the remainder of the bibliography of his works.³ Yet

¹The most extensive list of Sanday's works is Alexander Souter, "A Bibliography of Dr. Sanday," Journal of Theological Studies 22 (1921):193-205. This bibliography, as Souter himself indicates, is not complete and some articles quoted in this chapter cannot be found in it.

²Even after Sanday became Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity in 1895 and the scope of his writings broadened to a wide range of theological subjects, he remained primarily a New Testament scholar. There is an element of truth in the remark of one of his disciples and friends, who wrote of Sanday, "The leading New Testament critic in Oxford, and probably in England, was relatively untrained in theology in the stricter sense." Cuthbert H. Turner, "Dr. Sanday: A Fragmentary Sketch," Constructive Quarterly 9 (1921):335. Cuthbert Hamilton Turner (1860-1930), fellow of Magdalen College and later Dean Ireland's professor of exegesis at Oxford, was a close friend of Sanday and knew him for more than thirty-five years.

³The range of his writings includes Christian doctrine, creeds, patristics, apologetics, social and political questions, biographical articles, Christian unity, and comparative religions. Especially in the latter part of his life Sanday tends to deal with questions of a philosophical and psychological nature such as miracles and the laws of nature, personality, and the relation between matter and form.

though there are only two books and two articles¹ in which Sanday deals directly with the subject of inspiration, it would be wrong to conclude that the doctrine of inspiration was a matter of merely passing interest in his thinking. Many scattered fragments of evidence, both in his own writings and in statements or comments by others, indicate that questions relating to revelation and inspiration occupied his mind throughout his career as a scholar.²

From the very start of that career his ultimate concern was with theology in its widest ramifications. Sanday saw his own lifework as a progression from smaller questions on the periphery to the larger and vital issues at the center of theology. Starting with the problems of textual criticism and exegesis he went on to questions of authorship and authenticity but always with the aim to deal finally with the fundamental issues of faith and truth.³ The

¹The two books are The Oracles of God (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1891) (hereafter designated Oracles); and Inspiration (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1893; 3rd ed., 1896). (Subsequent references will be to the third edition). The two articles, published more than fifteen years later, are "Bible," Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, ed. James Hastings (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1909), 2:562-79; and "Inspiration and Revelation," Dictionary of the Apostolic Church, ed. James Hastings (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1915), 1:612-18 (hereafter designated "inspiration"). For a brief discussion of these four publications see below.

²This becomes evident from the different sources quoted in this chapter. In the introductory chapter of his second book Sanday emphasizes the need for a more scientific definition of what we mean by revelation, and in his last public lectures as Lady Margaret professor in 1919 he is still occupied with the issue of revelation and inspiration. William Sanday, The Gospels in the Second Century, An Examination of the Critical Part of a Work Entitled "Supernatural Religion" (London: Macmillan and Co., 1876), p. 9; Divine Overruling (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1920), pp. 20-25.

³He states, e.g., that he greatly believes "in the method of drawing gradually inwards from the circumference to the centre, of

nature and authority of the Bible occupied a prominent place among those issues as we might expect from a scholar who perceived himself (and was perceived by others) as a scientific theologian, trying to reconcile the essential, traditional doctrines of Christianity with the claims of modern science and Biblical criticism.¹

Sanday was an Anglican all his life and his published works give ample evidence of his concern with matters of his Church. His theology reveals clearly the influence of the Anglican tradition. Probably no theologian contributed more to the shaping of Sanday's theological thought than Bishop Butler. Sanday himself acknowledged his indebtedness to Butler, especially in regard to theological method, when he wrote in 1899:

As far back as I can remember, even before I came up to Oxford, a deep impression was made upon me by Butler's Analogy. One fixed

settling out-lying minor questions as a preliminary to attacking the greater questions which lie within." William Sanday, Two Present-Day Questions (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1892), pp. 29-30; cf. William Sanday, The Life of Christ in Recent Research (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907), p. 38.

¹Shortly after Sanday's appointment as Lady Margaret professor, one of his former students wrote at the close of a very appreciative article about his teacher and colleague, "Were we, then, by way of summary to style him a 'living eirenicon' in our midst, I feel sure that none in Oxford would blame the word, save perhaps himself--and he only to qualify it with a deprecating smile and the Pauline 'not as though I had already attained.'" J. Vernon Bartlet, "William Sanday," Expository Times 7 (1895-96):274. A reviewer of Sanday's book The Gospels in the Second Century gratefully accepts his aid "in tracking one line of investigation towards that 'middle position' where the scientific and the religious, the critical and the devout elements of our nature will lose their antagonism, and blend at last in conscious reconciliation." James Drummond in Academy, April 29, 1876, p. 401. See also R. Laird Harris, "Sanday and the Scriptures," in Inspiration and Interpretation, ed. John F. Walvoord (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957), pp. 179-88. Harris is of the opinion that Sanday, despite his good intentions to mediate between opposing views, ended up at an extreme on the critical side.

conclusion that I carried away with me from that work was that deductive arguments in the sphere of theology were highly precarious; that our real concern was not with what ought to be, or what must be in the Divine economy, but rather with what is, or in the historical sense, what has been. This naturally led up to the use of the so-called historical method, which in these days enjoys much favor; and, to the extent of my ability, I have spent most of my life in trying to apply it.¹

Butler's influence on Sanday's methodology is a determining factor in the latter's approach to the problem of the nature of inspiration as we will yet see.

There can be no question that Sanday wanted to maintain and vindicate the essential Christian beliefs, but at the same time he was convinced that those beliefs must be brought in harmony with the scientific mind of the modern age. Already in his earliest work he expresses his confidence in the adequacy of the scientific method and that confidence persists throughout his career.² The aim of his life to present the essence of Christianity in a way acceptable to the modern scientific spirit was summed up by him on the occasion of his retirement in these words:

¹W. Sanday, "Episcopacy and Sacerdotalism," Manchester Guardian, March 29, 1899, quoted in "Notes of Recent Exposition," Expository Times 10 (1898-99):341. Sanday's indebtedness to Butler is not surprising in view of the Butlerian renaissance in the mid-nineteenth century and especially the popularity of the Analogy at that time as a standard work of Christian apologetic. The renaissance and subsequent recession of Butler's influence in the nineteenth century is a well-documented fact. See, e.g., Hamish F. G. Swanston, Ideas of Order: The Mid-Nineteenth Century Renewal of Anglican Theological Method (Assen, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum and Co., 1974).

²He wrote in the "Preface" of his earliest book, "There is no limit to the efficacy of scientific method if it is but faithfully and persistently applied." William Sanday, The Authorship and Historical Character of the Fourth Gospel, Considered in Reference to the Contents of the Gospel Itself (London: Macmillan and Co., 1872), p. viii.

It is really the scientific spirit that I wish to represent. But I wish to do so without posing in a character to which I have no rightful claim. I would rather leave men of science to speak for themselves than attempt or profess to speak for them. I do not disclaim the name of Modernist. The name describes justly what I aim at being. I aim at thinking the thoughts and speaking the language of my own day and yet at the same time keeping all that is essential in the religion of the past. I fully believe that it is possible to do this That is my fundamental faith.¹

To modern man such ideas as the uniformity of the ordinary course of nature and the idea of evolution are nearly self-evident. The concept of uniformity makes it difficult for him to believe in miraculous divine interruptions in the regular order of the natural world.² Especially in the latter part of his life Sanday returned again and again to the question how to find the common term between the ancient believer with his faith in miraculous divine interruptions of the natural order and the modern Christian whose scientific outlook finds an enormous presumption against such interruptions.

Evolution to Sanday is one of the laws by which the world is certainly governed.³ This law of evolution embraces the universe

¹Divine Overruling, pp. 67-68.

²See, e.g., William Sanday, "Miracles and the Supernatural Character of the Gospels," Expository Times 14 (1902-3):65. Wrote Sanday in 1914: "By degrees there had hardened in my mind a distinction . . . between events that are supra naturam--exceptional, extraordinary, testifying to the presence of higher spiritual forces--and events, or alleged events, that are contra naturam, or involve some definite reversal of the natural physical order." Bishop Gore's Challenge to Criticism: A Reply to the Bishop of Oxford's Open Letter on the Basis of Anglican Fellowship (London: Longman's, Green, and Co., 1914), p. 23. Sanday rejected the latter.

³Divine Overruling, p. 33; cf. The Gospels in the Second Century, p. 5: "The Christian sees that evolution is as much a law of religion as of nature."

including man and his religion. The Christian religion and the Scriptures are to be understood as the product and culmination of this process of evolution.¹ It is not surprising that Sanday's theology and especially his concept of inspiration are closely related to his concept of the modern man, the scientific man with his basic presuppositions of the uniformity of nature and the law of evolution.

Although it is necessary to grasp the larger context of Sanday's theology and worldview for an understanding of his concept of inspiration, we must turn to the small corpus of writings in which he deals with that subject to discover his model of Biblical inspiration.

As we have seen, the core of his first book on the subject, Oracles, consisted of a series of six lectures on the nature and extent of Biblical inspiration presented in July and August of 1890 in the wake of the disturbance caused by the publication of Lux Mundi.² The central issue of these lectures is the extent of the human and divine elements in the Scriptures and the relationship of these two to each other. Convinced that modern critical study of the Biblical phenomena has shown that the human element in the Bible is much larger than had been supposed, Sanday poses the question whether there is "anything which the Bible lays down in point of doctrine

¹Says Sanday: "The Christian faith, as its data lie before us in the Bible, seems, naturally and without forcing, so to fall into its place in relation to the rest of the development [in the process of evolution] as to furnish it with its fitting completion or crown." "Bible," p. 578.

²See chapter 2, pp. 102-3.

which would conflict with these phenomena in point of fact," or, to put it in other words, whether "they imply an extension of the human element in Scripture inconsistent with that divine element which asserts its presence so unmistakably."¹ To the original six lectures Sanday added three others, one of which dealt with "Christ and the Scriptures," a subject that figured prominently in the controversy over inspiration. This first book laid down the basic principles of Sanday's methodology in dealing with the question of inspiration.

In the next three years he further clarified his position on the function and limitations of higher criticism, calling for great caution against hasty acceptance of so-called "assured results" and yet expressing firm confidence in what he considers results established by general scholarly agreement.² He sees higher criticism, chiefly through the application of the historical method, as the indispensable preliminary for exegesis, but states categorically that this method is not to be used as a means of excluding the supernatural from the historical process.³

¹Oracles, p. 63.

²Sanday's position on the value of higher criticism for a better understanding of the Bible is clearly stated in "Confronting New Problems [in New Testament criticism]," in The Official Report of the Church Congress, Held at Rhyd, October . . . 1891, ed. C. Dunkley (London: Bemrose and Sons, 1891), pp. 171-74; Two Present-day Questions; and "The Aims and Methods of the Higher Criticism," Arena, December 1893, pp. 26-33. The combination of caution and confidence in regard to the results of criticism is sometimes expressed by Sanday in one breath. But no matter how strong his expressions of caution, he was convinced that Biblical criticism had an important role to fulfil in God's providential guidance of the Church. See, e.g., Two Present-day Questions, pp. 21-24; "Aims and Methods," p. 29.

³"Aims and Methods," pp. 27, 31; cf. William Sanday, "The Historical Method in Theology," Expository Times 9 (1897-98):84.

Then in 1893, while the controversy over inspiration was still very much alive both in England and in the United States, Sanday delivered the Bampton lectures on inspiration, in which he returns to the issue of the relationship between the human and the divine elements of Scripture. He contrasts two theories of inspiration--the traditional theory and the modern scientific theory --and tries to show that the two concepts are not as far apart as many believe. The question of the extent of the human element is in his opinion the only question between the very strictest form of the traditional theory and the one put forward by him in his lectures.¹ Taking prophetic inspiration as the type of all true inspiration, Sanday develops a distinction between different degrees or levels of inspiration. Inspiration is certainly Sanday's major work on the subject and usually the only one quoted in later references to his concept of inspiration.²

Still, Sanday had not spoken his final word in the Bampton lectures, for in 1909 in the article entitled "Bible" in the second volume of the Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, he covers in a more concise fashion much of the same ground. Especially in the last part of the article there is evidence of a tendency towards a more subjective, psychological interpretation of the divine aspect of

¹Inspiration, p. 423.

²So, e.g., Alan Richardson, "The Rise of Modern Biblical Scholarship and Recent Discussion of the Authority of the Bible," in The Cambridge History of the Bible: The West from the Reformation to the Present Day, ed. S. L. Greenslade (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), pp. 313-18; and William J. Abraham, The Divine Inspiration of Holy Scripture (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 41-47.

inspiration and a further limitation of the attributes of Scripture, especially those of authority and infallibility. The development of a psychological approach to theology becomes more evident in the following years in Sanday's writings on Christology¹ as

¹In an attempt to answer the problem of the relationship between divinity and humanity in Christ, Sanday turns to the modern science of psychology with its distinction in the human personality between the conscious and the subconscious, the supraliminal self and the subliminal self. He suggests that what is divine in man belongs to the subliminal rather than the supraliminal. In a parallel fashion the divine in Christ is to be found in the region of the subconscious which only can come to expression through an entirely human consciousness, with all the limitations that pertain to the restraining and restricting medium of such a consciousness. Rather than drawing a vertical line between the human nature and the divine nature of Christ, Sanday prefers to "draw a horizontal line between the upper human medium, which is the proper and natural field of all active expression, and those lower deeps which are no less the proper and natural home of whatever is divine," and this horizontal line "is inevitably drawn in the region of the subconscious." William Sanday, Christologies Ancient and Modern (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), pp. 165-66. He further elaborated his theory in another book Personality in Christ and in Ourselves (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911). Sanday's Christological views met with serious criticism not only from a theological but also from a psychological viewpoint and were never accepted as a tenable Christology. See, for some of the criticisms, H. R. Mackintosh, "Christologies Ancient and Modern," Expository Times 21 (1909-10):486-90, 553-58; A. E. Garvie, "The Danger of Mares' Nests in Theology," Expository Times 24 (1912-13):271-72, 305-7, 373-75; John Baillie, "The Subliminal Consciousness as an Aid to the Interpretation of Religious Experience," Expository Times 24 (1912-13):353-58; Benjamin B. Warfield, "The 'Two Natures' and Recent Christological Speculation," American Journal of Theology 15 (1911):337-61 (also in Benjamin B. Warfield The Person and Work of Christ, ed. Samuel G. Craig (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1950), pp. 211-62, esp. the last pages of the article); H. Maurice Relton, A Study in Christology (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1929), pp. 199-210. One of Sanday's students, who expresses high regard for him as a deeply religious man and a scholar, states that Sanday in later life defended some causes that did not command general assent and that his worst fall came when he attempted to use the new science of analytic psychology with its discovery of the subliminal consciousness to explain the method of the incarnation. J. W. C. Wand, Changeful Page: The Autobiography of William Wand (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1965), p. 37.

well as in his views on inspiration.¹

One more time he comes back to the subject in an article entitled "Inspiration and Revelation" in Hasting's Dictionary of the Apostolic Church, published in 1915. Only in this article do we find a rather full discussion of his concept of revelation. It contains new aspects of his doctrine of inspiration, but in its general tendency confirms the trends present in the earlier article and in scattered remarks in his Christological writings.

In order to describe as fully as possible Sanday's model of Biblical inspiration, we have to rely mainly on the two books and the two articles discussed above. At the same time we shall note many scattered observations and statements from his other writings that contribute to a fuller understanding of the structure of that model.

Starting-Point and Methodology

It is in his book Oracles that Sanday enunciates the basic elements of a concept of Biblical inspiration and the method by which such a concept must be formed. He contrasts with one another two different starting-points from which to establish such a concept, qualifying the one as a "fundamental mistake" and the other as a "fundamental principle." The fundamental mistake is "to form the idea of what inspiration is from what we should antecedently expect it to be." The fundamental principle on the contrary holds "that a true conception of what the Bible is

¹This point is discussed below under the heading "Psychology of Inspiration," pp. 158-66.

must be obtained from the Bible itself."¹

In his rejection and refutation of any a priori approach in establishing a concept of inspiration, Sanday appeals to the famous refutation by Bishop Butler of a similar approach by the Deists, who by logic wanted to lay down beforehand what the Bible as a revelation from God ought to be.² Just as the Deists had mistakenly put forward the assumptions that a revelation must be universal, that it must be clear and that its evidence must be so certain as to leave no room for doubt, even so it would be wrong to assume antecedently that the inspiration of the Bible must imply its infallibility, its inerrancy, or its perfection. To make such assumptions is to take up a false position from the outset. We should not ask at all what an inspired book ought to be, but rather "content ourselves with the enquiry what this Book, which comes to us as inspired, in fact and

¹Oracles, pp. 34, 47.

²Ibid., pp. 34-35; Sanday refers especially to part 2, chapter 3 of Butler's Analogy, where Butler discusses man's incapacity of judging beforehand what is to be expected in a revelation and shows the credibility from analogy that such a revelation must contain things that appear liable to objections. Butler's refutation of any a priori reasoning in regard to divine revelation apparently had made a deep impression on Sanday and he refers to it a number of times throughout his works. So, e.g., in William Sanday, The Position of Liberal Theology (London: Faith Press, 1920), p. 29; Gospels in the Second Century, p. 10, n. 1. Sanday was certainly not the first to appeal to Butler in connection with the issue of Biblical inspiration. For a similar appeal see, e.g., Charles Adolphus Row, Christian Evidences Viewed in Relation to Modern Thought, Bampton Lectures for 1877 (London: Frederic Norgate, 1877), pp. 436-42. Charles Row (1816-96), like Sanday, emphasizes an inductive approach for establishing a concept of inspiration and appeals to Butler. Sanday never mentions Row, but may well have been acquainted with his work.

reality is."¹ Sanday is convinced that it will not refuse to answer our questions.

In formulating a doctrine of Biblical inspiration there are not merely two possible points of departure but also two possible methods, the deductive and the inductive.² For Sanday the true method in theology--as well as in other sciences--is the inductive one.³ He describes this method as follows:

The true method in this and in all cognate questions seems to me to be first, at all costs of time and labour, to ascertain what are the exact facts. When that has been done the explanation of the facts will come almost of itself. We shall see them in their true proportions, and they will fall into their proper place and relation to each other.⁴

¹Oracles, p. 36. Sanday does not mean that there is no assumption at all involved, for he states that in this inductive method "the Books of the Two Testaments are interrogated without any assumption beyond that of a Personal God who might be conceived as capable of putting Himself into communication with men." Inspiration, pp. 393-94.

²Sanday does not explicitly use these terms, neither in Oracles nor in Inspiration, but from his arguments in these two works it can easily be seen that that is the distinction he has in mind. Enlightening is, for example, the following remark in the concluding lecture of his book Inspiration: ". . . the contention which underlies the whole of the lectures is that the extent of it [the human element in the Bible] cannot rightly be determined by any a priori methods, by any deduction from such a postulate as that Revelation is a self-communication from God, but only by an inductive and critical inquiry as to the course which that self-communication has as a matter of fact taken." Inspiration, p. 423.

³He said in 1919, in looking back upon his career as a theologian, "The natural method for me to employ is inductive. I said to myself, when I began to work at theology, that I must begin at the beginning--I must know where I am. I must begin with the literature. I must put myself to school both in the lower criticism and in the higher. I must try to learn what are the right texts. I must try to put these texts into their right environment. I must consider questions of authorship, of genuineness and the like. This is what I did to the best of my ability." Divine Overruling, p. 60.

⁴Oracles, p. 102.

When referring to the facts of the Bible, Sanday has a wide range of facts in mind, namely, its text, its grammar, its science, and its history as well as spiritual facts.¹ A truly scientific method asks questions about canonicity and authenticity and makes comparisons with other sacred books and other religions.² Repeatedly Sanday emphasizes that a fundamental point in our search after the nature of the Bible is that the Bible, especially as literature and history, must be studied like any other book.³ This does not mean that the Bible is like any other book and its unique inspiration could well be defined in terms of "all those concrete points in which as a matter of fact the Bible does differ from and does excel all other Sacred Books,"⁴ and all other literature for that matter.⁵

¹Ibid., pp. 36, 41.

²Ibid, p. 42.

³Ibid., p. 11; Inspiration, p. 1; "Bible," p. 563. This principle had aroused a stormy reaction when put forward in 1860 by Benjamin Jowett in Essays and Reviews, but thirty years later it had become commonplace.

⁴Inspiration, p. 128.

⁵Wrote Sanday, "Let us by all means study it if we will like any other book, but do not let us beg the question that it must be wholly like any other book, that there is nothing in it distinctive and unique. Let us give a fair and patient hearing to the facts as they come before us, whether they be old or whether they be new." Inspiration, p. 2. It seems that Sanday applied this caution mainly to the spiritual aspect of the Bible, but that in regard to literary, historical, and scientific aspects he considered it to be like other books. He wrote in his article "Bible" in 1909: "The principle underlying the present art. is that on its literary and historical side the Bible must be studied like any other book (e.g., Livy, or like the mediaeval chronicles, which supply a better parallel for some parts of the problem), but that it does not therefore follow that in other respects, and in particular as a religious revelation, the Bible is only on the same level with these" (p. 562).

Sanday did not have much good to say about the deductive method. His characterizations of it were rather brief and somewhat disparaging. He spoke of a priori methods, in which deductions were made from such a postulate as that revelation is a self-communication of God; or of the older rabbinical view of the Bible which drew certain inferences from the fact that the Bible is a sacred book and the Word of God (such inferences were perfection, inerrancy, absolute authority, a finished whole, infallibility); or of taking a single text from which at once far-reaching dogmatic consequences are drawn.¹ In the context of a very different discussion he admitted that there is "no such thing as pure induction or pure deduction," and that "in every so-called inductive process there is an element of deduction, and in every so-called deductive process there is an element of induction."² In the same context he even admitted that "an old prejudice [namely, that deductive arguments in the sphere of

¹See Inspiration, p. 423; "Bible," p. 571; Oracles, p. 102. Sanday never refers to any specific authors or sources in which such views are actually put forward, but he speaks about a priori methods, deductions, or inferences in a rather general way. One wonders to what extent he had studied the works of scholars who held a "deductive" view of inspiration.

²William Sanday, The Conception of Priesthood in the Early Church and in the Church of England, 2nd ed. (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1899), p. 3. The context was a discussion of two methods of approaching the institutions and doctrines of the early Church, which according to Sanday stand to each other in rather sharp contrast. The first of these is the historical method, the other the logical method, which are related to each other somewhat in the way in which induction is related to deduction. Of the first method Sanday stated that it had "a recognized name and certain recognized canons," but that he was not sure "that this can be said of the other." Ibid. This remark called forth the criticism of his colleague and friend Dr. Robert C. Moberly (1845-1903) that any one who read Sanday's remark sympathetically could but feel that the second of the two methods was already not a little discredited. Ibid., p. 137.

theology were highly precarious] was not as well founded as I thought,"¹ but that admission did not noticeably affect his approach in regard to the nature of the Bible or his concept of inspiration. Sanday's distrust of so-called a priori reasoning remained the same till the end of his life.²

Sanday's emphasis on the inductive method as the true method to be used in the formulation of a theory of inspiration reflected a more general affirmation in the nineteenth century of the Baconian method as the true scientific method.³ Others before him had stressed the necessity of a true induction of all the facts of the Bible as the only way to construct a sound view of Biblical inspiration.⁴ It was on this very point, however, that George T. Purves felt constrained to object to the application of the term "inductive" by Sanday and other critical scholars to their modern view of inspiration. He agreed with them that "a real induction must build on all the facts that can be obtained," but observed that "the critical school of the present day deliberately excludes the statements of Scripture about itself."⁵ Purves felt that Sanday's

¹Ibid., pp. 159-60. It was in reaction to Moberly's criticism that Sanday admitted his prejudice against deductive arguments in the sphere of theology. He gave credit to his colleague by saying: ". . . since I came to know Dr. Moberly, I have become aware that the opposite method has a larger and more legitimate function than I had supposed." Ibid., p. 160.

²Position of Liberal Theology, p. 29.

³See chapter 2, p. 75, n. 1.

⁴So, e.g., Samuel Davidson and Charles Row. See chapter 2, p. 84, and chapter 3, p. 128, n. 2.

⁵George T. Purves, Review of Inspiration, by William Sanday, in FRR 6 (1895):180. George Tybout Purves (1852-1901) was Professor

designation of his view of inspiration as "inductive" was a misnomer. It is not our purpose in this analysis to discuss the validity of Sanday's claim to use the inductive method or to call his view of inspiration the inductive view, but the objection raised by Purves highlights a crucial issue in the debate concerning inspiration, namely, the question of the right methodology to be used in formulating the Biblical doctrine of inspiration. How crucial this issue is becomes clearer in the succeeding chapters.

Criteria of Inspiration

For Sanday the relationship between the natural and the supernatural, in general, and between the human and the divine in Scripture, in particular, is a central issue and this is very evident in the way he deals with the subject of Biblical inspiration. In answering questions such as: How do I know that the Bible is inspired? How do I know to what extent it is inspired? Sanday presents a variegated answer. In his writings a number of criteria can be found by which the fact, the extent, and the nature of inspiration may be determined.¹ These are discussed under four

of New Testament literature and exegesis at Princeton Theological Seminary from 1892 until 1900.

¹Sanday does not use the word "criteria" in this connection; in fact, his discussion does not exhibit any rigid terminology, nor does he deal with the questions in such a systematic fashion as is used here for the sake of brevity. He does, however, use the word criteria occasionally, as for instance when he speaks about the criteria put forward by the Deists of what the Bible as a revelation from God ought to be, calling those criteria untenable assumptions. Oracles, p. 35. See also the use of the word criteria in the "Synopsis of Contents" in Inspiration, pp. xix-xxix.

headings which follow as much as possible Sanday's own terminology.¹

The "Experimental Test"

In answering the question as to whether the Bible is divine or not, the majority of people do not attack the question in a strictly logical order by asking questions about the accuracy of its text, details of chronology or archaeology, the process by which its books were composed, or what sort of external attestation it brings with it. The fact which for plain men and women settles that question is the fact that there are sayings on every page, not few or far between but constantly occurring, which speak to their hearts with power. It proves itself divine to them, as it has done to thousands and millions before them, by the spiritual experience--the sense of forgiveness, the consciousness of divine love, the assurance that there is a deliverance for the lost and erring, self-surrender to a Power outside self which supplements and supports the infirmities of human nature--which it brings to them. This is what Sanday calls the "experimental test."²

As an argument for the inspiration of the Bible, the experimental test may appear popular rather than scientific, but Sanday thinks that it has justification in philosophy as well as in practice. This justification, he holds, lies in the fact that truth

¹His writings are generally devoid of an abundance of technical theological terms. As he stated it himself at the end of his life, "I have aimed at simplicity and clearness; and I have not been satisfied until I had attained something of those qualities." Divine Overruling, p. 62.

²This as well as the next paragraph provide a brief summary of Sanday's discussion in Oracles, pp. 36-43 (emphasis Sanday's).

is really nothing more than propositions framed in accordance with the ascertained laws of the mind. The inner truth of things in themselves we cannot know. Rather we are concerned primarily, if not entirely, with the impressions made upon our own minds. But then surely the experimental test is of the very greatest importance. Especially where it concerns a theory which is to cover the whole life, the natural question to ask in regard to it is whether it works or not, whether it really harmonizes with the conditions of human nature.¹

Although Sanday estimates the experimental test to carry much weight in determining the divine inspiration of the Bible, he also appears to circumscribe its significance with certain limitations. In the first place it may not meet the demands of science,² and, secondly, it is relative, for with the same criterion one could possibly make similar claims for the inspiration of Gautama Buddha and other religious leaders on the basis of the experience of their

¹Sanday's argument in defense of the experimental test is philosophical rather than Biblical. We may perhaps detect here the influence of Thomas Hill Green (1836-82), who had been one of his teachers at Balliol and who was very influential in introducing idealistic philosophy to the British academic world. Sanday expresses a high regard for Green in his book Christologies, pp. 65-69, 88-89. For Green's significance, see F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, eds., The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), pp. 592-93.

²Writes Sanday: "Science may demand something more: it may demand credentials formally proved; it may demand investigations rigorously conducted; it may have its questions of canonicity and authenticity; it may insist on comparisons with other sacred books and other religions. The demand is a legitimate one, and must not be rejected or ignored." Oracles, p. 42. All his life Sanday was striving for a more scientific apprehension of the nature and meaning of the Bible. See, e.g., the closing remark of his article "Bible."

followers.¹ In fact, Sanday is convinced that there are "sparks from heaven" in many other religious phenomena outside Christianity, yet "neither Socrates nor Mahomet afford more than a very rudimentary and imperfect analogy to the Bible."²

Criticism

It was Sanday's conviction that criticism is essential to the better understanding of the Bible and to the more vital apprehension of that which the Bible enshrines.³ This would include criticism in any of its forms, whether textual, literary, historical, or scientific. He expressed the necessity of criticism in this way: "Indeed criticism is only the process by which theological knowledge is brought into line with other knowledge; and as such it is inevitable."⁴

In what sense then is criticism a criterion for Biblical inspiration? Sanday wants it to be distinctly understood that "the

¹Sanday remarks, ". . . Buddhism may allege with good reason the number of its votaries. It is impossible to read the life and teaching of Gautama without feeling that he too had an impulse from the Holy One." Oracles, p. 46, n. 1.

²Ibid., p. 98. Sanday strongly believed in the presence of the σπέρματα τοῦ Λόγου --seeds or germs of the Divine Word--among the heathen nations, those outside the pale of Biblical revelation. Oracles, p. 94; Divine Overruling, pp. 16, 77-78; Christologies, p. 18.

³See "Aims and Methods," p. 27. The purpose of criticism, says Sanday, is "to get at the very truth of the circumstances under which our Faith first grew and spread amongst men, in the hope that we may so penetrate through the husk to the kernel, and be brought into closer, more vital, and more inspiring contact with the Faith itself." Dunkley, Official Report . . . 1891, p. 174.

⁴Inspiration, p. 116. This statement creates the impression that for Sanday "other knowledge" has priority over "theological knowledge."

higher criticism of the Bible as such makes no assumptions of a philosophical or theological character, and certainly none which interfere with a full belief in a real objective inspiration of the books to which it is applied."¹ The critics who adopt the impossibility of the supernatural as postulate of their critical method are doing so not as critics. In Sanday's experience criticism leads straight up to the supernatural and not away from it. For him any naturalistic approach to the Bible betrays a prejudice, something essentially onesided.²

Nevertheless, criticism is of immense significance for our understanding of the relationship between the human and the divine elements in the Bible. Starting from the fact that there is a human element in the Bible, Sanday assumes that it is possible to distinguish it from its divine counterpart. It is his contention that the extent of the former cannot be determined by any deductive methods, but only by an inductive and critical inquiry as to the course which the revelation from God to men has as a matter of fact taken.³ In other words, the human element in the Bible can be determined by similar methods of criticism as are used in the study of other documents.

¹"Aims and Methods," p. 31.

²On this point Sanday takes issue with Kuenen who, in his opinion, wrote in the interest of almost avowed Naturalism, and also with Wellhausen of whom much the same might be said. See Inspiration, p. 117. Nevertheless Sanday thinks that their reconstruction of the main stages of development in the history of Hebrew literature is essentially correct.

³Inspiration, p. 423. In fact Sanday claims that the extent of the human element in the Bible is the only question between the deductive and inductive theories of inspiration.

It must be said that Sanday's concern is not to theorize about the validity of his assumption that the extent of the human element in the Bible can be settled by critical methods, but rather to show its validity by the results of critical inquiries in regard to the actual phenomena of the Scripture record.

The Prophetic Consciousness

When Sanday turns to the question of the divine element in Scripture, he expresses as his conviction that its presence can be proved "in the same way as that by which we prove the presence of a human element."¹ That means we must allow the Bible to speak for itself according to the inductive method. The clearest, simplest, and most direct proof that the Bible is really the Word of God is to be found in the account which the sacred writers give of themselves. Therefore, to Sanday, the consciousness of the sacred writers themselves "is the true starting-point for a really critical enquiry into the nature of Biblical inspiration."² The advantage of this starting-point is that it assumes nothing. It takes the documents as they stand.

By the consciousness of the sacred writers Sanday thinks primarily of the consciousness of the prophets. The central phenomenon of the Old Testament, and actually of the whole Bible, is

¹Oracles, p. 30.

²Ibid., p. 62; cf. p. 48. Elsewhere Sanday acknowledged his indebtedness to the German Old Testament scholar Friedrich Eduard König (1846-1936) for what he calls one of the leading ideas of his book Inspiration, namely, "that our conception of what the Bible is should be drawn in the first instance from what the Biblical writers say of themselves." Inspiration, p. xv.

prophecy or prophetic inspiration. This point is stressed repeatedly in his writings.¹ To him, "the prophetic inspiration seems to be a type of all inspiration. It is perhaps the one mode in which the most distinctive features of Biblical inspiration can be most clearly recognized."² This prophetic inspiration is not limited to the writings of the prophets; it can also be found in other parts of the Bible.

Sanday believes that the consciousness of the sacred writers is not only of the greatest importance for our understanding of the nature of Biblical inspiration but also a significant criterion for the extent of inspiration. In answer to the question how the Christian, who rests his belief in the Bible primarily upon the Bible itself, can tell where the divine prompting begins and where it ends, or in other words how he can tell "what is inspired and what is not," Sanday answers that all he has to do is "to look closely at the language which the Biblical writers use, and to see where they claim inspiration and where they do not, where they profess to speak the words of God, and where they write after the manner of men."³ In his opinion this is a line of thought which any one can work out for himself.

¹Oracles, pp. 48, 63, 92; Inspiration, pp. 128, 394, 441; "Bible," p. 577; "Inspiration," p. 615.

²Inspiration, p. 128.

³Oracles, pp. 89-90. The question is whether this axiom, that where the Biblical writers claim inspiration and where they do not can determine the limits of what is inspired and what is not inspired, is a true Biblical axiom or whether it belongs to that kind of a priori reasoning of which Sanday himself is rather wary.

The Sanction of Christ

One of the most controversial points in Lux Mundi was Gore's denial that the use which the Lord Jesus Christ made of the Old Testament could be used as an argument to foreclose certain critical positions as to the character of Old Testament literature. He maintained that in his incarnation the Lord submitted Himself to the limitations of the knowledge of his age in regard to questions of science and history and one could therefore not appeal to the utterances of Christ about the Old Testament to put an end to free critical enquiry of questions raised by Biblical criticism. Opponents, on the contrary, held that Christ's statements on questions of Old Testament history and authorship, whether explicit or implicit, were to be held as binding in nature.¹ The real issues at stake were, of course, the authority of Christ and the inspiration of the Old Testament, despite Gore's assertion to the contrary.²

Sanday addressed the issue both in Oracles and in Inspiration. He admitted that the one proof which in all ages had

¹The publication of Lux Mundi and the controversy it engendered have been discussed previously. See chapter 2, pp. 100-103. Sanday did not belong to the Tractarian party, but he did appreciate the stand which the authors of Lux Mundi took in regard to the cause of Biblical criticism and in this respect they received his support. Liberals generally defended Gore. See Owen Chadwick, The Victorian Church, 2 vols., Ecclesiastical History of England Series, no's 7 and 8 (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1966, 1970), 2:103.

²Wrote Gore, "Our Lord, in His use of the Old Testament, does indeed indorse with the utmost emphasis the Jewish view of their own history. He does thus imply, on the one hand, the real inspiration of their canon in its completeness, and, on the other hand, that He Himself was the goal of that inspired leading and the standard of that inspiration. . . . This, and it is the important matter for all that concerns our spiritual education, is not in dispute." Gore, p. 299.

been the simplest and most effective as to the validity of the idea that the Bible as a whole and in all its parts was the word of God "was the extent to which it was recognized in the sayings of Christ Himself."¹ Nevertheless, he felt that it was unfortunate that the authority of the Lord was thought to sanction the traditional views as to the origin and authorship of the books of the Old Testament and to preclude from the outset the adoption of any other view.² Like Gore he held that Christ in his humanity condescended not to know. Sanday preferred to ascribe any limitation of the Lord's knowledge to kenosis rather than to an accommodation to current notions, knowing them to be false.³ When he later in his Bampton lectures wrote about a so-called neutral zone among our Lord's sayings, he seemed to shift his explanation of Christ's statements to that of accommodation, but he himself denied such a shift.⁴

¹Inspiration, p. 393.

²Oracles, p. 103

³Ibid., p. 111.

⁴In discussing Christ's quotation of Ps 110:1 in Matt 22:44 and the emphatic ascription of these words to David in Matt 22:45, Sanday wrote in Inspiration that criticism or exegesis were not at issue, but that the Lord met the Pharisees on their own ground, showed the fallacy of their conclusion on their own premises, and refrained from correcting these premises. They fell within Christ's "neutral zone." Inspiration, p. 420. The editor of the Expository Times made the observation that in the matter of our Lord's references to the Old Testament, Professor Sanday seemed to have changed his conviction by accepting the accommodation theory which he repudiated in his previous book. [James Hastings], "Notes of Recent Exposition," Expository Times 5 (1893-94):145. Sanday responded by saying that although his words might have given the impression of such a change, he was not conscious of it. He would not like to say that Christ's "neutral zone" was due to a mere "economy" in teaching. In regard to his remark that Christ had refrained from correcting the strong premises of the Pharisees (which would include their belief in the Davidic authorship of Ps 110), he explained: "There is a refraining on the part of our Lord. But I don't think we can regard this refraining as merely the suppression at the moment of something

Although Sanday acknowledged that Christ's sayings favor the view that the Bible in its entirety is to be accepted as the word of God and that it is not possible to point to any anticipation of modern critical theories in his words, he felt that Christ's dealing with the Old Testament was quite radical compared with that of modern Biblical criticism. For instance, certain statements of the Lord in regard to the Ten Commandments or the Levitical distinctions between clean and unclean were far more revolutionary, in Sanday's opinion, than "anything that is involved in accepting the lessons of criticism."¹ It is not surprising that he came to the conclusion that in order to ascertain questions of Old Testament authorship it was a sounder method to determine this with the power of scholarly enquiry than to appeal to Christ's references by name to the traditionally received authors of books of the Old Testament.² In short, what he called "the sanction of Christ" was not to be used as a criterion for questions of Old Testament authorship or history, and the same was a fortiori true of apostolic pronouncements on these points. For the mind that is made up in regard to a whole network of conclusions which hang together and form a coherent body of thought,

which it was (so to speak) on His lips to say, but did not say. I imagine that it goes much further back, and was in fact implied in the limitations which He assumed when he became man. The one great condescension includes all smaller condescensions." William Sanday, "Christ and the Old Testament," Expository Times 5 (1893-94):229. See also H. D. McDonald, Theories of Revelation: An Historical Study 1860-1960 (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1963), pp. 140, 145-47. However, when one carefully studies the whole discussion by Sanday of Christ's sayings, it is hard to avoid the impression that Sanday does present a sort of accommodationist view.

¹Inspiration, pp. 408, 410-11, 413.

²Oracles, p. 109.

"it would be an act of violence to the intellectual conscience to arrest the process of criticism, and suppress its results even at the bidding of the highest authority."¹ It is evident that Sanday's rejection of this criterion gave a different scope to the criteria which he did accept.

The Nature of Inspiration

The major concern, as we have noted earlier, of Sanday's two books Oracles and Inspiration, is the nature and extent of inspiration. It is evident that, even though it is useful to make a distinction between the nature and the extent of inspiration, it is impossible to treat these two subjects as completely separate entities. One's view of the extent of inspiration is closely correlated with one's concept of the nature of inspiration and vice versa. Though Sanday may not deal with the two subjects in the systematic way adopted in the following pages, he definitely makes such a distinction not only in the subtitle of Oracles but throughout the remainder of his writings as well.²

In order to understand his concept of the nature of inspiration, it is necessary to discuss first Sanday's concept of revelation and its relation to inspiration.

¹Inspiration, p. 414.

²See, e.g., his remark in Oracles, p. 70: "St. Paul lets us see plainly what his inspiration is, and how far it extends." In the same book the consciousness of the sacred writers is not only considered as the true starting-point for a critical enquiry into the nature of Biblical inspiration (p. 62), but also as a criterion for the extent of inspiration (pp. 89-90).

Revelation and Inspiration

Revelation is defined by Sanday as "the 'discovery' or 'disclosure' (ἀποκάλυψις) of God (i.e., of the being and character of God) to man."¹ The question is how this revelation has taken place. In one of his earliest books Sanday describes what he calls a rigid and somewhat antiquated view which sees revelation as "a direct and external communication of God to man of truths undiscoverable by human reason," in which "the revelation of divine truth was thought to be as sudden and complete as the act of creation," and in which "the presence of any local and temporary elements in the Christian documents or society was ignored."² The time had come, in his opinion, when an attempt should be made to obtain a more scientific definition of revelation and the method to obtain such a definition should be free from any a priori reasoning.³

One thing is clear to Sanday: revelation is partial and progressive. This point is reiterated in a variety of ways throughout his writings.⁴ Not only is this evident from the

¹"Inspiration," p. 612. ²The Gospels, p. 4.

³Ibid., p. 10. He speaks here of the meaning of divine revelation as "a term of which our actual conception is vague and indeterminate in the extreme." Sanday takes Abraham Kuenen to task for saying that "A revelation, however limited and natural the form under which it is conceived, must convey some absolute truth, . . ." and expresses his surprise that even a scientific theologian like Dr. Kuenen "has been misled by the old fallacies which arise from assuming that the metaphor contained in the word 'revelation' is an exact representation of the facts." He maintains that there surely is no "must" in the case. William Sanday, "On the Nature and Development of Monotheism in Israel" (hereafter abbreviated as "Monotheism"), Theological Review 13 (October 1876):495.

⁴In his book Oracles revelation is called "a long process and a gradual process" (p. 2); "partial and differing in individuals though coalescing together so as to form a whole" (p. 4); of prophecy

Biblical phenomena and claims¹ but also from the general dealings of God with man.² The divine education of mankind has always worked in the way of an infinite number of graduated steps by which the human race has progressively risen from its poor and low beginnings.³ Revelation is no exception to that rule.⁴ It works in harmony with the principle of evolution, which "is as much a law of religion as of nature."⁵

There are two kinds of revelation: revelation by facts and revelation by means of words. Revelation by facts is again of two kinds: "There is the broad revelation of God in nature; and there is also a special revelation of God in history."⁶ However, the

it is said that there is "an evolution of its several parts, a progressive succession in order of time" (p. 66).

¹In this connection Sanday often quotes and discusses Heb 1:1 (so e.g., in Oracles, pp. 1-5, 67; very extensively in "Inspiration," pp. 615-16), but also refers to other passages in Scripture such as Isa 28:10, 13 and Rom 12:6.

²Wrote Sanday in 1876, "All God's dealings with man, so far as we can see, are relative and progressive, and there is no sound reason why revelation should not be so too." "Monotheism," p. 495.

³See "Inspiration," p. 612.

⁴In the context of a comparison between what Sanday calls lower and higher prophecy, he asserts that "God does not act per saltum in revelation any more than in nature; lower forms lead up to higher, mixed forms to pure; the special influences at work in these latter do not involve any breach of continuity." Inspiration, p. 141, n. 1.

⁵Sanday sees the principle of evolution at work as much in the realm of revelation as in the realm of nature. This, of course, would be in harmony with Butler's principle of analogy. Once evolution has been accepted as the basic principle in the formation of the universe analogical reasoning would lead to its acceptance as a formative principle in the process of revelation.

⁶"Inspiration," p. 612.

revelatory facts by themselves are not understood by the great mass of mankind.¹ That is why revelation by words is needed to provide an interpretation of the facts. It is at this point that inspiration comes into the divine scheme of things. For the interpretation of the facts of revelation, especially of the revelation of God in history, "is supplied by the inspired man who speaks and writes, who seizes on the secret and then publishes it to the world."²

If we ask for the relationship between revelation and inspiration, Sanday presents us with several answers. In his book Inspiration, Sanday quotes approvingly from Andrew Fairbairn³ who tells us that "God inspires, man reveals: inspiration is the process by which God gives; revelation is the mode or form--word, character, or institution--in which man embodies what he has received."⁴ Fairbairn's statement was open to misunderstanding, and so Sanday adds, "The context shows that it is as correct to say, 'God reveals'; but it is through man that the revelation takes concrete shape."⁵

¹Sanday attributes this lack of understanding to the fact that "The pressure of mere physical needs is so great that ordinary humanity would be apt to be absorbed in them, if it were not for the influence of a select few more highly endowed than the rest." Ibid. He makes no mention of man's incapacity and blindness as a result of sin.

²Ibid.

³Andrew Martin Fairbairn (1838-1912) was a Congregational theologian and from 1886 till 1909 principal of the nonconformist Mansfield College in Oxford. Sanday refers to him as one who is more of a philosopher than he is himself.

⁴Andrew M. Fairbairn, The Place of Christ in Modern Theology (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1900), p. 496, quoted in Inspiration, p. 124, n. 1.

⁵Inspiration, p. 124, n. 1.

Fairbairn further held that the two terms, though not equivalent, are coextensive, inspiration denoting the process on its inner side and revelation on its outer side, to which view Sanday apparently agrees.

However, Sanday seems to use the word revelation also in connection with the manner in which God makes Himself known to inspired men. He speaks, for instance, about "the revelation, or series of revelations, by which there was brought home to the mind of St. Paul the full significance of his Master's mission," or about an awful voice which comes to Moses "and delivers to him at once a revelation and a commission."¹ It is evident that Sanday uses the word revelation in two ways: on the one hand, as nearly synonymous with inspiration indicating the means by which God makes Himself known to a prophet or apostle, on the other hand, as the mode or form in which an inspired man embodies what he has received in passing it on to others. Revelation, then, is both process and product.

More explicit is this diversified use of the term "revelation" when Sanday, more than twenty years later, writes about the relation of the two terms, "inspiration" and "revelation." He asserts that revelation is the wider term of the two, including both revelation by facts as well as by words. But "so far as revelation has been conveyed by speech or writing we call the process inspiration" and as a result "revelation is in large part the direct product of inspiration." Inspiration is the mode by which God reveals Himself, "it is the process by which certain select persons were enabled, through the medium of speech or writing, to convey

¹Oracles, pp. 59 and 49.

special information about God to their fellows."¹ In Sanday's view the two terms are to a large extent strictly correlative. It is not surprising, therefore, that we find in his writings a number of instances where the terms are used as practically synonymous. Neither is it surprising that Sanday would ascribe the same characteristics to inspiration as he does to revelation, for in essence the two form one process.

Prophetic Inspiration

An inductive approach to the Bible in order to discover the nature of Biblical inspiration finds its starting-point in the consciousness of the sacred writers, especially of the prophets. The central phenomenon of the Old Testament is prophecy and the same can be said for the New Testament. The inspiration of the prophets is therefore the true type of all inspiration. These are basic tenets of Sanday's concept of Biblical inspiration.

This prophetic consciousness manifests itself first of all in the conviction of the prophets that they have received a divine call and commission. Frequent characteristics in the description of these calls are the fact of an overpowering and external impulse coming down upon the prophet, the definiteness of the time of the event and the prophet's reluctance to accept the commission. Sanday finds it extraordinary how the same features are reproduced in the different prophetic books.²

¹This whole paragraph depends on and summarizes Sanday's exposition in the early part of his article "Inspiration."

²He discusses the calls of Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel as examples and indicates the similarities between them in

This is true not only of the prophetic call but also of the prophetic experience as a whole. He stresses the fact that in the case of the prophets the source of their inspiration is external and does not lie in themselves.¹ The words they utter are put in their mouth by the divine Spirit. They speak therefore with the authority of Jahweh himself. This is manifest in the characteristic way in which the prophets preface their messages with a "thus says the Lord," "hear the word of the Lord," or similar expressions. The language they use is as though God himself were speaking through them. This consciousness of speaking with divine authority marks off the prophetic utterances as unique.²

It is not this consciousness of authority alone, however, that constitutes the uniqueness of the prophetic inspiration. The

Oracles, pp. 48-54; later he also compares them with the call of Paul. Ibid., pp. 59-60.

¹In both of his books Sanday emphasizes the fact that the prophetic utterances had an external or objective cause or source, that they came from without and not from within. So, e.g., in Oracles, pp. 51-52, 57; Inspiration, pp. 145-46, 147; "Inspiration," p. 617. In Inspiration, p. 147, Sanday enumerates five reasons which to him form exceedingly strong grounds for accepting the claim of the prophets that they received their revelation as coming from God: (1) the glimpses which they give us into their own consciousness on the subject; (2) the universal belief of their contemporaries; (3) the extraordinary unanimity of their testimony; (4) the difficulty of accounting for it in any other way; and (5) the character of the teaching in which this divine prompting and suggestion results. In his later writings there seems to be a certain shift of emphasis, stressing the internal aspect of inspiration. See below pp. 161-66.

²To Sanday this is the essence of the prophetic consciousness and on this point there is a very clear consistency in his writings. Oracles, pp. 54-55; Inspiration, pp. 150, 176; "Bible," pp. 569-70; "Inspiration," p. 615. He calls this the one standing characteristic of the main note of prophecy. He often uses the term "formulae" in references to such expressions as "thus says the Lord" and the use of these characteristic formulae is one of the criteria of prophetic inspiration.

spiritual affirmations found in the writings of the prophets, their insight into divine principles, and the nature of the divine character are the highest known to mankind and in this respect Biblical prophecy occupies a distinctive and unique place among the religious literature of the world. Its lofty conceptions of God could never be the product of inductive reasoning, but belong to the sphere of revelation.¹ Other features which stamp the prophetic utterances as unique are the coherence and continuity which they present even though spread over a succession of centuries and their beneficent effect upon the history of Israel, molding it into a nation that with its monotheism occupied a unique place among all other nations.

While Sanday sees the prophetic spirit as the central force throughout the history of Israel, the evidence suggests to him that in some of the prophets the inspiration is higher than in others. The terms higher and lower occur frequently in his writings--especially in association with such concepts as prophecy, inspiration, truth, etc. Characteristic, e.g., is the following statement:

When we come to reflect, it may be seen that the lower modes of inspiration have a place in relation to the divine purpose (which includes both high and low) that is not less appropriate than the

¹In a very interesting sermon preached before the University of Oxford on October 21, 1894, Sanday discusses the lofty conception of God found in Exod 34:6-7. He is assured that no Israelite could ever have arrived at such a conception as a result of a process of induction. Inspiration, p. 438; cf. ibid., p. 152, "A perfectly just and holy and good God is not the result of any induction."

higher, but from our present standpoint they must be described as lower.¹

Sanday conceives the history of prophetic inspiration as an evolution from lower to higher forms culminating in the prophets of the eighth through the sixth century B.C., the so-called "writing prophets." In the earlier phases of this evolution the forms of prophetic inspiration were crude and rudimentary and comparable with similar phenomena in other nations like the Greek oracles or the *δαίμωνιον* of Socrates.² But in Israel the lower forms of prophecy developed into higher forms and eventually the latter triumphed so completely that they dominate the prophetic literature.³ As a result the writing prophets provide us with a standard of prophetic inspiration by which we should evaluate earlier and later manifestations of this phenomenon.⁴ This applies to Moses as well,

¹Ibid., p. 398. An extensive discussion about the lower and the higher prophecy is presented in Inspiration, pp. 128-44.

²Oracles, p. 94. Sanday does say that a phenomenon like Socrates' "daemon" provides no more than a very rudimentary and imperfect analogy (ibid., p. 98). The evolutionistic concept is of course in harmony with his concept of God's dealings with mankind in general and his idea of revelation in particular. The lower forms of prophetic inspiration include such phenomena as dreams, ephod and teraphim, trance or ecstasy, and strong physical excitement sometimes aroused by music. "It is noteworthy," writes Sanday, "how as we rise in the scale of prophecy one by one the concomitants of the older and lower stages fall away." Inspiration, p. 143.

³Though Sanday speaks of "many steps and degrees between the lower and the higher forms of Hebrew prophecy," he wants us to remember that "the higher forms triumphed so completely that they entirely dominate the prophetic literature, and it is only through incidental allusions and the narrative of the historical books that the existence of the lower forms can be at all adequately realized." "Bible," p. 570.

⁴The prophets--and Sanday means the so-called writing prophets--show us the workings of inspiration and "having once realized what it is, we have a standard by which we can argue

for though Sanday believes that in a sense the inspiration of Moses was higher than that of the other prophets, especially through its greater originality,¹ the historical narratives in the Pentateuch come from too late a date to give us an adequate portraiture of the founder of the prophetic religion.² The higher inspiration not only can hardly be carried back behind Moses, but "even in the time of Moses we should recognize the presence of the higher inspiration rather in the form of germinal ideas or principles than in any completed system."³

It should not be thought, however, that the prophetic spirit

backwards and forwards." Inspiration, p. 396; cf. Oracles, p. 147. In his later article "Inspiration and Revelation" Sanday takes Paul's description in 1 Cor 2:7-16 as a key to a better understanding of the nature of inspiration, but in comparing Paul's account with the prophetic inspiration of the Old Testament, he finds "nothing that clashes or is essentially different. It is only the difference of a simpler and a more advanced dispensation." "Inspiration," p. 615.

¹Sanday discusses the inspiration of Moses in Inspiration, pp. 175-77, and thinks that it differed from that of the prophets by its greater originality, because unlike Moses the prophets "introduced no new principle into religion," but "developed with great freshness and force principles already existing." Inspiration, p. 176. However, elsewhere in the same book we are told that Isaiah and Jeremiah were "men strongly inspired and gifted with the faculty of not only applying old truths but creating new ones." Ibid., p. 398.

²Inspiration, p. 396. Sanday's conclusion is in agreement with his acceptance of the critical reconstruction of the Pentateuch along lines of Kuenen and Wellhausen, and it is not surprising that he states elsewhere that the part in the Pentateuch which is due to Moses, great as it must be, is dim and inferential. Ibid., p. 177. According to Sanday the historical narrative of Moses' life and ministry is an idealized story from a much later date which contains a large element of folklore (e.g., the memory of some portentous volcanic eruption became associated with the giving of the law) and only a nucleus of all the laws in the Pentateuch is Mosaic in origin. See "Bible," pp. 565, 570.

³Divine Overruling, p. 24.

is limited to the writing prophets. The prophetic inspiration is also manifested in other parts of the Old Testament and in the New Testament. In the Pentateuch Sanday detects a triple strain of inspiration: the Mosaic, the prophetic, and the priestly. That of Moses is primary, that of prophets and priests is derivative and secondary. However, the extent of the Mosaic is indeterminate, whereas that of prophet and priest can be marked out with considerable clearness.¹ In the Psalms too, Sanday finds elements of the prophetic spirit, though it would not be correct to conclude from these data that the psalmists possessed the full measure of prophetic inspiration.² In the New Testament the prophetic spirit is the proper vehicle of revelation as much as it is in the Old, and Paul and John are as much prophets as Isaiah and Hosea.³ In fact, Sanday holds the apostolic inspiration to be more sustained than that of the prophets in the Old Testament,⁴ but not essentially different from it.

¹Inspiration, p. 177. Sanday, following Wellhausen, sums up all that is most fundamental in the teaching of Moses in two correlated pairs of propositions: (1) Jehovah (Yahweh) is the God of Israel, and Israel is the people of Jehovah; and (2) Jehovah is a righteous God and requires righteousness in those who worship Him. However, Sanday does not think that Mosaic religion consisted at first and in the strict sense in monotheism, but rather in monolatry. A strict monotheism was later developed from the Mosaic foundation by the prophets. Ibid., p. 174; cf. "Bible," pp. 564-65, and his article, "Monotheism."

²Inspiration, pp. 195-97.

³Oracles, p. 90; earlier in the same book Sanday quotes the expression of Rev 19:10 that "the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy" as an expression of the fact that "the main drift of New Testament revelation was really an expression of prophecy." Ibid., p. 58.

⁴Inspiration, p. 353. It is somewhat difficult to see how

Other Forms of Inspiration

Although Sanday finds manifestations of the prophetic inspiration in many parts of the Old Testament besides the writings of the prophets as well as in the New Testament, he makes it clear that there are distinct limitations to this inspiration. Many parts of the Bible are not the product of prophetic writers or of prophetic inspiration but come from the hand of other classes in Israel, such as priests, psalmists, wise men, and historians. All these groups have a place in God's purpose according to selection,¹ but the same inspiration cannot be claimed for them as for the prophets.

The inspiration of these different classes from the point of view of the manner of their inspiration as compared with that of the prophets must be described as derived or secondary.² Their inspiration lacks such characteristic formulae of the prophetic

Sanday thinks that the apostolic inspiration is more sustained than that of an Isaiah or Jeremiah, of whose books he claims they are "throughout the work of men strongly inspired." Ibid., pp. 397-98.

¹Ibid., p. 180. "The same 'purpose of God according to selection' worked both through the prophetic order and through the priestly order."

²It was especially in regard to the manner of their inspiration that the inspiration of priests, psalmists, and wise men was designated as a secondary or lower inspiration by Sanday. Judged by the value of its results, it was not inferior to that of the prophets. Ibid., p. 397. In the light of this emphasis on the manner rather than the results or content of their inspiration as that which distinguishes it from the prophetic inspiration, the remark by William Abraham that Sanday in measuring the degree of inspiration in any particular writing in the Bible concentrated on its content rather than on the form of its inspiration seems one-sided. See Abraham, p. 45. It is true that content played an important role in Sanday's evaluation, but his explicit stress on the manner of inspiration must be given due weight.

spirit as a "Thus says the Lord."¹ Though the Spirit of the Lord is really upon them, they are not normally the recipients of special revelation. Sanday conceives of their inspiration as a result of their imbibing the teaching and the spirit of prophets and law-makers, a result of living in close contact with the immediate channels and organs of revelation.² He is convinced that as in the case of the prophets there is an external objective cause for their inspiration, but the nature of it is more obscure than the nature of the prophetic inspiration, which in a very gradual way shades off into that of the other books.³ In the authors of the Hagiographa, just as in those of other writings, Sanday finds degrees of inspiration, depending on the measure in which they are influenced by the principles which are most fundamental.⁴

The question of the inspiration of the historians perhaps more than any other shows the influence of Biblical criticism on Sanday's concept of inspiration. He finds two elements in the

¹"Inspiration," p. 616; cf. Inspiration, p. 268, "The psalmists, and wise men had an inspiration of their own, which may be in part prophetic, but in any case is not so entirely."

²Inspiration, pp. 190-91; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 396-97. There seems to be a certain lack of consistency in Sanday's thinking because he defines the inspiration of the psalmists as secondary in relation to that of prophets and lawmakers by the lack of creativity on the part of the former, yet he speaks of the wise men, whose inspiration is also classified as secondary, as men of creative minds within the sphere of revelation. Cf. "Bible," p. 567, and Inspiration, pp. 397-98, with *ibid.*, p. 249.

³*Ibid.*, p. 207.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 397. Speaking about the inspiration of the psalmists, Sanday observes that in "the Church of the Old Covenant as in that of the New every man had his proper charisma; and the self-same Spirit expressed Itself in many degrees and ways." *Ibid.*, p. 197.

historical narratives of the Old Testament. On the one hand, there is a distinctly prophetic element, on the other hand, there is what he calls a commemorative or historical element.¹ To state it differently, there is an element of religious interpretation of history which shows the marks of the prophetic spirit, and there is the bare record of facts and events which does not seem to differ from any other history. The similarity between the writings of Biblical history and that of other history is reiterated and stressed by Sanday in different ways.² The results of historical and literary criticism prove to him beyond question that Biblical history is subject to the same flaws and failings which are found in non-Biblical historical literature.³

In the light of these two different elements in Old Testament history, how should one conceive of the inspiration of Biblical historians? This question becomes all the more significant in view of the fact that Sanday is convinced that the prophets are primarily

¹Oracles, pp. 67-68.

²See Oracles, pp. 68-70, 75; Sanday compares the beginning of history writing in Greece and in Israel and finds significant analogies. "Bible," p. 563. He also compares the idealization of certain events in Roman history with a similar idealization in the story of the Exodus and the giving of the law from Mount Sinai. Ibid., p. 565. The best analogy for Hebrew historical writing would be, in Sanday's opinion, the historical chronicles written by medieval monks. Inspiration, p. 158; "Bible," pp. 563-64.

³The Hebrew historian has the tendency to idealize and glorify institutions of which he is proud, to read back into the past conditions with which he is familiar in the present, to add to the work of an older writer without indicating the fact of the accretion, etc. See Inspiration, p. 162; Oracles, p. 27. Sanday emphasizes, however, that such practices should not be measured by modern standards.

the historians of Israel.¹ He finds the answer in a sharp distinction between the function of the prophet as a spokesman for God under the impulse of a divine afflatus, on the one hand, and his function as a chronicler when he records events as any historian might do without special supernatural aid, on the other.² The knowledge of God as acquired in inspired moments did give the prophet an insight into the meaning of history, but it did not suspend the working of ordinary psychological laws, nor did it supersede the ordinary use of historical sources or preclude the possibility of errors.³ It is in the interpretation of the facts rather than in their narration that we can speak of inspiration on the part of the Hebrew historians, and even in that sense the inspiration is only indirect.

For the historians of the New Testament no more can be claimed than for those of the Old. In the prologue of the Gospel of Luke, Sanday finds evidence that the author of that Gospel does not claim any supernatural direction for his work, only the accuracy of careful research.⁴ In both Testaments there is a difference

¹Inspiration, pp. 155, 157, 400.

²According to Sanday "the inspiration of the prophet was remote from the writing of history," and what applies to him speaking or writing as a prophet should not be transferred to another function of the same man writing as a historian. *Ibid.*, p. 268; cf. p. 400.

³*Ibid.*, pp. 162, 268-69.

⁴Luke's preface is quoted a number of times to prove that there is no claim of supernatural direction or influence on the part of the Biblical historian. Oracles, p. 72; Inspiration, pp. 317, 391. The weakness of this argument is that it is an argument from silence. It seems that in Sanday's opinion historical research and the use of historical sources, on the one hand, and supernatural guidance or inspiration, on the other, are mutually exclusive. Such

between doctrine and history. Doctrine, even when it occurs in a historical narrative, may be attributed to a supernatural influence, but history as history, that is, as a narrative of events, appears to proceed upon ordinary methods.¹ To Sanday Biblical history, in so far as it is a mere record of facts, is not inspired. As he sees it, when the prophetic element is subtracted, "the bare record of events which remains does not seem to differ from any other history."²

Psychology of Inspiration

The phrase "psychology of inspiration" does not occur in Sanday's two books on inspiration, only in his later article "Inspiration and Revelation."³ This reflects the growing influence of the science of psychology on theology in general in the decades following the turn of the century⁴ and is another evidence of the increasingly important role which that science played in Sanday's

a dichotomy was probably the consequence of his idea that the prophetic inspiration is concerned with the principles of religion rather than with sheer historical facts.

¹Oracles, pp. 71-72.

²Ibid., p. 68. The question is whether such a sharp distinction between history and doctrine in the Biblical record is really possible.

³"Inspiration," p. 614.

⁴In the English-speaking world this influence had its beginnings in the work of such American psychologists as Granville Stanley Hall (1844-1925), founder of the American Journal of Psychology (1887) and one of the organizers of the American Psychological Association (1891); Edwin Diller Starbuck (1866-1947), author of The Psychology of Religion: An Empirical Study of the Growth of Religious Consciousness (London: W. Scott, 1899); and William James (1842-1910), author of The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature, Gifford lectures delivered at Edinburgh in 1901-1902 (New York and London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1902). The interest was focused on religious experience and this was

theology in particular.¹ However, it is certainly in harmony with Sanday's own thinking to apply the term to everything he has written concerning the manner in which the divine Spirit acts upon the human spirit, the way in which God communicates with man, and the effect of that communication upon man's mind.²

A great variety of terms is used by Sanday to describe the process of divine communication to man. Some terms are familiar Biblical expressions and phrases such as "God putting his words in the mouth of prophets," "the Spirit moving upon the prophets" or "moving upon their hearts and minds," and "God making known His will in dreams or visions."³ We find numerous other expressions in his writings in which he sets forth this process as a divine prompting or suggestion, the Spirit of God holding communion or communicating with

in harmony with the whole tenor of liberal theology. It was to be expected that the new science would be applied in order to explain the phenomenon of inspiration. Cf. McDonald, p. 238.

¹For the influence of psychology on Sanday's christological concepts, see p. 126, n. 1. The growing influence of psychology and philosophy on his theological thinking in the latter part of his life is reflected in all the major fields of his interest.

²Already in his Bampton lectures a number of references to psychology can be found. He says, e.g., that the simple expressions of the prophets are not to be judged from the standpoint of an advanced psychology (p. 147), that the identity of language used by the prophets implies an identity of psychological fact behind it (p. 150), that in the case of the Biblical histories there is no evidence of the suspension of ordinary psychological laws (p. 162), and that though the divine acts through the human in inspiration, the psychological processes through which it acts remain unaltered (p. 355).

³Of Moses he writes, "The words which were put in his mouth to speak were put there by the Spirit." Oracles, pp. 50-51; cf. pp. 53, 62, 65; Inspiration, pp. 145, 150. Of the prophets he states that they have their hearts and minds moved in a manner more penetrating and more effective than their fellows and that this special moving is due to the action upon these hearts and minds of the Holy Spirit. Ibid., p. 127.

man, an enlightenment from above, an impulse of the Spirit, a divine guidance or action, and even an actual possession from above.¹ Despite the diversity of phraseology, one is left with an impression of vagueness about Sanday's concept of the manner of divine communication and inspiration.²

In view of Sanday's assertion that God puts His words in the mouth of the prophets and that their words are not their own words, the question naturally arises as to whether he believes that God actually did speak to the prophets. Sanday repeatedly deals with this question, and whenever he does so his discussion strongly suggests that he does not conceive of God as speaking to man with an audible voice. Sanday thinks that when Moses saw the burning bush and heard the voice of God, the organ of vision may have been the eye of the spirit and not the bodily eye and the hearing was by the spirit and not by any bodily sense. In his opinion we, with our more precise definition of the human faculties, are more careful to distinguish between these two ways of seeing and hearing than the men who wrote the Bible, who expressed themselves in a very simple way suited to

¹The concept of an impulse is used quite often by Sanday, sometimes associated with very emphatic adjectives in such expressions as: "some strong and irresistible impulse coming down upon the prophet" and "the over-mastering nature of the impulse" (Oracles, p. 54), or "they [the prophets] knew that the impulse--the overpowering impulse and influence--came from outside themselves" ("Inspiration," p. 617). It is in regard to the consciousness of the apostle Paul that Sanday says, "There is a strong unhesitating conviction of an impulse and guiding, nay of actual possession, from above." Inspiration, p. 358.

²This is one of Abraham's criticisms of Sanday's concept of inspiration. Abraham, pp. 43-44. Sanday in one place admits that the view which he presents "is vague in comparison with the old idea," but thinks that that is just its merit. "Bible," p. 573.

the primitive age in which they lived.¹ Sanday does not believe that when the prophets say "God spake" to them that a literal and actual voice audible to the bodily ear is meant, nor that when they say "they saw" that an actual literal sight presented to the waking eye is meant. If these simple expressions would be "judged from the standpoint of an advanced psychology" they "would certainly be pronounced inadequate."²

If one asks how we are to conceive of the communication between God and prophet in the light of an advanced psychology, the answer is not found in Sanday's early books on the subject of inspiration³ but can be found in his later writings. In his article "Bible," Sanday discusses the question "whether, allowing for the naive and simple language of primitive times, the idea of God speaking to man and through man still expresses a substantial truth."⁴ Assuming that behind the world of phenomena there is a supreme Spirit which has brought it into being and that this Spirit is invested with personal attributes, Sanday holds it to be very

¹Oracles, p. 49. It is especially in those more precise definitions that Sanday sees the progress of the present age, which is largely an intellectual progress. Inspiration, p. 268; cf. "Bible," p. 579.

²Inspiration, pp. 146-47.

³This explains in part the frustration of a scholar like Abraham who remarks that one can read and reread Sanday's lectures--he means his Bampton lectures--and still remain convinced that he has not laid hold of his theory of inspiration. Abraham, p. 43. Scholars generally refer to Sanday's book Inspiration only, and seem unacquainted with his other publications on this subject. However, for a fuller understanding of Sanday's concept of what he calls the psychology of inspiration, an acquaintance with his later publications is essential.

⁴"Bible," p. 578.

credible that such a Spirit would "speak to" the spirit of man, but he considers this expression only as a metaphor describing "the influence of the higher Spirit upon the lower, not in equal degree upon all individuals but preeminently upon some."¹

It is only in his book Christologies Ancient and Modern, published in 1910, that Sanday gives us an idea of how he conceives of the speaking of God from the standpoint of modern advanced psychology. Following the lead of such scholars in the field of the psychology of religion as Frederic W. H. Myers (1843-1901) and William James (1842-1910), he distinguishes between our conscious mind or the supraliminal consciousness on the one hand and the subconscious or the subliminal self on the other. It is his conviction that "the work of the Holy Spirit, the true and proper work, the active divine influence brought to bear upon the soul belongs to the sphere of the subliminal and not the supraliminal,"² and as a result we cannot see the work of the Spirit, only its effects. When the ancient prophets claimed that God spoke to them with an audible voice, they were only describing in the best possible way available to them the process that went on in their minds.³ In agreement with Percy Gardner⁴ it seems to Sanday that we should

¹Ibid. Sanday, in this context, makes the interesting remark that "simple as the language is, it seems very difficult to improve upon it. Science does not as yet seem capable of describing the facts of the case in more appropriate terms."

²Christologies, p. 156.

³Ibid., p. 231.

⁴Percy Gardner (1846-1937) was professor of archaeology at Oxford from 1887 to 1925 and though Sanday is critical of some positions of his colleague, when it comes to his concept of inspiration, Sanday seems to agree with Gardner quite extensively. This is evident from two review articles Sanday sent to the Journal

describe the process of divine inspiration in two ways: as a strengthening and intensifying of the natural powers and as producing in the Biblical writer an uprush of the subconscious or an inrush of the superconscious. In this way we place belief in divine revelation, communicated through human media, on the reasoned basis of modern psychology. Though the advanced modern psychological conception is very different in its expression from the simple primitive way of speaking of the inspired writer, Sanday sees this as a process of evolution without anything of the nature of contradiction.¹

In his article on inspiration and revelation published in

of Theological Studies. In the first one he agrees with Gardner that inspiration acts primarily on the will, though it also has a wonderfully illuminating power on the intellect. This illumination, however, does not extend to the revelation of fact and, although "inspiration does lead men frequently to brilliant insight into the character and the motives of great religious teachers of past time," it can never "furnish us with trustworthy details as to particular events of their lives." William Sanday, review of An Eirenicon from Culture: A Historic View of the New Testament, by Percy Gardner, in Journal of Theological Studies 3 (1901-2):218. Eight years later, in reviewing the book Essays on Some Biblical Questions of the Day, to which Gardner had contributed an essay entitled "The Speeches of St. Paul in Acts," Sanday approvingly quotes what he calls an incidental paragraph on the subject of inspiration in which Gardner expresses the idea that inspiration is an uprush of the subconscious or an inrush of the superconscious. Writes Sanday, "The appeal to the subconscious is, I venture to think, fraught with great promise, not only in this but in many other directions. It happens, by coincidence, that I am myself having recourse to it for another purpose at the present time. But on this subject of inspiration, I fully believe with Dr. Gardner that it opens out new vistas; and I am very grateful to him for the form which he has given to his statement." William Sanday, "The Cambridge Biblical Essays," review of Essays on Some Biblical Questions of the Day, by Members of the University of Cambridge, in Journal of Theological Studies 11 (1909-10):173-74.

¹Christologies, pp. 231-32. Sanday quotes here the same paragraph of Gardner that he had quoted earlier the same year in his review article. See previous note.

1915, Sanday takes his cue for a description of the psychology of inspiration from Paul's description in 1 Cor 2:7-16 and draws two important conclusions from it: first, that the knowledge which inspiration imparts is wholly exceptional and sui generis, and, second, that this knowledge is imparted to Paul by the Holy Spirit acting upon his own spirit. In regard to the latter he observes that it is "a well-known peculiarity of the psychology of St. Paul that he often mentions the divine Spirit and the human spirit together in such a way that they seem to run into each other" without a clear demarcation between the two.¹ Sanday is inclined to attribute these subtle transitions to the fact that the divine influence operates in the subconscious part of man's being, which is beyond the reach of conscious analysis and can only be known by its effects. Though Sanday in the same article repeats his earlier emphasis that the prophets knew that the overpowering impulse and influence of the divine came from outside themselves, he definitely sees the process as an internal process in the human spirit. The essence of inspiration is the God-consciousness of the Biblical writers, which is the product of the working of the divine Spirit upon the human spirit.²

Sanday emphasizes that this process is dynamic and not mechanical; that is to say, there is no mechanical transference of

¹"Inspiration," p. 614.

²Ibid., p. 616. In his article "Bible," Sanday equates the terms inspiration and God-consciousness. The Bible is distinguished from other sacred literature by the peculiar energy and intensity of the God-consciousness apparent in the writers, but this consciousness manifests itself in different modes and degrees. "Bible," p. 577.

information.¹ Earlier he had already asserted that there is no preternatural conveyance of knowledge in inspiration, that inspiration is not to be identified with verbal infallibility.² The knowledge imparted in inspiration is a knowledge of spiritual values, an insight into the nature and attributes of God and the duty of man, an insight into the principles which lay behind the divine ordering of events.³ This insight takes the form of an intuition, but is not to be attributed to human genius.⁴ Sanday can speak of thoughts arising in the hearts of the prophets, of a knowledge of divine principles being borne in upon their minds, of a far-darting gleam of intuition, but never of God actually speaking to the

¹"Inspiration," p. 614. The word mechanical is frequently used by Sanday in different contexts, but practically always in a negative and even somewhat pejorative sense. See, e.g., Gospels, p. 4; "Aims and Methods," p. 30; Inspiration, pp. 141-42, 186, 423. In connection with inspiration he seems to use it as a synonym for verbal inspiration with the implication that in inspiration there is no direct verbal communication from God to man. For his negative use of the word mechanical in connection with inspiration, see Oracles, pp. 18, 46; Inspiration, p. 399.

²"Our forefathers did not hesitate to suppose that the gap between the knowledge of the Hebrew historian and modern science was filled by a preternatural conveyance of knowledge which they included in their definition of inspiration; but we have learnt to think of inspiration differently." Life of Christ, p. 16.

³"Inspiration," p. 614; Inspiration, pp. 144-45; Oracles, pp. 63-64.

⁴"The process of prophetic inspiration is always extremely different from what it would be if the prophet arrived at this insight into spiritual things by the tentative efforts of his own genius." Oracles, p. 52. Sanday does not seem to ascribe inspiration to a religious genius for the knowledge of God, as Alan Richardson would suggest. See Richardson, p. 315. Cf. John K. S. Reid, The Authority of Scripture: A Study of the Reformation and Post-Reformation Understanding of the Bible (London: Methuen and Co., 1957), pp. 167-68.

prophets in distinct words.¹ When Sanday speaks of the words of the prophets being put in their mouth by God, he does not mean that God actually spoke to them in an audible voice, but that the ultimate source of their message was divine though it was shaped by a human mind acting in accordance with its own proper laws.²

The Extent and Attributes of Inspiration

The question of the extent of the human and the divine elements in the Bible and their relationship to each other is the dominant issue in the book Oracles. It also looms large in Sanday's major work on the subject of inspiration. In contrasting the traditional and the modern scientific theories of inspiration, he finds that the extent of the human element is in fact the only question between them.³ However, it is evident that a difference in regard to this issue is bound to affect such other questions as whether inspiration is plenary or partial, whether Scripture is or merely contains the word of God.

Related to these issues is the crucial subject of the properties or attributes of inspiration. Do the attributes of that which is divine extend to that which is human? In what sense can such attributes as perfection, infallibility, inerrancy, and authority be predicated as belonging to the Bible and, if we do so

¹Inspiration, pp. 145, 152; Oracles, p. 64. Concerning the words and the visions of revelation of the prophets, Sanday is certain that they "are not merely their own inventions, but are suggested and brought home to them from without in such a way that they were irresistibly attributed to God and given out as coming from Him." Inspiration, p. 147.

²"Inspiration," p. 615.

³Inspiration, p. 423.

attribute them, should we understand them as pertaining to the Bible in its totality or only to such parts of it which are considered divine? Or do the phenomena of Scripture prevent us from ascribing such properties to it at all? We follow Sanday here to note the way in which he deals with these questions.

The Human Element

That there is a distinct human element in the Bible is axiomatic for a scientific theologian like Sanday, who does not fail to stress that the extent of this element can only be determined by an inductive and critical inquiry and not by a priori methods.¹ He is aware that his investigation of the human element in the Scriptures may seem negative but regards it as a necessary task.² This human element in the Bible is first of all manifest in the fact that the Bible is written by men in human words which are governed by the ordinary laws of language. The language is not merely human, it is far from perfect from the viewpoint of grammar, literary style, and logical construction. If perfection is claimed for the Bible, it certainly does not mean conformity to the standards of literary correctness.³

Neither can it be claimed that inspiration pertains to the

¹Ibid.

²Oracles, pp. 17-18.

³Ibid., pp. 15-16, 24. The latter remark is especially directed against the so-called Purists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, who, according to Sanday, as a result of a very strict view of verbal inspiration claimed that the Greek of the New Testament writers must needs be perfect and their grammar faultless. Sanday draws here on George Benedict Winer, A Treatise on the Grammar of New Testament Greek, 3rd rev. ed., trans. and ed. W. F. Moulton (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1882), pp. 13-15.

text of the Bible. Not only is it obvious that the rigid theory of inspiration which held that even the vowel points of the Hebrew text were inspired is a palpable exaggeration,¹ but the great diversity of texts in ancient Greek manuscripts of the New Testament shows that "although the limits of possible error are not really very wide," there remains a residue "about which we cannot be absolutely certain that we have the actual words of the Apostolic writers before us."² Sanday's high estimate of the science of textual criticism is evident throughout his life,³ and the result of this science established for him the fact that it was impossible to speak of an infallible text.⁴

¹Oracles, pp. 20, 21. The unfortunate controversy in the seventeenth century about the antiquity of the Hebrew vowel points is often mentioned by scholars critical of the concept of verbal inspiration as an argument to discredit this concept. They usually fail to go into the historical and theological causes of this controversy, which was not primarily concerned with the doctrine of inspiration but with maintaining the clarity and authority of Scripture over against Roman Catholic polemicists.

²Ibid., p. 23.

³An early example of Sanday's own work in textual criticism can be found in his article "The Greek Text of the New Testament," Contemporary Review 40 (1881):985-1006, in which he evaluates different textual traditions on the basis of variants in the Gospel of Mark, chaps. 1-3. In this article he acknowledges his indebtedness to Westcott and Hort. Of special interest is the record of a meeting with Westcott in Cambridge in 1872 in the course of which he [Westcott] "pointed out to me [Sanday] my ignorance in matters of textual criticism, and when I asked his advice, he replied, 'Analyze a few chapters for yourself and see'" (p. 1006). This advice bore fruit in later years. In his article "The Future of English Theology" Sanday presents four reasons why he recommends to his students who have a bent in that direction to begin their studies with lower criticism (p. 54), one of them being that it is "an excellent practising ground in scientific method" and "the nearest approach to pure science which theology offers."

⁴Oracles, p. 36.

To Sanday the human element of the Bible is also manifested in the process of its literary composition. Literary analysis, he holds, has detected the composite origin of the Pentateuch and of many other books of the Old Testament as well as of some books in the New Testament, especially the Gospels.¹ As a result of literary and historical criticism, the traditional concepts of the authorship of different books of the Bible have given way to the recognition that in many cases we are dealing with anonymous writers (especially in the historical books of the Old Testament, but also in Psalms and Proverbs) or with pseudonymous authorship (e.g., in the Pentateuch, in many Psalms attributed to David, in such prophetic books as Isaiah, Zechariah, and Daniel, and very likely in 2 Peter).² However, the attributing of later writings to great men of the past should not be considered a form of deception. Sometimes it was merely accidental.³ In regard to its origin and the process of its

¹Ibid., pp. 11, n. 1, 28, 68; for the composite origin of the Gospels, see Inspiration, pp. 277-83. Sanday affirms quite clearly his adhesion to the critical theories of Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918) and Abraham Kuenen (1829-91) concerning the main stages of development in the history of Hebrew literature and the composite character of the Pentateuch and other books of the Old Testament. See ibid., pp. 118-21.

²Sanday stresses a number of times the fact that in regard to its authorship much of the Biblical material is anonymous; so, e.g., in Inspiration, pp. 156, 206-7, 240, 241; "Bible," p. 564.

³Oracles, p. 33. Though Sanday recognizes that the attribution of later writings to great men of the past, like Moses, David, and Solomon, cannot be justified by our standards of literary property and truthfulness, he thinks that the fact of pseudonymous authorship seems to be clearly proved in some cases and very probably in others and could be attributed to the very subordinate position of the idea of literary property among the Israelites on the one hand and to a strong sense of the continuity and solidarity which pervaded the order of prophets and of priests, and the class of the "wise men" on the other. Inspiration, pp. 224-25; cf. Oracles, p. 27.

literary composition, Sanday can detect nothing in the Bible that is essentially different from other literature of the same kind.¹

If error is evidence of human frailty rather than divine inspiration, then there can be no question for a modern critical mind that the Scriptures are full of frailty. There are slips of the pen;² there are discrepancies, especially in the Gospel narratives;³ there are defects not only of language and logic but also of temper;⁴ and at times we are conscious not only of human limitations, but of the violence of human passion.⁵ For instance, Paul's outbreak against the circumcision party in Gal 5:12, "I would they were even cut off which trouble you," could not have been written under the immediate influence of the Spirit.⁶

Perhaps no other phenomenon in the Bible exhibits its human element so clearly to Sanday as its defects of knowledge. The traditions of the creation and the flood in the Bible are an approximation to the truth, but we must be careful not to exaggerate

¹Oracles, pp. 25-26, 75.

²Ibid., p. 18.

³Ibid., p. 19, n. 1; cf. Inspiration, p. 46.

⁴Inspiration, p. 356.

⁵Ibid., p. 197. According to Sanday, the Psalter has its low notes as well as its high; there are verses which bear the mark of a lower stage of religious attainment, whereas others are the most perfect expressions of religious emotion we can find. Ibid., p. 198. Sanday's evolutionistic concept of revelation is illustrated in his estimate of the imprecatory Psalms, which "were in place at one stage of the history of revelation, whereas they would not have been in place at a later stage." Oracles, pp. 66-67.

⁶Inspiration, p. 357.

the extent of this approximation.¹ The conflict between the Bible and natural science has shown that the Bible has been wrongly invoked to check the course of free inquiry. Sanday sees an agreement among thinking men that "the Bible was never meant to teach science, and that the Biblical writers simply shared the scientific beliefs of their own day and expressed themselves in the language which was currently used all around them."² Divine revelation and inspiration are not concerned with matters pertaining to science; they address rather the nature and relations of God and man.

It seems to Sanday that nowhere are defects of knowledge, human fallibility, and imperfection so conspicuous as in the historical parts of the Scriptures. He does not think so much of minor errors in matters of chronology and numerics but rather of significant distorting influences in the work of the Hebrew historians--especially when they wrote at a considerable interval after the events occurred. Their records are not free from error, and literal accuracy cannot be claimed for them.³ The historical narratives in the Pentateuch, for instance, especially of the Egyptian plagues, the Exodus, the giving of the law at Sinai, and the wanderings of Israel in the desert are not contemporary but are

¹Oracles, p. 10, n. 1. Elsewhere Sanday expresses the opinion that the stories of the creation and the flood in Genesis "represent an ancient deposit long assimilated and thoroughly recast by the Hebrew mind under the influence of revelation." Inspiration, p. 221.

²Oracles, p. 25.

³This lack of accuracy pertains in Sanday's estimation to large tracts of the historical narratives in the Bible, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. See, e.g., Inspiration, pp. 234, 318, 398, 407.

later compositions from the time of the monarchy, which contain large elements of oral tradition and folklore. They are not free from a certain amount of idealization.¹ The Books of Chronicles manifest "a genuine warmth of religious feeling" but "imperfect historical method and defective sense of historical accuracy." The Book of Esther "probably never professed to be in the strict sense history."² In the records of Jesus' miracles there are doubtless some elements of superstition mixed in, and there is a manifest gap between the reality and the record of events in each case.³

To Sanday neither the narrative of events nor the processes of literary composition seem to be free from "the conditions to which other works would be exposed at the same place and time."⁴ For him the point of greatest divergence between the traditional view and the inductive view of inspiration is that on the latter, inspiration "belongs to the historical books rather as conveying a religious lesson than as histories, rather as interpreting than as narrating

¹"Bible," p. 565. Israel "idealized its history, emphasized its deliverances, dwelt on its few moments of comparative greatness and prosperity, and explained its own decline as due to its faithlessness and disobedience." "Inspiration," p. 612. Sanday hardly comes to grips with the moral implications of such a process of idealization with its distortion of historical truth; he is not completely unaware of the problem but seems to minimize its seriousness. See p. 156, n. 3.

²Inspiration, p. 398; cf. p. 213. On a later occasion Sanday could refer to this book as "the patriotic legend of Esther." "Bible," p. 568.

³Gospels, p. 8. This remark, which comes from one of Sanday's early publications, shows that Sanday's estimate of the historical inaccuracy of the Bible was present throughout his career. This estimate, however, became more radical towards the end of his life.

⁴Oracles, p. 75.

plain matter of fact," for "in this last respect they do not seem to be exempted from possibilities of error."¹

The Divine Element

Convinced as Sanday is about the human element in the Scriptures, he is no less certain about the divine element in them. This divine element, as stated above, Sanday ascertains by means of two criteria: the "experimental test" and the consciousness of prophets and apostles.² Everyone who reads the Bible cannot but feel that it is charged with affirmations about the supernatural, the sphere of a higher, finer spiritual life, and these affirmations have been found true and adequate by millions of men and women, both in the past and in the present.³ Though this by itself is not sufficient to establish the divine inspiration of the Bible, it is nevertheless of great importance. The second criterion, the prophetic consciousness which especially comes to expression in such formulae as "Thus saith the Lord," "The word of the Lord came to me," etc., provides even stronger evidence of the divine element in the Bible. This consciousness, which manifests itself with such a remarkable continuity throughout the Scriptures and which it seems impossible to attribute to deception or to an illusion forms the clearest, simplest, and most direct proof that the Bible is really the word of God.⁴

¹Inspiration, p. 400.

²See pp. 134, 138; cf. his remark about the two main tests applied to the work of the prophets, their own consciousness, and the character of the result of their work in Inspiration, p. 183.

³Oracles, pp. 40-41. ⁴Ibid., p. 48.

To the prophets is given special insight into spiritual things, into the principles which lie behind the divine ordering of events, and into the nature and attributes of God and the duty of man.¹ Consequently, the divine element of the Bible is especially manifest in prophetic descriptions of God's character and his salvation in words such as found in Exod 34:6-7: "Jehovah, Jehovah, a God full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty." In a sermon before the University of Oxford in 1894, Sanday emphasized the point that such a concept of God could never result from an inductive inquiry into the conditions of the world in which we live, but was the product of a process of revelation and inspiration.² The same point is stressed again in another sermon, preached ten years later, in regard to the Old Testament prophetic concept of "the living God,"³ a concept which is much richer and deeper than such philosophical terms for God as the Absolute, the Infinite, the

¹Ibid., pp. 63-64; Inspiration, pp. 144, 145, 266.

²Ibid., pp. 438-40.

³William Sanday, "The Living God," Expository Times 16 (1904-5):153-56. This sermon was preached at Trinity Church, New York, on October 23, 1904. Asking the question how the title of "the living God" was attained to by Israel, Sanday is quite certain that the process by which it did so was not a process of scientific reasoning, nor an inductive inference from the phenomena of the external world, but rather that certain gifted men among the people reached the truth by what seemed to be a kind of intuition. And they felt that this intuition was not wholly and simply an act of their own minds, but it was revealed to them, put into their minds by God Himself. Ibid., p. 156.

Unconditioned, or the First Cause.¹ It is such great ruling principles or ideas as the Fatherhood of God, his holiness, and, even more, his lovingkindness, his kingdom or rather the reign of God, the divine election of individuals and nations, and the divinely wrought deliverance or deliverances culminating in the redemption through Christ that constitute the divine element of the Scriptures; and it is this element which is capable of counteracting the wear and tear, the troubles, anxieties, and sorrows, the weaknesses and temptations of our earthly existence.²

The Relation of the Human
and Divine Elements

Convinced that there is both a human and a divine element in the Scriptures, Sanday cannot but raise the question how these two elements are related to one another. One of the points he sets out early in his lectures of 1890, when he discusses the change that is coming over the conception many good and informed Christian men hold of the Bible, is that "we make a mistake in attempting to draw a hard and fast line between the two elements."³ In his view "the part which comes from man and the part which comes from God run into and blend with each other. We think of them best not as acting separately but as acting together."⁴ In a discussion of the divine and the human element in the Epistles of Paul, he states as his conviction that the two elements are not really separable, except as

¹Inspiration, p. 153.

²Oracles, pp. 85-87.

³Ibid., p. 16.

⁴Ibid.

an abstraction of thought.¹ Rather, they "are held together in a union which is organic and unanalysable."²

From these few statements one might conclude that Sanday sees the Scriptures as the product of a concurus of the divine and the human agent.³ However, a thorough analysis of his writings makes manifest that he not merely distinguishes between the two elements as an abstraction of thought, but that the evidence suggests to him a certain discontinuity between them. He can speak of "an encroachment of the human element upon the divine" and of the fact that investigation makes it "appear that the human element is larger than had been supposed."⁴ He sees the two elements as shading off into each other by almost insensible degrees.⁵

Inspiration to Sanday is unquestionably a matter of degrees. Not only does he use the term degrees or grades of inspiration in a very explicit way,⁶ but he also employs many other expressions

¹Inspiration, p. 355.

²Ibid., n. 1. This phrase originated with J. G. Richardson and was quoted by Thomas Cheyne in his book Aids to the Devout Study of Criticism (London: T. F. Unwin, 1892), p. 150. It was taken over by Sanday, who apparently is in agreement with it, as an explanation of his statement that the human and the divine elements are not really separable. Already in Oracles, p. 16, Sanday speaks of the union between the two elements as an "intimate or organic union."

³Sanday does not use the word concurus in this connection, but the view expressed in the statements just quoted would certainly justify the use of this term. For a fuller discussion of this concept, see chapter 4.

⁴Oracles, pp. 17 and 16.

⁵Ibid., p. 74.

⁶So, e.g., in ibid., p. 66, "There were various grades and proportions in the prophetic gifts . . .;" cf. Inspiration, p. 208: "Still there are no doubt well marked grades of inspiration in the canon."

which clearly imply a gradation of both revelation and inspiration. Quite often, as we noticed earlier, he distinguishes between higher and lower forms of revelation or inspiration. Moses' inspiration is higher than that of the prophets and among the prophets we find higher and lower forms of prophecy.¹ He also speaks of primary and secondary inspiration, the prophetic inspiration being primary, whereas the inspiration of priests, psalmists, and wise men is secondary, though the products of the latter inspiration are often not inferior.² Another way of expressing the idea of graded inspiration is the distinction between different levels of inspiration.³

Scriptural support for the idea of degrees of revelation and inspiration Sanday finds in such expressions as "line upon line and precept upon precept" (Isa 28:10, 13); "let us prophesy according to the measure of faith" (Rom 12:6); "unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (Eph 4:7); and more emphatically in the words of Heb 1:1, R.V.: "God having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and

¹Inspiration, pp. 175-77; 140-43. Sanday uses this contrast between higher and lower forms of inspiration or prophecy throughout his writings. Cf. Oracles, pp. 99-100; "Bible," pp. 564-70; Divine Overruling, pp. 23-24.

²Inspiration, pp. 396-97.

³E.g., the Book of Ecclesiastes may be on a somewhat lower level of inspiration than Proverbs and Job. Ibid., p. 249. In the Sermon on the Mount we find instances which show how far our Lord went in correcting portions of the older Scriptures, which in their original context had been truly inspired, but on a lower level. "Inspiration," p. 616.

in divers manners."¹ Yet no passage of Scripture provides for him clearer evidence of degrees of inspiration than the seventh chapter in Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians.² Sanday admits that "the apostle does not elsewhere graduate his precepts in the same explicit manner," but he thinks that "we can well believe that he did so tacitly."³

In the context of his discussion of 1 Cor 7 as evidence for degrees of inspiration in Paul's writings, Sanday uses the idea of a scale, at the one end of which there is a strong unhesitating conviction of an impulse and guiding--even of actual possession--from above, whereas at the other end of the scale this conviction shades off into more ordinary conditions. In other words, at the one end there is clear evidence of inspiration but at the other end there is merely the expression of Paul's opinion as a good and loyal Christian.⁴ Using the same metaphor of a scale in summing up his answer to the question of the relation of the human to the divine in the Bible, Sanday concludes that "they shade off into each other by almost insensible degrees; but at the two ends of the scale they are wide enough apart to stand out quite clearly."⁵ This gradation of inspiration goes so far that there are some books in Scripture in which the divine element is at the MAXIMUM and others in which it is

¹See Oracles, pp. 66-67; "Inspiration," pp. 615-16.

²Oracles, pp. 70-71; Inspiration, pp. 357-58.

³Oracles, p. 71.

⁴Inspiration, p. 358.

⁵Oracles, p. 74.

at the MINIMUM,¹ and of some books like Esther and Song of Songs, which contribute nothing to the sum of revelation, there can be no question of inspiration even in a secondary sense.² It seems that Sanday is after all separating the two elements which he said are not really separable, that he is analyzing that which he claimed to be unanalyzable.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Sanday cannot speak of the Bible in its totality as the word of God. This idea arose in his opinion from the fact that the different parts of the Bible each contain a number of words of God, while the fact that there is a considerable human element in the interstices between those words was lost sight of. This mistaken idea of the one word of God may

¹Inspiration, p. 398 (capitalizing as Sanday's). Sanday sees the scale of inspiration not only within the canon of Scripture, but also outside of it, and in his view some of the Apocrypha might well lay claim to a measure of inspiration. Ibid., p. 259. He evidently thinks of the canon as flexible and potentially subject to modification. For Sanday the conception of inspiration and canon are closely related, and just as there are degrees of inspiration, there is a gradation in canonicity. He is convinced that there are "well-marked grades of inspiration in the canon; and there are some books which have their place quite upon the outskirts of it, and one or two in which inspiration is hardly perceptible at all." Ibid., p. 208; cf. p. 350.

²Of the Book of Esther we read that "If the canon of the Old Testament is anywhere at fault it is in regard to the Book of Esther," that "it is not probable that the book is strictly historical," that "it adds nothing to the sum of revelation." Ibid., pp. 212-14. A similar remark is made in regard to the Song of Songs, of which book "there can be no question of inspiration, as we have so far understood it, even in the case of Ecclesiastes" (Sanday refers here apparently to the so-called secondary inspiration). Ibid., p. 211. Sanday's friend, Walter Lock (1846-1935), who twice succeeded him in positions Sanday had held before, took issue with the latter concerning his evaluation of the Book of Esther, asking whether it could not be put on the same level with Ruth and Philemon (of which books Sanday did not question the canonicity or inspiration) and whether those latter books could be said to add to the sum of revelation. See *ibid.*, p. 223.

have been necessary in previous ages when it would have been most dangerous to discriminate between the divine and the human, for the divine would have gone with the human, but in God's providence the time has come for a transition from the traditional conception to one which is more strictly accurate and scientific.¹

The traditional theory and the modern scientific theory of inspiration do not differ, according to Sanday, in regard to the reality or the quality of inspiration, but rather in regard to quantity, because the traditional theory holds that the Bible as a whole and in all its parts is the word of God, whereas "on the inductive view inspiration is not inherent in the Bible as such, but is present in different books and parts of books in different degrees."²

The Attributes of Inspiration

The obvious corollary of the divergence between the two theories concerning the extent of inspiration is a parallel divergence concerning the attributes of inspiration. Both views agree that divine inspiration carries with it certain attributes or properties,³ but they disagree in regard to the nature and extent

¹Inspiration, pp. 424-25. Driver holds a view similar to Sanday's as to the concept of the word of God and thinks that to use this expression as a term descriptive of the entire Bible may easily give rise to misunderstanding and tend to generate a confusion between the divine thought and the human imagery or human form of composition under which it is presented. Samuel R. Driver, "Inspiration," Magazine of Christian Literature 5 (1891-92):286.

²Inspiration, p. 400.

³Sanday uses several terms like attributes, properties, accessories, marks, and qualities, but the first two terms are most widely used by him.

of these attributes. The most significant properties historically ascribed to the Scriptures are sacredness, veracity, perfection, infallibility, inerrancy, and authority.¹ According to the traditional view these properties pertain to all of Scripture, because it considers all of Scripture to be inspired. In other words, it holds the plenary, verbal view of inspiration.

Sanday recognizes that this view was the prevailing view in ancient Judaism, that it is clearly present in the writings of Josephus and Philo and in the rabbinic tradition.² Again in speaking of the views held by the Fathers of the Early Church, he asserts not only that testimonies to the general doctrine of inspiration may be multiplied to almost any extent, but that there are some which go even further and point to an inspiration which might be described as "verbal." Nor does this idea come in tentatively and by degrees, but almost from the very first.³ And although Sanday thinks that he

¹This list is not exhaustive and terms like veracity or truthfulness, perfection, infallibility, inerrancy, and certainty interlock and overlap to a considerable extent in meaning. Sanday uses all these terms, though in varying frequency, in his discussions of the attributes of Scripture, but he never seems to attempt to define them in such a way as to make clear distinction among them.

²Sanday surveys these writers in the second of his Bampton lectures, part of which is devoted to a discussion of the properties ascribed to the Old Testament in writings of the first century of the Christian era. Inspiration, pp. 72-90. Of Philo it is said that his "whole method of exegesis involves a conception which is nothing short of verbal" (p. 85), and the exegesis of the rabbis "is based on the assumption that the text must be taken strictly as it stands" (p. 37).

³Properties ascribed to the New Testament in the writings of the early church are considered by Sanday in the first lecture. Ibid., pp. 28-42.

finds evidence in the New Testament for degrees of inspiration,¹ he admits that the concept of inspiration found in the apostolic writings is essentially the same as that held by the Jews, namely, that of a verbal infallibility of the Scriptures.² He is no less candid in conceding that the one proof which in all ages has been the simplest and most effective as to the validity of the traditional concept of the whole Bible being the sacred word of God was "the extent to which it was recognized in the sayings of Christ Himself."³

Nevertheless, Sanday is convinced that the traditional view of inspiration is not in harmony with the facts of Scripture and the result of the working of one of the commonest principles to which the operations of the human mind are subject--the principle of

¹See pp. 177-78.

²Writes Sanday, "The apostolic conception of inspiration did not differ in kind from that which prevailed in Jewish circles at the time." And again in the same context speaking about the Jewish belief in the infallibility of the inspired word he remarks, "The apostles in this respect did not differ from their countrymen. The infallibility of the Scriptures--and indeed the verbal infallibility --is expressly laid down in John 10:35." "Inspiration," p. 617.

In his discussion of the properties ascribed to the Old Testament in the Jewish writings of the first century A.D. and in the New Testament, Sanday concedes that there are a few expressions scattered over the New Testament "which seem to attribute to the Scriptures of the Older Covenant, not only authority in matters of faith and life, but a kind of ultimate and inviolable perfection." Inspiration, p. 88. He makes specific references to Matt 5:18; John 10:35; 2 Tim 3:16; and 2 Pet 1:20-21. He seems, however, to attach little weight to the force of the evidence presented by these texts as may be deduced from the fact that the only significant reference to 2 Tim 3:16 in his writings on Scripture and its inspiration is found in this place, where he observes that whatever way we translate the text it would "include all, or very nearly all" [the qualification is typical] of those Scriptures which form our present Old Testament. *Ibid.*, p. 89.

³*Ibid.*, p. 393.

extensions.¹ There is no question for him that "the inspiration of the prophets for its particular purpose was plenary," that "the prophetic 'thus saith the Lord' knows no degrees," that "the Law was as binding as law could be," and that this easily could and actually did lead to the doctrine of plenary or verbal inspiration.² In this process the attributes of the Law and the attributes of the Prophets were extended to all the books and to all the parts of the books included in the canon.³ The properties of that which was due to prophetic inspiration were extended to those portions of Scripture which were not so inspired, or only inspired in a secondary sense or a lesser degree. However--and this is the crucial point for Sanday--this extension was an undue extension, which must not be assumed as an exact and scientific fact.⁴ In this process of extension, limitations of the properties of inspiration were forgotten and propositions which were true in a defined area became so elastic that they ceased to be true.⁵ That which pertained only to the divine element of Scripture was also attributed to its human element.

¹Ibid., p. 264. Sanday adds: "I do not think that there is one of the points which go to make up the strictest form of the traditional doctrine of inspiration which has not some warrant in the books themselves. But that which originally had reference to some particular mode or organ of revelation was extended so as to cover the whole." Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 265.

³Ibid.

⁴"Inspiration," p. 617. Cf. Inspiration, p. 400, where Sanday attributes the origin of "the traditional theory of inspiration" to "a simple process of enlargement or extension," in which "properties which the prophets and lawgivers of Israel claimed for themselves in their own proper spheres" were applied to "other writers in a different sphere" or "to themselves otherwise than in their capacity as prophets and lawgivers."

⁵Inspiration, p. 264.

The working of the principle of extensions is repeatedly set forth in Sanday's writings in connection with the different attributes of inspiration. Thus, for instance, Sanday does not hesitate to speak about the Bible as a sacred book or a collection of sacred books, but in his view this idea of sacredness is not cut and dried, rather it is progressive and admits of degrees.¹ The extension of the idea of sacredness can be seen in the history of the Gospels, which from the very first contained the elements of a sacred book, namely, the words and acts of the Lord Jesus. The sacredness of the elements was then ascribed to the entire record containing those elements, so that by the end of the second century we find the full conception "according to which the Gospels are treated in all their parts as sacred and as not admitting possibilities of mutual collision or error."²

A similar extension can be observed in regard to the idea of authority. "The one standing characteristic of the prophet is that he speaks with the authority of Jehovah Himself."³ In fact, the prophets were as convinced of the authority of their utterances as they were of their own existence. The same authority pertained to the written as to the spoken word of the prophets and was derived

¹"Bible," p. 571.

²Inspiration, p. 317. Sanday describes on pp. 316-17 how the attributes ascribed to the writings of the Prophets would come to be ascribed to the Gospels and how by the process of extension it came to be ascribed to every part of the Gospels. But, he stresses, this was neither the universal doctrine nor a scientifically defined doctrine, though he admits that it was no doubt widely current and might be said to represent the general mind of the Church.

³Oracles, pp. 54-55; cf. Inspiration, p. 394.

from the special action upon them of the Spirit of God.¹ The authority of the Law was even greater in the eyes of the Jews than the authority of the Prophets, but by means of a process of equalizing the different parts of the canon the same properties were attributed to all parts of the canon and the Christians completed the process by which all the books of the Old Testament were brought up to the same level of sacredness and authority.² But the scientific critical approach to Scripture has shown that the traditional idea of the Bible as equally authoritative in all its parts, in history as well as in doctrine, needs to be changed.³

The principle of extension not only caused attributes to be ascribed to the whole Bible that only pertained to the divine element in Scripture, but Sanday also perceived its working in unwarranted inferences being drawn from the inspiration of the Bible, such as the

¹Inspiration, pp. 264, 226-27. From the way Sanday speaks about the authority of the prophets and the formulae, such as "thus saith the Lord," which are expressive of that authority, it is evident that it is difficult at times to distinguish sharply between criteria of inspiration and attributes of inspiration, because an attribute like authority also functions for him as a criterion.

²Ibid., p. 263.

³This, of course, is one of the major thrusts of Sanday's discussion of the subject. Especially in his later years reductive qualifications of the authority of Scripture became more pronounced, like this one of the year 1916, "The Bible is still to me the highest authority that I know. But it is true that I pin my faith not so much to what the Bible says as what I believe that it means to say; in other words, not so much to what it said in the letter to those to whom it was first given as to what it says in the spirit to us now." William Sanday, ed., Form and Content in the Christian Tradition: A Friendly Discussion between W. Sanday . . . and N. P. Williams. . . . (London: Longmans Green, and Co., 1916), p. xiv. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that Sanday is introducing a subjective element in his recognition of the authority of the Bible and that he is moving away from the Protestant emphasis on the sensus literalis of the Scriptures.

belief that it is infallible. Of all the properties commonly claimed for the Bible he holds none more vulnerable in view of the phenomena of Scripture than its infallibility.¹ Although the broad divine purpose as such is infallible, that infallibility does not extend to the details in the human expression of that purpose, certainly not to matters of physical law or historical event.² Similarly, Sanday holds "the full dogmatic conception of verbal inerrancy" to be "an extension, and an undue extension, of the original idea [of inspiration]."³

The idea of a sacred book which must be in all respects authoritative and infallible, Sanday contends, was an instinctive rather than a reasoned idea, which crystallized in the intertestamental period and then held sway more or less completely for two thousand years. In view of scientific criticism, however, it has come to be seen as no longer tenable. Sanday asserts that in many ways the Bible is not infallible and, therefore, in the strict sense,

¹Speaking about the Bible as the book in which the revelation of God is embodied, he writes already in 1890, "Such a book, it is urged, must at the least be infallible. If that were so, we should find it hard to contend with the facts; for the sphere of its infallibility has been steadily narrowed. Its text is not infallible; its grammar is not infallible; its science is not infallible; and there is grave question whether its history is altogether infallible." Oracles, p. 36.

²"Inspiration," p. 617. Cf. "An Eirenicon from Culture," p. 218, where Sanday quotes in obvious agreement the following words of Percy Gardner: "No inspiration of which any trace is to be found in history communicates to the inspired man an infallible knowledge either of physical law or of historic event." In the same context he vents the supposition that it is very much a discovery of the last generation that inspiration does not involve infallibility in the record of fact. *Ibid.*, p. 219.

³"Bible," p. 577.

not authoritative, except in the spheres of ethics and religion.¹ Even in these spheres qualifications need to be made as a result of the temporal conditioning of the language. We cannot in crude blocks without change transfer the thought of one age into another. As a result, concludes Sanday, we no longer look at things so much under the category of authority; "the main question for us in these days is how much we can assimilate of the Bible."²

Summary and Conclusion

Sanday's views on Biblical inspiration exercised considerable influence not only in the Church of England but also beyond its confines. Discussions of his position, however, despite the recognition of its influential effect, are generally brief and limited in scope. A more comprehensive understanding and evaluation can only be based on a thorough presentation of Sanday's model of Biblical inspiration such as has been attempted here. At this point it is necessary to summarize the results of our investigation and to articulate some issues raised by it.

It was only in the last decade of his life that Sanday openly and explicitly professed himself a modernist and clearly avowed the cause of liberal theology, yet the whole tenor of his career as a theologian was to make theology more scientific, to reconcile the essentials of the Christian faith with the changed outlook of the modern scientific mind. Convinced that traditional views of the Bible, its inspiration, and authority could no longer be maintained in view of the results of advanced science and Biblical criticism, it

¹Ibid., p. 579.

²Ibid.

was his aim to formulate a more precise, accurate definition of inspiration, one which would preserve the essence of the concept and at the same time satisfy the demands of science and criticism.

To Sanday it is a fundamental principle that a true concept of inspiration and of the nature of the Bible must be obtained from the Bible itself without any a priori assumptions of what that inspiration must imply. He considers it the only valid starting-point in the quest for a more accurate definition of inspiration. Coupled with this he emphasizes the inductive method as the only right method in establishing the nature and the extent of inspiration. This means that one must carefully study the full range of Biblical phenomena without making hasty dogmatic deductions from a few isolated texts. Such an emphasis on the inductive method was in harmony with the high regard for scientific method which was dominant in the latter part of the nineteenth century. It also means for Sanday that the Biblical phenomena must be in harmony with what he considers to be basic laws of science, such as the law of evolution or the principle of the uniformity of nature.

In order to show the presence of both a divine and a human element in the Scriptures and to determine the nature and extent of inspiration, Sanday places special stress on three criteria: the spiritual experience which the Bible has brought and still brings to millions of people, the consciousness of the Biblical writers--especially the prophets, and Biblical criticism. The first one, the so-called "experimental test," is based on numerous sayings in the Bible which speak to men's heart with power and so prove themselves divine to them. The second most prominent criterion for Sanday is

the prophetic consciousness, which is indeed deeply rooted in the Scriptures. Sanday is impressed by the continuity and consistency of the prophetic phenomenon finding it in both the Old and New Testaments, a fact that undoubtedly forms one of the unique characteristics of the Bible.

These two criteria constitute in Sanday's view the basic proof for the divine element in the Scriptures, while his third criterion, Biblical criticism, provides the main test by which to determine the human element. By applying different forms of criticism Sanday finds abundant evidence of all kinds of errors and imperfections in the Scriptures, which to him are proof that there is a human element in the Bible that can be distinguished from its divine element. Sanday regards these criteria as the legitimate result of an inductive approach to the Bible, and few would question that the spiritual phenomena and the widespread manifestations of the prophetic consciousness in the Scriptures constitute primary evidence of their divine inspiration.

The recognition by Sanday of Biblical criticism as an important tool for a better understanding of the Bible reflects a widespread acknowledgement of its importance among European and American scholars in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Sanday was neither the first nor the last to use the results of Biblical criticism as a means of distinguishing between human and divine elements in the Bible. It does not seem that he himself questioned the validity of using Biblical criticism in making such a distinction, but he was aware that others did not consider this a legitimate application of criticism. To him, however, it seemed an

act of violence to the intellectual conscience to suppress the results of a coherent body of critical conclusions even if that would mean to contradict the bidding of the highest authority.¹ It is at this point that the difference between what Sanday calls the traditional theory of inspiration and the inductive scientific theory begins to come into focus.

The emphasis which Sanday places on prophetic inspiration finds its strongest support in the so-called prophetic formulae, which in his estimation constitute one of the remarkable phenomena of the Scriptures, especially of the prophetic books of the Old Testament. The presence or absence of such formulae becomes for him one of the most prominent criteria by which the inspiration of the Biblical writings should be measured and on the basis of which he develops his distinction between primary and secondary inspiration, higher and lower levels of inspiration and different degrees of inspiration. Sanday believes that by looking closely at the language which the Biblical writers use, where they claim inspiration and where they do not, where they profess to speak the words of God and where they write after the manner of other men, one is able to tell what is inspired and what is not.² It seems that he does not question whether the limiting function of the prophetic formulae and related phenomena to determine the extent of inspiration is a principle that is sustained by Scripture itself.

In Sanday's model of inspiration, not only does the consciousness of the prophets constitute a cardinal criterion for the

¹Ibid., p. 414.

²Oracles, pp. 89-90.

extent of inspiration, it also gives the clearest insight into the nature of inspiration. Most significant to Sanday in this respect is the awareness on the part of the prophets that their words are not merely the product of their own minds but that they must be attributed to a divine prompting which is external to themselves. The emphasis in Sanday's writings, especially the earlier ones, on the external or objective cause of the prophetic consciousness may suggest that divine speaking constitutes an essential part of his concept of revelation and inspiration. A more careful analysis of the entire corpus of his writings, however, shows that he conceives of the divine communication with man as an uprush of the subconscious or an inrush of the superconscious. This conception is in harmony with the entire tendency of his theology to bring the Biblical data in harmony with modern scientific (in this case psychological) understanding.

When Sanday describes the relationship between the human and the divine elements in inspiration, there seems to be a certain ambiguity in his thinking. On the one hand, we are told that we should best think of the two elements as acting together, that they are not really separable and that they are held together in a union which is organic and unanalyzable. On the other hand, however, Sanday speaks of an encroachment of the human element upon the divine, of the two elements shading off into each other by almost insensible degrees concluding with the definite assertion that at the two ends of the scale they are wide enough apart to stand out quite clearly. The evidence suggests that the second set of statements presents Sanday's basic view of the matter and is in full harmony

with the conclusion he reaches in the last of his Bampton lectures, namely, that the Bible not as a whole is the word of God, but rather that it contains words of God with considerable human elements in the interstices between the divine words binding them together. He is profoundly conscious that this view of the Bible differs from the traditional concept that the Bible in its entirety is the word of God, but to him the new view is more strictly accurate and scientific.

Logically correlated to the idea of a partial inspiration of Scripture is that of limitations of the attributes of inspiration such as authority, infallibility, truthfulness, and perfection. Sanday does not hesitate to point out such limitations not only in regard to the authority and infallibility of the Scriptures but also in respect to other attributes. Infallibility cannot be claimed for the text of the Bible, nor for its grammar or style, nor for its scientific or historical data, and possibly not even for its ethics and theology. Although he still considers the Bible the highest authority he knows, he pins his faith not so much on what the Bible says as on what he believes it means to say.

If we consider Sanday's position as a whole, we may readily agree with William Abraham that it is "a valiant attempt to bend traditional notions of inspiration to accommodate a critical approach to Scripture."¹ This appraisal accentuates the double focus of Sanday's aim to offer a more precise definition of inspiration. On the one hand he wants to bring his concept of Scripture and its

¹Abraham, p. 46.

inspiration in harmony with what he esteems to be the just demands of science and criticism. On the other hand he desires to preserve the essence of the traditional concept of inspiration to designate the divine element contained in the Scriptures.

Despite the breadth of Sanday's scholarship and the earnestness of his effort to formulate a scientific theory of inspiration, his attempt to do so raises a number of questions. Paramount among these questions are those concerning methodology. There is first of all the question as to what is involved in the principle that the Bible should be the only starting-point for an inductive investigation into the nature of Biblical inspiration. Sanday's fundamental principle that "a true conception of what the Bible is must be obtained from the Bible itself"¹ still allows him to come to Scripture with what he considers to be basic scientific axioms such as evolution and the uniformity of nature. The application of these scientific principles certainly molds Sanday's concepts of Biblical revelation and inspiration, but the question is whether such a procedure permits Sanday's fundamental principle to function freely or whether it obstructs its operation.

Sanday's insistence on and application of the inductive method lends even greater urgency to the issue of the correct methodology. A major question asks which facts or phenomena constitute the relevant material for the induction. Does Sanday mean that the induction should include all the Biblical data, or does he consider some Biblical data as more pertinent to the induction than

¹Oracles, p. 47.

others? Why does he stress the importance of such prophetic formulae as "thus says the Lord," but pays rather scant attention to texts, especially in the New Testament, which seem to attribute divine inspiration to the Old Testament Scriptures in their entirety? Why does he often refer to 1 Cor 7 or Heb 1:1-2, but only once or twice, and that rather briefly, to 2 Tim 3:16 or 2 Pet 1:19-21?¹ Is the criticism raised by George Purves that Sanday excludes from his induction "the statements of Scripture about itself"² justified or not?

The question of which data are relevant to the induction assumes new importance in view of Sanday's criteria of inspiration. Are they the product of an exhaustive induction of the Biblical phenomena or are they rather based on a limited and eclectic induction? Is it the result of a comprehensive induction of the Biblical data which prevents Sanday from letting what he calls "the sanction of Christ" function as a criterion of inspiration? Is such an exclusion or attenuation of Christ's statements in regard to the nature, authority, and inspiration of the Old Testament Scriptures in harmony with the fundamental principle that a true concept of the inspiration of the Bible must be obtained from the Bible itself?

The methodological issues are not limited to the question of the data relevant to the induction. When Sanday admits that there is "no such thing as pure induction or pure deduction" and that his prejudice against deductive arguments in the sphere of theology was

¹See p. 182, n. 2.

²Purves, p. 180.

not as well founded as he once thought,¹ the question naturally emerges as to whether the appropriate method for ascertaining the Biblical doctrine of inspiration should not combine induction and deduction. The answer to the latter question might prove of special significance in reaching sound conclusions concerning the nature, extent, and attributes of inspiration.

Crucial for Sanday is the free and untrammelled function of Biblical criticism for determining the human element in Scripture. Especially literary analysis and what he calls the historical method should be applied to the Bible just as to any other book. Sanday refuses, however, to accept a criticism prejudiced by an antisupeanatural bias. Even so, the question is pertinent whether the critical methods and conclusions used and approved by Sanday are as free from bias as he believes them to be. More crucial, however, is the question whether Sanday's use of criticism to distinguish between human and divine elements in Scripture is really in accordance with Scripture's own testimony on this point. It is evident that the answer to this question is of critical importance in any attempt to establish the Biblical doctrine of inspiration.

The questions raised as a result of our analysis of Sanday's model of inspiration were addressed by him, as our survey shows, only in a very limited way or hardly at all. When we turn next to analyze Warfield's concept of Biblical inspiration, we find that he does deal with a number of them. However, even where this happens to be the case, it is not the purpose of chapter 4 to compare or contrast the

¹The Conception of Priesthood, pp. 3, 159-60

views of these two scholars in an extended way. Rather it is to present a descriptive analysis of Warfield's model of inspiration. Only in chapter 5 do we intend to bring these two models in juxtaposition in an attempt to compare and evaluate their methodology and their conclusions as to the nature, extent, and effects of inspiration.

CHAPTER IV

BENJAMIN WARFIELD'S MODEL OF BIBLICAL INSPIRATION

Context and Corpus of Warfield's Writings on Inspiration

The scholarly output of Benjamin Warfield stretches over a period of more than forty years (1880-1921) and its volume and diversity are impressive. Much of his writing was in the form of articles, and these in their unbound state probably would have been lost for posterity had not Warfield himself in his last will provided for their collection and publication in a more permanent form. As a result of this will a series of ten compilations was published posthumously between 1927 and 1932 under the supervision of an editorial committee appointed by Warfield.¹ Other compilations as well as reprints of some of his books and single articles have

¹This series is known as the "Oxford series" of Warfield's works because it was published by the Oxford University Press, New York. The editorial committee under whose supervision the series was published consisted of Ethelbert D. Warfield, William Park Armstrong, and Caspar Wistar Hodge. The original edition was fairly limited and for many years difficult to obtain. Recently it has been reprinted under the title The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1981). The titles and dates of publication for the original ten volumes are: Revelation and Inspiration (1927) (hereafter designated as Revelation); Biblical Doctrines (1929); Christology and Criticism (1929); Studies in Tertullian and Augustine (1930); Calvin and Calvinism (1931); The Westminster Assembly and Its Work (1931) (hereafter designated as Westminster Assembly); Perfectionism, 2 vols. (1931); Studies in Theology (1932); and Critical Reviews (1932).

continued to appear; thus Warfield's writings are better known today than during his lifetime.¹ An extensive bibliography of his works

¹A shorter series of five volumes edited by Samuel G. Craig (and consequently referred to as the "Craig series") was published after World War II over a period of ten years (1948-58) by the Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Philadelphia, Pa. This series, frequently reprinted, made Warfield's writings accessible to a world-wide theological audience (these volumes have subsequently been distributed by Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich.). It contains a number of the articles earlier published in the "Oxford series" as well as others not previously reprinted. The titles and dates of publication are: The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible, with an Introduction by Cornelius van Til (1948) (hereafter designated as Bible); The Person and Work of Christ (1950); Biblical and Theological Studies, with a biographical article about Benjamin B. Warfield by Samuel G. Craig (1952) (hereafter designated as Studies); Calvin and Augustine (1956) (hereafter designated as Calvin); and Perfectionism (1958).

A set of two volumes comprising many other articles and book reviews, mostly fairly brief, was published under the title Selected Shorter Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield, 2 vols., ed. John E. Meeter (Nutley, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1970-73) (hereafter designated as Writings, 1 and Writings, 2). Only two other reprints are mentioned here because of their special significance for this study, namely, Limited Inspiration, ed. J. Marcellus Kik (Philadelphia, Pa.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1962), originally published as an article entitled "Professor Henry Preserved Smith on Inspiration," Presbyterian and Reformed Review (hereafter abbreviated as PRR) 5 (1894):600-653, and a booklet, which Warfield co-authored with Archibald A. Hodge, entitled Inspiration, with an introduction and appendixes by Roger R. Nicole (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1979), originally published as an article entitled "Inspiration," The Presbyterian Review (hereafter abbreviated as PR) 2 (1881):225-60, and published later in the same year as a separate pamphlet under the same title by the Presbyterian Board of Publication, Philadelphia, Pa. Pages 5-29 of the booklet contain the part written by Hodge, and pages 29-71 the part by Warfield. However, the two authors shared responsibility for the entire article. This booklet will be referred to hereafter as Hodge and Warfield, Inspiration, to distinguish it from the book Inspiration by Sanday.

Where possible, in this chapter quotations from Warfield's writings are taken from the compilations and reprints. If an item has been reprinted in more than one compilation, reference is to the volumes in the Craig series unless otherwise noted. To facilitate in checking the original sources and dates of publication of articles and book reviews quoted, each reference to a compilation is followed by a date preceded by the letters o.d. (which stand for "original date"). With the help of this original date one can turn to the chronologically arranged list of Warfield's publications in the

was published in 1974 by John E. Meeter and Roger Nicole.¹

The doctrine of inspiration figures prominently in the corpus of Warfield's writings, beginning in 1880 with an address entitled "Inspiration and Criticism" at his inauguration as professor of New Testament literature and exegesis at Western Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and concluding with some articles on inspiration and revelation written thirty-five years later. During the entire period about forty articles on the subject appeared from Warfield's hand with another twenty-five on closely related topics such as revelation, the canon, and Biblical authority. In addition, he wrote many reviews on books devoted to the subject or touching on various aspects of it.

Though Warfield's writings show a strong consistency on inspiration, it is possible to distinguish them roughly in three stages: (1) the foundational stage--1880 until about 1889; (2) the stage of controversy--1889 until approximately 1899; and (3) the stage of deepening maturity--1899-1915.

bibliography which gives the title and publication data of the original article or book review and in parentheses an abbreviated form of the title of the compilation and the pages in that compilation where the article or review is reprinted. If the same source is quoted several times in immediate sequence, the reference to the original date of publication is not repeated.

Quotations from articles and book reviews that have never been reprinted give all the publication data in the first footnote reference.

¹John E. Meeter and Roger Nicole, A Bibliography of Benjamin Brackinridge Warfield 1851-1921 ([Nutley, N.J.]: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1974) (hereafter designated as Bibliography). This is unquestionably, though not exhaustive, the most extensive bibliography of Warfield's works available. I gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness to the compilers of the bibliography.

In the first stage, Warfield enunciates his basic views on inspiration, the canon of the Bible, and the function and limits of Biblical criticism.¹ Though not free from strife, this period is characterized by a relative calmness in contrast with the next stage where controversy and polemics constitute the dominant strain.

The second stage was initiated by the ensuing conflict over the revision of the Westminster Confession in the Presbyterian Church in North America, the discontinuance of the Presbyterian Review as a joint publication representing different streams of thought in the same church, and the publication of the controversial book Whither? by Charles Augustus Briggs in September 1889. The conflict was intensified in January 1891 when Briggs, as professor of the newly created chair of Biblical theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York, delivered his even more provocative inaugural address on the authority of the Bible. The controversy culminated in the heresy trials of Briggs and Henry Preserved Smith in the following years.

About half of Warfield's articles on inspiration originate during this period and many of them are of a polemical nature. The majority of his reviews dealing with books on inspiration also derive from this time (1888-96) and provide evidence of the widespread agitation concerning this subject both in Europe and in the United

¹Three publications from this initial period are of special significance because they show that the essential tenets of Warfield's doctrine of inspiration are already present in his earliest writings. These three are his inaugural address "Inspiration and Criticism," Bible, pp. 419-42 (o.d. 1880); Hodge and Warfield, "Inspiration," reprinted in Inspiration, pp. 5-71 (o.d. 1881); and a pamphlet The Divine Origin of the Bible, reprinted in Revelation, pp. 429-47 (o.d. 1882). Of these three the second article has received much attention, but the first, which is certainly as important, is hardly ever mentioned.

States during the final decades of the nineteenth century.¹

The third stage is characterized by the publication of a number of very substantial articles in which Warfield works out in detail basic Biblical and historical arguments that he had put forth on earlier occasions and some in which he extends the scope of his historical apologetic with in-depth studies on the doctrine of the knowledge of God in Calvin and Augustine.² This period closes with the publication in 1915 of two articles on revelation and inspiration in the International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia. Here Warfield sums up once again the basic views that he had enunciated thirty-five years earlier and which he had explained, defended, and elaborated in the intervening time.³

It is not our purpose in this chapter to develop Warfield's

¹Warfield's preoccupation with the subject reaches its peak in the years 1891 through 1894, which is what one might expect in view of the crisis engendered by Briggs's attack on Princeton theology in general and the doctrine of verbal inspiration and inerrancy in particular. During this period appear at least seven articles on the Westminster doctrine of Scripture and inspiration (see below), a number of articles on the Biblical doctrine of inspiration, and some of Warfield's strongest polemical articles. Among the latter, "The Real Problem of Inspiration," Bible, pp. 169-226 (o.d. 1893), and "Professor Henry Preserved Smith on Inspiration," reprinted as Limited Inspiration (o.d. 1894), are the most outstanding.

²These articles include: "'It Says:,' 'Scripture Says:,' 'God Says:,'" Bible, pp. 299-348 (o.d. 1899); "The Oracles of God," Bible, pp. 351-407 (o.d. 1900); "God Inspired Scripture," Bible, pp. 245-96 (o.d. 1900); "Augustine's Doctrine of Knowledge and Authority," Calvin, pp. 387-477 (o.d. 1907); "Calvin's Doctrine of the Knowledge of God," Calvin, pp. 29-130 (o.d. 1909); and "'Scripture,' 'the Scriptures,' in the New Testament," Revelation, pp. 115-65 (o.d. 1910).

³Besides the articles "Inspiration," reprinted under the title "The Biblical Idea of Inspiration," Bible, pp. 131-66, and "Revelation," reprinted under the title "The Biblical Idea of Revelation," Bible, pp. 71-102, the year 1915 saw the publication of

model of Biblical inspiration according to a chronological sequence; but in order to understand certain developments in his treatment of the subject, an awareness of that sequence is not only helpful but virtually indispensable.

Although it is possible to distinguish certain periods in Warfield's writings on inspiration according to the intensity of their controversial nature and the depth of their argumentation, it may nevertheless be said that his writings are throughout actuated by an essentially assiduous apologetic. The rising tide of higher criticism with its literary and historical analysis of the Biblical documents, its reconstruction of the Biblical history, and its unrelenting attack on the belief that the Bible in its entirety and in its particulars is the infallible word of God, stirred up every nerve and fiber of Warfield's being to defend what to him was not only the traditional church doctrine but also the true Biblical doctrine of inspiration. This apologetic aim is already manifest in his inaugural address of 1880 in which he attempts to supply an answer to the question whether the church doctrine of the plenary verbal inspiration¹ of the New Testament is endangered by the assured

the pamphlet The Bible the Book of Mankind, reprinted in Writings, 1:3-22, in which Warfield in a different way once more testifies to the divine origin and power of the Scriptures, constituting it the great regenerative and unifying power in the history of mankind.

¹Plenary inspiration means to Warfield that Scripture in its entirety and in its details is a product of the divine Spirit. He qualifies inspiration as "verbal" because he believes that it pertains not only to the thoughts and ideas but also to the words of Scripture. Warfield often uses these terms side by side; at other times he uses them as synonyms, although he does make a distinction between them. His use of these terms and the meaning he attaches to them is further discussed under the heading "The Extent of Inspiration." See pp. 285-90.

results of modern Biblical criticism. It pervades to a large extent the whole corpus of his writings, both those of a casual and those of a more permanent nature. His book reviews, usually written in a spirit of sympathetic understanding and appreciation, when treating on the subject of inspiration, seldom lack a few lines if not whole paragraphs in defense of the full inspiration of the Bible, its absolute infallibility and authority, the correct principle of canonicity, the true function of the testimony of the Holy Spirit, and related issues.

Critical scholars like Briggs found fault with the doctrine of verbal plenary inspiration on three different but interrelated grounds: the doctrine is not Biblical, it is not really the historical doctrine of the Christian Church, and it is not the doctrine of the Westminster Confession--the principal creed of the Presbyterian Church--and its related documents. It is not surprising, therefore, that Warfield's writings are often cast in a polemical form. However, his aim is not primarily polemical. It is rather to establish the certainty of the Christian faith through a positive affirmation of the authority and infallibility of the Scriptures as the word of God. To realize this aim he considered it essential to defend the doctrine of verbal inspiration over against the contentions of its critics by showing that it is the doctrine of the Westminster Confession, that it is the historical doctrine of the Christian Church, and, above all, that it is the true and certain doctrine of the Scriptures.

It was especially Briggs who contended that neither the Westminster Confession nor the individual writings of the divines who

framed that document taught the doctrine of verbal inspiration or the inerrancy of the original autographs.¹ He saw these doctrines as a serious threat to the faith of thousands of Christians, and he believed that only Biblical criticism could rescue the faith of the Church in the word of God by showing the fallaciousness of these doctrines. In response to Briggs's arguments Warfield wrote a number of articles, some of them quite extensive,² to prove that the Westminster divines held not only a doctrine of verbal inspiration but sometimes expressed sentiments that pointed to a doctrine of divine dictation. He also quoted the same divines to show how they believed God--who is Truth itself and cannot lie--to be the Author of the Scriptures which are therefore truth and will not admit of error. Those who denied that the Westminster divines believed in the doctrines of verbal inspiration and the inerrancy of Scripture, in Warfield's eyes, not only corrupted these doctrines but also the historical facts.³

¹Charles Augustus Briggs, Whither? A Theological Question for the Times (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1889), chap. 4, "Shifting," pp. 63-90.

²These articles are: "The Westminster Doctrine of Inspiration," Independent, December 5, 1889, pp. 1605-6, reprinted in R. Howie, ed., The Westminster Doctrine anent Holy Scripture (Glasgow: David Bryce and Son, 1891), pp. 64-74; "The Westminster Doctrine of Holy Scripture," Writings, 2:560-71 (o.d. 1891); "The Westminster Doctrine of Inspiration," Writings, 2:572-79 (o.d. 1891); "The Inerrancy of the Original Autographs," Writings, 2:580-87 (o.d. 1893); "The Westminster Doctrine of Holy Scripture," Westminster Assembly, pp. 155-257 (o.d. 1893); "The Doctrine of Inspiration of the Westminster Divines," Westminster Assembly, pp. 261-333 (o.d. 1894); and "the Westminster Confession and the 'Original Autographs'," Writings, 2:588-94 (o.d. 1894).

³Westminster Assembly, p. 333 (o.d. 1894). The issue concerning the doctrine of inspiration of the Westminster Confession and the Westminster divines is still very much alive today. Despite

More effort was exerted by Warfield to demonstrate that the so-called high doctrine of inspiration was the authentic doctrine of the Westminster Confession than that it was the general doctrine of the Church in all ages. Yet he was just as certain in his conviction that it was the true church doctrine--or Catholic doctrine--and assertions to this end can be found throughout his writings on inspiration from the earliest to the latest.¹ He appealed to Church

a very elaborate and detailed effort to substantiate a position similar to that of Charles Briggs by scholars such as Jack B. Rogers and Donald K. McKim, others maintain that the historical evidence unmistakably proves the soundness of Warfield's historical judgment that the Westminster divines generally believed in the verbal inspiration and inerrancy of the Scriptures and that this is also the doctrine of the Westminster Confession. Views similar to those of Briggs are expressed in John H. Leith, Assembly at Westminster: Reformed Theology in the Making (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1973), pp. 75-84; Jack B. Rogers, Scripture in the Westminster Confession: A Problem of Historical Interpretation for American Presbyterianism (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1966); idem, "The Church Doctrine of Biblical Authority," in Biblical Authority, ed. Jack Rogers, (Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1977), pp. 31-36; and Jack B. Rogers and Donald K. McKim, The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible: An Historical Approach (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979), pp. 200-223. The view of Warfield that the Westminster divines and the Westminster Confession upheld verbal inspiration and the inerrancy of Scripture is advocated by John H. Gerstner, "The Church's Doctrine of Biblical Inspiration," in The Foundation of Biblical Authority, ed. James Montgomery Boice (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), pp. 42-45; Roger R. Nicole, "The Westminster Confession and Inerrancy," Appendix 6 in Hodge and Warfield, Inspiration, pp. 97-100; and John D. Woodbridge, Biblical Authority: A Critique of the Rogers/McKim Proposal (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), pp. 101-18.

¹Warfield wrote confidently in 1881, "This doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture, in all its elements and parts, has always been the doctrine of the Church" (Hodge and Warfield, Inspiration, p. 32), and he sums up his conviction thirteen years later in these words, "It is the doctrine that was held and taught by the Church throughout the whole patristic age and throughout the whole mediaeval age; and that was given expression by the Church of Rome in the Tridentine deliverance that God is the author of the Scriptures and that they were written Spiritu sancto dictante. The same doctrine was held and taught by the Reformers, and underlies all the creeds of the Protestant churches, finding its fullest expression in the later

Fathers such as Polycarp, Irenaeus, and Origen, and especially to Augustine to show that the Early Church held to Scripture as the authoritative and infallible Word of God, without error, in the form in which it had originally been given to the Church by the sacred writers.¹ He freely referred to the established creeds, both of the ancient Church and of the Reformation and of the Council of Trent, as teaching the same view of Scripture, its inspiration, and authority.² He was convinced that it was not only the doctrine of the seventeenth-century Westminster scholars, but that it was the general doctrine of all the Reformers beginning with Luther and Calvin and maintained by their successors.³ However, he never wrote an extensive treatise to prove this point, satisfied apparently that

creeds of the Reformed churches, such as the Westminster Confession and the Formula Consensus Helvetica." He concludes in the same spirit: "Despite great divergences of opinion among recent theological writers, it is this same church doctrine that remains not only the confessional doctrine of the Church at large, but the fundamental conviction of the body of Christian people." Writings, 2:618 (o.d. 1894).

¹Bible, p. 108 (o.d. 1894). Warfield especially refers to Augustine's famous statement in an epistle to Jerome, "I have learned to defer this respect and honor to the canonical books of Scripture alone, that I most firmly believe that no one of their authors has committed any error in writing," as representative of the judgment of the patristic age. Writings, 2:586 (o.d. 1893). A fuller discussion of Augustine's doctrine of Scripture can be found in the second part of the extensive article "Augustine's Doctrine of Knowledge and Authority." See Calvin, pp. 430-42 (o.d. 1907).

²Bible, pp. 110-11 (o.d. 1894).

³Warfield was fully aware that there were scholars who had a view different from his own in regard to the doctrine of inspiration of the Reformers and particularly of John Calvin. "Yet nothing is more certain," he writes, "than that Calvin held both to 'verbal inspiration' and to 'the inerrancy of Scripture,' however he may have conceived the action of God which secured these things." Calvin, p. 61, n. 36 (o.d. 1909). For his discussion of Calvin's doctrine of inspiration, see *ibid.*, pp. 60-70.

anyone who would study the historical data without prejudice would come to the same conviction.

Even more impressive than the fact of the existence of a stable church doctrine standing over against the many theories of the day was, for Warfield, the fact "that this church doctrine of inspiration was the Bible doctrine before it was the church doctrine, and is the church doctrine only because it is the Bible doctrine."¹ If we focus in this chapter on Warfield's concept of Biblical inspiration, our emphasis will certainly be in harmony with his own. In his polemics against critics of the so-called church doctrine of verbal plenary inspiration, Warfield stressed the point that in abandoning that doctrine they were in reality abandoning the Biblical doctrine of inspiration. Consequently, the dominant thrust of his writings on inspiration was to demonstrate by means of a careful exegesis of crucial texts, a detailed study of significant Biblical terms and phrases and especially a comprehensive investigation of the teachings of Jesus and the apostles, that the Biblical doctrine of inspiration is unmistakably the doctrine of verbal plenary inspiration with, as its concomitant, the absolute infallibility of Scripture.

Methodology

In assessing Warfield's methodology one is immediately faced with the already mentioned difficulty that his statements on the subject are distributed over a number of sources. Probably the most

¹Bible, p. 114 (o.d. 1894). Cf. Writings, 2:617-18 (o.d. 1894).

concise expression of a proper methodology for determining the Biblical doctrine of inspiration is set forth in his article "The Real Problem of Inspiration."¹ In this article, just as he does in several other of his essays on inspiration, Warfield starts from what he terms the established church doctrine and goes on to show that an exact and scientific exegesis of the Bible proves that the authors of the New Testament held a doctrine of inspiration "quite as high as the church doctrine."² The rest of the article he devotes to a discussion of modifications of the Biblical doctrine by means of four faulty procedures that lead to a lower view of Scripture than that held by the New Testament writers, also of the immense weight of evidence in favor of the Biblical doctrine, and, finally, of the immense presumption against alleged facts or phenomena contradictory to the Biblical doctrine. He concludes the essay with a consideration of what he esteems as the correct logical method in approaching the question of how to establish the Biblical doctrine of inspiration. Since this concluding part seems to present Warfield's clearest statement on methodology, it most naturally provides the basic framework for our discussion of that subject.³ Before

¹Originally published in PRR 4 (1893):177-221, at the height of the controversy engendered by the ecclesiastical trial of Briggs (see pp. 200-201), it is one of Warfield's strongly polemical articles. A much shorter version of this article had been published two years earlier under the title "The Present Problem of Inspiration," Homiletic Review 21 (1891):410-16 (hereafter designated as "Present Problem").

²Bible, p. 175 (o.d. 1893).

³The importance of this article has been recognized by a number of scholars. Few, however, have stressed Warfield's discussion of the correct methodology to establish the Biblical doctrine of inspiration in the last four pages of that article (pp.

entering this discussion, however, we need to take a brief look at Warfield's emphasis on Scripture as the only source for establishing the true doctrine of inspiration.

Scripture the Only Source for Establishing
the Doctrine of Inspiration

That a Biblical doctrine of inspiration must of necessity be derived from Scripture itself may be self-evident, yet Warfield does not fail to make it clear. When in his familiar polemical fashion he reviews three books on inspiration which he characterizes as "very favorable specimens" of a copious literature on inspiration presenting a "lowered view of the Bible," he recommends them at the outset for their attempt to preserve the Bible as "the foundation of religious doctrine and life" but concludes that they are attempting an impossibility for two obvious reasons. In the first place, he says, they concede the very thing to be safeguarded: the trustworthiness of the record. Secondly, they neglect and discredit the testimony of the Bible to itself.¹ This procedure, he thinks, must ultimately lead to a rejection of all "external authority" and

223-26), despite the fact that this is the clearest discussion of methodology in his writings. The most pertinent discussion is probably in Robert James Hoefel, "The Doctrine of Inspiration in the Writings of James Orr and B. B. Warfield: A Study in Contrasting Approaches to Scripture" (Ph.D. dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, School of Theology, 1983), pp. 232-34. However Hoefel can hardly bring out sufficiently the sharp contrast that Warfield draws between the true inductive method and the so-called inductive method, because in his discussion of the methodology he does not draw on those sources where that contrast is presented most sharply by Warfield.

¹B. B. Warfield, review of How God Inspired the Bible, by J. Paterson Smyth; What Is Inspiration? by John DeWitt; and Inspiration and Other Lectures, by T. George Rooke. in ERR 5 (1894):169-79 (hereafter designated as "Review of Smyth et al.").

the erection of the human spirit, in one form or another, into the sole test, the sole norm, and, ultimately, the sole source of truth. In contrast with this, Warfield holds to the Bible as the only trustworthy source of Christian doctrine and concludes that

There is, on the other hand, but one course for consistent Christian thinkers in determining their doctrine of inspiration: to go straight and humbly to the Bible, "rejecting nothing, selecting nothing and scorning nothing," but simply transcribing its doctrine of inspiration.¹

To prevent misunderstanding of his position Warfield stresses elsewhere the fact that he is not reasoning in a circle. He is not basing the doctrine of inspiration on Scripture as the source of doctrine and then establishing the authority of Scripture as such a source on the proof of its inspiration. "The question of inspiration does not come into discussion until the general trustworthiness of the Scriptures as sources for Christian doctrine has already been established."² Consistently he maintains that the doctrine of inspiration just as all other Christian doctrines must be derived from the Scriptures and that it is supported by the same weight of evidence as these doctrines, namely, the evidence of the trustworthiness of the Biblical writers as teachers of doctrine. It is necessary, therefore, to prove the authenticity, credibility, and general trustworthiness of the New Testament writings before proving their inspiration.³ In his emphasis on the priority of the evidences for Christianity over the proofs of the inspiration of

¹Ibid., p. 179.

²Writings, 2:632 (o.d. 1894).

³Bible, p. 212 (o.d. 1893). Though Warfield stresses the immense weight of the evidence, he does not present in this context the actual substance or content of that evidence.

Scripture, Warfield is in close agreement with his mentor and friend Archibald A. Hodge, who had written that one should never "allow it to be believed that the truth of Christianity depends upon any doctrine of inspiration whatever."¹

It may be true, as Robert Reymond asserts, that there is an overemphasis in Warfield's writings on the importance of the proofs or evidences for Christianity, and there may be the appearance of "irreconcilable contradictions" in his thoughts on this matter.² Princeton theology in general and Warfield's theology and apologetics in particular have been accused of being scholastic and determined by Scottish Common Sense philosophy.³ It is not possible to enter here into a discussion of the nature of Warfield's apologetics, a subject that has attracted the attention of a number of scholars.⁴ Suffice it to say that Andrew Hofferker has

¹Hodge and Warfield, Inspiration, p. 8. Warfield had stated a similar conviction in his inaugural address a year earlier. See Bible, pp. 441-42 (o.d. 1880). This idea was familiar in Princeton theology. See Francis Landey Patton (1843-1932), The Inspiration of the Scriptures (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work, 1869), pp. 22-23.

²Robert L. Reymond, The Justification of Knowledge (n.p.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1976), p. 57.

³See, e.g., chap. 2, p. 55, n. 2, and p. 112. Briggs accused Princeton theology of being scholastic and this charge has more recently been strongly reiterated by Rogers and McKim. See Rogers and McKim, pp. 265-379.

⁴Probably the most significant studies in this area are: William D. Livingstone, "The Princeton Apologetic as Exemplified by the Work of Benjamin B. Warfield and J. Gresham Machen: A Study in American Theology 1880-1930" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1948); Clyde Norman Kraus, "The Principle of Authority in the Theology of B. B. Warfield, William Adams Brown, and Gerald Birney Smith" (Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 1961); John Jacob Markarian, "The Calvinistic Concept of the Biblical Revelation in the Theology of B. B. Warfield" (Ph.D. dissertation, Drew University,

demonstrated quite conclusively that Warfield stressed the subjective element of religion as well as the objective.¹ Any charges that Warfield's apologetic was scholastic or rationalistic should be measured against that twofold emphasis.

In anticipation of a later discussion of some distinctions in Warfield's theology that have a special bearing on his concept of inspiration, it is good to stress here already the fact that Warfield differentiates between the divine origin of Scripture and the inspiration of Scripture. He considers the latter as only one aspect of the former, which he conceives in a very broad sense as "the part of God in all that complex of processes by the interaction of which these books, which we call the sacred Scriptures . . . have been brought into being."² For Warfield the acceptance of the divine origin of the Scriptures comes logically prior to a belief in their

1963); and W. Andrew Hoffecker, "The Relation between the Objective and Subjective Aspects in Christian Religious Experience: A Study in the Systematic and Devotional Writings of Archibald Alexander, Charles Hodge, and Benjamin B. Warfield" (Ph.D. dissertation, Brown University, 1970).

¹It is Hoffecker's opinion that "Alexander's and Hodge's concern for the content of faith plus the role of man's subjective aspect is maintained intact by Warfield. He was no more a scholastic than the two former Princeton professors. None of the Princetonians were scholastics demanding only assent to propositions. . . . The writings of all three exhibit their intense, conscious concern to maintain both the intellectual and the emotional aspects of faith." W. Andrew Hoffecker, Piety and the Princeton Theologians: Archibald Alexander, Charles Hodge, and Benjamin Warfield (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1981), pp. 117-18. Hoffecker is convinced that no one can deny that Warfield as much as his predecessors attempted "to balance the objective and subjective emphases." Ibid., p. 154.

²Bible, p. 154 (o.d. 1915). See below pp. 244 and 255 for a fuller discussion of Warfield's concept of the divine origin of Scripture and the testimony of the Holy Spirit as related to and yet distinct from his concept of inspiration.

inspiration and rests on evidence provided by a multiplicity of facts showing that the origin of the Bible cannot be accounted for apart from God.

Two Possible Methods

Even when the Bible is acknowledged and accepted as the only source from which the doctrine of Biblical inspiration should be drawn, it is still possible to come to very different concepts of that inspiration. On the one hand scholars such as Warfield hold that the Biblical doctrine is the doctrine of plenary verbal inspiration, on the other, scholars such as Sanday conclude from the Biblical data that inspiration is a matter of degrees--in other words, only partial and certainly not verbal. Why do scholars who professedly start their quest for the doctrine of inspiration from the same source--the Scriptures--reach such different results? Warfield's answer to that question is found in his observation "that the conclusions actually arrived at by students of the subject seem practically to depend on the logical method adopted."¹

To select and preserve the correct logical method is therefore of the utmost importance for Warfield. He contrasts two ways or methods to determine the doctrine of inspiration and presents them with great clarity. One method "proceeds by obtaining first the doctrine of inspiration taught by the Bible as applicable to itself and then testing this doctrine by the facts as to the Bible as

¹Ibid., p. 225. We rely upon Warfield's discussion of methodology in the latter part of his article "The Real Problem of Inspiration," but supplement this with remarks on methodology from his other writings.

ascertained by Biblical criticism and exegesis." The other "proceeds by seeking the doctrine of inspiration in the first instance through a comprehensive induction from the facts as to the structure and contents of the Bible, as ascertained by critical and exegetical processes."¹ The latter method treats all these ascertained facts, the so-called "phenomena," as co-factors of the same rank for the induction.

The first method, which primarily obtains the doctrine of inspiration from the teachings of the Biblical writers by means of a thorough exegesis of all the statements that have a bearing on the doctrine, seems to Warfield to be "the only logical and proper mode of approaching the question."² Throughout the entire body of his writings on inspiration he consistently confronts his readers with what he interchangeably refers to as the "teachings," the "assertions," the "claims," the "doctrine," and the "self-testimony" of the Scriptures in regard to their own inspiration.³ It is widely acknowledged that no scholar has written as much as Warfield, using careful research and exegesis, to elucidate and ascertain that Biblical doctrine of inspiration on the basis of the Bible's own teachings,⁴ though serious and sustained efforts have been made and

¹Ibid., p. 223 (o.d. 1893).

²Ibid.

³Warfield compared the multiplicity of the Bible's witness to its plenary inspiration with the conglomerate mass of stones in an avalanche. He considered it just as futile to attempt to reason away the power of an avalanche by analyzing the pathway of each separate stone and showing how it can be avoided as to explain away the force of two or three texts which teach plenary inspiration, without recognizing that there "are scores, hundreds of them," and that "they come bursting upon us in one solid mass." Ibid., pp. 119-20.

⁴Bernard Ramm wrote in 1961, "B. B. Warfield of Princeton

are being made to prove that Warfield has misunderstood or misconstrued the Biblical data and drawn unwarranted conclusions from them.¹ These criticisms are specified in the latter part of this chapter where the Biblical foundation for the doctrine of plenary inspiration as stated by Warfield is presented.

The second method puts the primary emphasis in the process of establishing the doctrine of inspiration on the phenomena of Scripture. This method is usually referred to by its proponents as the inductive method. Warfield quotes in his article "The Real Problem of Inspiration" from the works of several scholars such as Marvin R. Vincent, J. Paterson Smyth, Robert F. Horton, and William G. Blaikie to show that, while they professedly start from the Bible as it is, for them the primary stress in their induction falls not upon the specific teachings of the Bible in regard to its own inspiration, but rather upon the phenomena of its structure which Biblical criticism and exegesis bring to view.² They claim that

Seminary devoted much of his scholarly life to an investigation of the witness of Scripture to itself. . . . To the knowledge of this writer nothing yet has been produced to parallel the detailed work of Warfield. If Warfield is guilty of overstating his case for revelation, certainly most contemporary theology understates the Scriptural witness." Bernard Ramm, Special Revelation and the Word of God (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1961), p. 152, n. 18.

¹So, e.g., John Schoneberg Setzer, "A Critique of the Fundamentalist Doctrine of the Inerrancy of the Biblical Autographs in Historical, Philosophical, Exegetical and Hermeneutical Perspective" (Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 1965), esp. chap. 3, "Fundamentalist Biblical Inerrancy in Exegetical Perspective," pp. 177-297; James D. G. Dunn, "The Authority of Scripture According to Scripture," Churchman 96 (1982):104-22, 201-25.

²Bible, pp. 202-4 (o.d. 1893). Works referred to are Marvin R. Vincent (1834-1922), "The Septuagint and the Inspiration of the Bible," Magazine of Christian Literature 6 (1892):11-17; John

such an inductive study shows that the Bible contains many errors and discrepancies and that the only safe principle is to formulate our concept of inspiration in harmony with these phenomena.

Warfield considers this methodology inadequate. If the induction only includes the facts as to the structure and contents of the Bible without adequate regard for its teaching, it certainly would be difficult to arrive at a precise doctrine of inspiration. Such disregard for the teaching of the Bible as to the inspiration of the Bible in favor of our own determination of its inspiration from the so-called phenomena shows that we have more confidence in our reading of the meaning of the facts than we have in the explicit teaching of Scripture. "And," questions Warfield, "is not this just the principle of rationalism?"¹

Even if the induction includes the teaching of the Bible and the Biblical facts as co-factors of equal rank, "the procedure is liable to the danger of modifying the teaching by the facts without clear recognition of what is being done," and the result is "the loss from observation of one main fact of errancy, viz., the inaccuracy of the teaching of the Scriptures as to their own inspiration."²

Warfield is convinced that:

Paterson Smyth (1852-1932), How God Inspired the Bible: Thoughts for the Present Disquiet (New York: J. Pott and Co., 1892); Robert F. Horton (1855-1934), Inspiration and the Bible: An Inquiry, 4th ed. (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1889); and William G. Blaikie (1820-99), Letter to the Rev. Andrew A. Bonar, D.D., 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: Macniven and Wallace, 1890).

¹Review of Smyth et al., p. 173. This review provides one of the most incisive discussions by Warfield of the use and misuse of the inductive method and deserves republication.

²Bible, p. 224.

. . . the attempt to make the facts of Scripture co-factors of equal rank with the teaching of Scripture in ascertaining the true doctrine of inspiration, is really an attempt to modify the doctrine taught by an appeal to the facts, while concealing from ourselves the fact that we have modified it, and in modifying corrected it, and, of course, in correcting it, discredited Scripture as a teacher of doctrine.¹

Of one thing Warfield is sure: in contrast to this procedure the correct method for establishing the Biblical doctrine of inspiration is to start from the teaching of Scripture as to its own inspiration and give that teaching priority over all other considerations. If the proponents of the second method raise the objection that such a methodology is based on a priori reasoning and is deductive rather than inductive,² Warfield stoutly repudiates the charge:

Let it not be said that . . . we are refusing the inductive method of establishing doctrine. We follow the inductive method. When we approach the Scriptures to ascertain their doctrine of inspiration, we proceed by collecting the whole body of relevant facts. Every claim they make to inspiration is a relevant fact; every statement they make concerning inspiration is a relevant fact; every allusion they make to the subject is a relevant fact; every fact indicative of the attitude they hold towards Scripture is a relevant fact. But the characteristics of their own writings are not facts relevant to the determination of their doctrine.³

Warfield does not simply repudiate the charge of a priori

¹Ibid., p. 207.

²Vincent, for instance, had asserted that the doctrine of verbal inspiration "is based wholly upon an a priori assumption of what inspiration must be, and not upon the Bible as it actually exists." Marvin R. Vincent, Exegesis (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1891), p. 40, quoted in Bible, p. 180 (o.d. 1893) (emphasis Warfield's). In recent times William Abraham has identified Warfield's approach as a deductive approach. See William J. Abraham, The Divine Inspiration of Holy Scripture (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 14-38. For further discussion of this objection, see pp. 299-300.

³Bible, pp. 205-6 (o.d. 1893) (emphasis Warfield's).

reasoning; he throws the charge back upon those who claim to adhere to the inductive method. In a review of some polemical tracts concerning the doctrine of inspiration published in Scotland, he takes issue with William Blaikie and holds him to be mistaken "in supposing that the loose view [of inspiration] that he represents is inductively established, while a priori reasoning is the support of those who hold to a plenary inspiration." On the contrary, however-- and here Warfield quotes approvingly a statement by Robert Watts-- the principle of Blaikie's theory "is a mere inference from apparent discrepancies not yet explained," while the principle of the theory he opposes "is the formally expressed utterance of prophets and apostles and of Christ Himself."¹ Warfield does agree with those who stress the inductive method that "induction is a very important instrument for the discovery of truth. But it must be warily used. All the facts must be collected, and understood, and the reasoning upward from them must be exact."² But it is just at this point, in Warfield's opinion, that so many scholars who claim to use the inductive method go astray. They do not include in their induction the chief phenomena for establishing the Biblical doctrine of inspiration, namely, the explicit assertions of Scripture on this

¹Benjamin B. Warfield, review of Letter to the Rev. Andrew A. Bonar . . . on a Manifesto Issued by Him on the Dods and Bruce Cases, by William G. Blaikie; Reply to Letter of Prof. Blaikie . . . to Rev. Andrew A. Bonar . . . on a Statement Issued on the Dods and Bruce Cases, by Robert Howie; and A Letter to the Rev. Prof. William G. Blaikie . . . in Reply to His Letter to Rev. Dr. Andrew A. Bonar, by Robert Watts, in FRR 2 (1891):349 (hereafter designated as Review of Blaikie et al.). In a similar vein Warfield sees an "ineradicable a-prioriism" continually cropping out in Smyth's book How God Inspired the Bible. Review of Smyth et al., p. 171.

²Ibid., p. 172 (emphasis Warfield's).

subject as well as other relevant data, such as the use of the Old Testament by the writers of the New.¹ Or if they do include them they treat them only as factors equal in rank with all other phenomena instead of recognizing them as the chief phenomena for the induction.²

This does not mean for Warfield that the phenomena of the structure and content of Scripture can be set aside. He admits that an "a priori possibility may be asserted to exist in the case of the Bible, that a comparison of its phenomena with its doctrine may bring out a glaring inconsistency."³ It is therefore necessary to test the truth of the claims of the Bible through comparison with its contents, characteristics, and phenomena. And if the latter are inconsistent with the former then all should know it, because of the importance of the issues involved. If what Christ and the apostles teach in regard to the nature of Scripture is contradicted by the

¹Review of Blaikie et al., p. 349. Warfield had a dim view of an induction that did not meet the standard. He wrote, "The great vice of 'modern critical science' is that . . . it makes a god of its so-called 'induction'; it has such overwhelming confidence in its own devising power, that it thinks it can 'just look at anything' and at once determine its origin and whole character; all those broad considerations which should really determine judgment are cast contemptuously aside, at the bidding of infallible insight." Review of Smyth et al., p. 172.

²It is necessary to observe that Warfield uses the word "phenomena" in two different ways. Often he employs the term in reference to the facts of the structure or the characteristics of the Bible in contrast with its teachings, but he also uses it in a broader sense so as to include those teachings. In fact, he refers to the teachings as the "chief phenomena" or the "primary phenomena." Bible, p. 206 (o.d. 1893); Review of Blaikie et al., p. 349.

³Bible, p. 217 (o.d. 1893).

phenomena, their trustworthiness as teachers of doctrine would be undermined.

Warfield, convinced of their trustworthiness by the weight and amount of evidence in its support,¹ thinks that there is a strong presumption against the alleged contradiction between the phenomena and the teachings.² Such a presumption does not mean for him that we should resort to "strained exegesis in order to rid the Bible of phenomena adverse to the truth of the Biblical doctrine of inspiration," but it does mean that we should exercise "great care in the exegetical determination of these alleged phenomena."³ He does not feel bound to harmonize the alleged phenomena with the Bible doctrine at all costs. If they cannot be harmonized without strained or artificial exegesis they would be better left unharmonized. However, difficulties arising from the "phenomena" of Scripture should never be classified as objections to the Biblical doctrine of inspiration so long as we can believe that there is the possibility of harmony even if we cannot as yet see that such harmony exists.⁴

In summary, we can state that for Warfield the right method,

¹Warfield's estimate of the weight and amount of that evidence is considered below in our discussion of his distinction between the divine origin of Scripture and its inspiration.

²The final part of his article "The Real Problem of Inspiration" is entitled "Immense presumption against alleged facts contradictory of the Biblical doctrine [of inspiration]." Bible, pp. 214-16. Warfield considered this presumption to be very strong and completely justified in view of the evidence that the New Testament writers are trustworthy as teachers of doctrine. Ibid., p. 215.

³Ibid., p. 219 (o.d. 1893).

⁴For Warfield's view on the question of errors in the Bible, see below pp. 293-98.

the correct logical method, for ascertaining the Biblical doctrine of inspiration is the inductive method and not any a priori determination of what this doctrine ought to be. For him a true induction means an induction of the teachings of the Bible in regard to its own inspiration rather than an induction of the facts of its structure or its contents, the so-called "phenomena." He maintains that the teachings are the chief phenomena to be considered. The other phenomena should not be considered as co-factors of equal rank in the induction, though they should be used to test the truth of the claims of the Bible.

The Importance of the Teachings of Christ and the Apostles

One point that is stressed repeatedly in Warfield's numerous articles on inspiration is that the Biblical doctrine of inspiration must be derived from the teachings of the Biblical writers. One soon discovers, however, that first and foremost this means for him the teachings of the New Testament or, in other words, the teachings of Christ and the apostles.¹ Warfield regards the claims and teachings of the New Testament writers as the primary foundation and test of the fact and nature of inspiration. His inaugural address of 1880 focused immediately on the doctrine of the plenary inspiration of the

¹Warfield is convinced that the New Testament canon came into existence during the apostolic era and was based on apostolic authority. It was not the product of the early Church whether in regard to content or in regard to authority. The teachings of Christ and the apostles as presented in the New Testament are in truth their teachings and not reflections of early Christian believers. His views on this matter are developed quite thoroughly in his article, "The Latest Phase of Historical Rationalism," in Studies in Theology, pp. 585-645 (o.d. 1895).

New Testament and he had the writers of the New Testament in mind when he said:

We have, then, so far to deal with the proofs of the doctrine. It is evident, now, that such a doctrine must rest primarily on the claims of the sacred writers. In the very nature of the case, the writers themselves are the prime witnesses of the fact and nature of their inspiration. . . . If a sober and honest writer claims to be inspired by God, then here, at least, is a phenomenon to be accounted for.¹

The question might be raised whether such a strong emphasis on the teachings of the New Testament reflects a Marcionitic disdain for the Old Testament on the part of Warfield. Nothing, however, could be further from his mind. His regard for the value of the Old Testament in its bearing on the doctrine of inspiration is made manifest in an extensive review of Alfred Cave's book The Inspiration of the Old Testament Inductively Considered, a book which Warfield holds to be satisfactory as few books that leave the press.² It is Warfield's judgment that the doctrine at which Cave arrives as the result of his inductive study, is indistinguishable from the reformed doctrine of the inspiration of the Scriptures, even though Cave does not use the customary theological terminology.³ It really is impossible to impute to Warfield any prejudice against the Old Testament. Several of his Biblical and doctrinal studies

¹Bible, pp. 422-23 (o.d. 1880).

²Benjamin B. Warfield, review of Inspiration and the Bible, an Inquiry, by Robert F. Horton, and The Inspiration of the Old Testament Inductively Considered, by Alfred Cave, in PR 10 (1889):325 (hereafter designated as Review of Horton and Cave).

³Ibid., p. 328.

specifically deal with the Old Testament,¹ and it is evident that in general he regards the Old Testament to be as fully the authoritative word of God as the New Testament.

One might ask why Warfield, to a large extent, passed over the Old Testament in his studies on inspiration. Warfield, himself, provides an answer if one carefully searches his writings. In reaction to an article of Hinckley G. Mitchell on inspiration in the Old Testament²--at the end of which Mitchell concludes that he has shown that the Bible does not claim to be inerrant, Warfield expresses his amazement that such a conclusion could be reached on the basis of a study which confined itself entirely to the Old Testament and, worse still, did not even quote or allude to a single one of the passages in which the Bible speaks of itself. The latter part of the procedure Warfield characterized as "Hamlet with Hamlet left out with a vengeance." At the same time concerning the confinement to the Old Testament he avowed to have "great difficulty in reconciling such a procedure with the principle of the progressive delivery of doctrine."³

¹So, e.g., "The Divine Messiah in the Old Testament," Studies, pp. 79-126 (o.d. 1916), and "The Spirit of God in the Old Testament," ibid., pp. 127-56 (o.d. 1895).

²Hinckley Gilbert Mitchell (1846-1920), "Inspiration in the Old Testament," Christian Thought 11 (1893-94):182-94. Mitchell was a Methodist Episcopal minister and professor of Hebrew and Old Testament exegesis at the Boston University School of Theology from 1884 until 1905 when the Methodist bishops refused his reappointment because of his critical views of the Bible. See Stephen G. Cobb, "Mitchell, Hinckley Gilbert," Encyclopedia of World Methodism (Nashville, Tenn.: United Methodist Publishing House, 1974), 2:1649-50.

³Benjamin B. Warfield, "Dr. B. B. Warfield Replies to His

The teaching of the New Testament on this subject Warfield deems to be fuller than that of the Old Testament, consequently, he stresses the former rather than the latter.¹ It is not that he thinks that the doctrine of inspiration cannot be found in the Old Testament. His review of Cave proves the contrary.² But the teachings of Christ and the apostles in regard to Scripture and its inspiration he considers more explicit. In view of this we are not surprised to read him affirming "that as Christians we will naturally go first to the New Testament even for our doctrine of the inspiration of the Old."³

It was Warfield's settled conviction that a thorough and unprejudiced exegesis of the New Testament data could not but show that Christ and the apostles held the doctrine of plenary, verbal

Critics," Christian Thought 11 (1893-94):215 (hereafter designated as "Warfield Replies").

¹Because the development of doctrine is progressive, Warfield sees the doctrinal teaching of the New Testament to be of greater clarity and plenitude than that of the Old Testament. In a study on the Biblical doctrine of the Trinity he compares the Old Testament with a chamber richly furnished but dimly lighted. The introduction of light brings nothing which was not in the room before, but it brings more clearly into view what was only dimly seen or even not perceived at all. So the mystery of the Trinity is not revealed in the Old Testament though it underlies the Old Testament revelation. The fuller revelation of the New Testament does not correct the older revelation; it only perfects, extends, and enlarges it. Studies, pp. 30-31 (o.d. 1915). The same illustration was used by him much earlier in his article "Paul's Doctrine of the Old Testament," Presbyterian Quarterly 3 (1889):404 (hereafter designated as "Paul's Doctrine").

²Cf. his remark that "The New Testament is full of passages in which something very definite is openly asserted or clearly implied as to the nature and divine trustworthiness of the Scriptures. Nor are such passages lacking even in the Old Testament." "Warfield Replies," p. 215.

³"Present Problem," p. 415.

inspiration. He expressed this conviction early in his career:

Note, then, in the first place, that modern Biblical criticism does not in any way weaken the evidence that the New Testament writers claim full, even verbal, inspiration. Quite the contrary. The careful revision of the text of the New Testament and the application to it of scientific principles of historico-grammatical exegesis, place this claim beyond the possibility of a doubt. This is so clearly the case, that even those writers who cannot bring themselves to admit the truth of the doctrine, yet not infrequently begin by admitting that the New Testament writers claim such an inspiration as is in it presupposed.¹

Two assertions stand out in this statement which frequently recur in Warfield's writings and which he endeavored to substantiate in every possible way. The first and unquestionably the most important assertion is that a strict and scientific exegesis of the New Testament makes it certain that Christ and the apostles held the Scriptures to be fully and verbally inspired. To prove the truth of this assertion Warfield made a number of significant exegetical studies which have retained their value until the present and which constitute an essential element in his doctrine of Biblical inspiration. Additional proof was adduced by him from exegetical studies by other scholars, especially other Princetonians.²

The other affirmation of major importance for Warfield was that often even theologians who emphatically reject the doctrine of plenary and verbal inspiration admit that the New Testament writers

¹Bible, p. 423 (o.d. 1880).

²Warfield's major exegetical studies have been mentioned above on p. 201, n. 2, and are considered more closely in the latter part of the chapter. Some studies mentioned or quoted by Warfield are: William Caven (1830-1904), "The Testimony of Christ to the Old Testament," FRR 3 (1892):401-20; and George Tybout Purves (1852-1901), "St. Paul and Inspiration," FRR 4 (1893):1-24. See Bible, pp. 176 and 214 (o.d. 1893).

held that very doctrine. This he corroborated from the writings of a number of prominent German and British scholars, including Sanday.¹ Especially in the articles from the early 1890s, when the conflict over inspiration had reached a peak, this argument shows up again and again.²

In the attempts made by scholars to weaken or neutralize the force of the admitted fact that the apostles or Jesus or both held a high view of Scripture and its inspiration, Warfield saw additional evidence that the New Testament does teach plenary verbal inspiration. In several articles and book reviews he analyzes such attempts to show how they conflict with the Biblical data and either explicitly or implicitly undermine the authority of the Scriptures as a standard of doctrine.³ Richard Rothe, for instance, concedes that

¹Space does not permit a repetition of all the scholars quoted by Warfield nor the quotations he made from their works. He frequently adduced the same quotations and among these the more significant are from Frederic William Farrar (1831-1903), Life and Works of St. Paul, 2 vols. (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1879), 1:49; Otto Pfleiderer (1839-1906), Paulinism: A Contribution to the History of Primitive Christian Theology, 2 vols., trans. Edward Peters (London: Williams and Norgate, 1877), 1:88; Richard Rothe (1799-1867), Zur Dogmatik (Gotha: F. A. Perthes, 1863), pp. 177-78; William Sanday (1843-1920), Inspiration; 3rd ed., (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1896), pp. 393 and 407; Hermann Schultz (1836-1903), Grundriss der Evangelischen Dogmatik, 2nd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1892), p. 7; and Friedrich August G. Tholuck (1799-1877), "The Citations of the Old Testament in the New," trans. Charles A. Aitken, Bibliotheca Sacra 11 (1854):612.

²So, e.g., in "Present Problem," pp. 412-14; "The Real Problem of Inspiration," in Bible, pp. 175-78; "The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration," Christian Thought 11 (1893-94):166-67; "Warfield Replies," pp. 215-17; "Inspiration" in Writings, 2:617 and 634 (o.d. 1894); and "The Church Doctrine of Inspiration" in Bible, pp. 115-16 (o.d. 1894). However, the argument had also been presented in earlier works. See Hodge and Warfield, Inspiration, p. 41, note.

³The most extensive discussion of such attempts to weaken or modify the teaching of Christ and the apostles is in Bible, pp. 181-

the New Testament authors "look upon the words of the Old Testament as immediate words of God, and adduce them expressly as such, even those of them which are not at all related as direct sayings of God," and that, "so far as the Old Testament is concerned, our ecclesiastical-dogmatic doctrine of inspiration can, therefore, in very fact, appeal to the authority . . . of the apostles."¹ Rothe tries to neutralize the force of this admission by asserting that Christ differed from the apostles in not holding such a view. Warfield shows the precariousness of this position and says that Rothe has to explain away by means of artificial exegetical expedients a number of facts in Christ's usage and teaching in regard to Scripture which are similar in character and force to those on the basis of which Rothe infers the high doctrine of the apostles. To put the teaching of the apostles in contrast with that of the Lord has another very serious consequence in Warfield's opinion, in that, according to John 16:12-15, Christ identifies his teaching with that of the Holy Spirit through the apostles. Discrediting the teaching of the apostles can therefore result in nothing else

206 (o.l.d. 1893), in which four different procedures are analyzed. Warfield captures them under the headings: "Christ versus the apostles," "Accommodation or ignorance?," "Teaching versus opinion," and "Facts versus doctrine." It is not our purpose to discuss all these procedures here, but only to highlight the basic issue involved. The "facts versus doctrine" method is different from the other three, as Warfield himself remarks, in that it does not necessarily start with the explicit recognition that the doctrine of inspiration held by the New Testament writers is a high doctrine of inspiration. The fourth procedure is nothing else but the so-called inductive method, which starts from the characteristics of the Bible rather than from its teachings.

¹Ibid., pp. 177, 178. Here Warfield apparently gives his own translation from the German text of Rothe's Zur Dogmatik, pp. 177-78 (emphasis is in Warfield's translation).

but discrediting the authority of Christ Himself.¹

Other procedures to modify or undermine the New Testament teaching come under Warfield's scrutiny. Not the least of these are the kenotic and accommodationist theories aimed at minimizing the significance of the witness of Christ and the apostles to the Old Testament. A number of scholars in England and in the United States appealed to the kenosis of Christ to justify their acceptance of results of Old Testament criticism which contradicted Christ's affirmations of Old Testament history and authorship. Warfield sharply criticized this appeal to the kenosis which implied that on matters of a historical or scientific nature, Christ was on the same level of ignorance as his Jewish contemporaries and his statements in regard to such matters carried no more weight than theirs.

In his opinion there was a great difference between the German scholars, who originally enunciated a kenotic Christology in their attempt to sound the depth of an unfathomable doctrine, and many advocates of this theory in the Anglo-American world who merely adopted it as a convenient means to ease the tension between Christ's affirmations in regard to questions of Old Testament history and authorship and the negative results of Old Testament criticism.² As an explanation of the incarnation Warfield considered the theory of kenosis to be unbiblical and inadequate, and he carefully documented

¹Bible, pp. 183 and 188 (o.d. 1893).

²Benjamin B. Warfield, Review of Christus Comprobator or the Testimony of Christ to the Old Testament, by C. J. Ellicott, in PRR 3 (1892):763.

the reasons to substantiate his judgment.¹ But the "attempt to hide a refusal of the Lord's guidance under a kenotic doctrine of His person" merited, in his estimate, not merely scholarly criticism but "just indignation."²

Any theory that the Lord or his apostles accommodated their statements to the conceptions of their contemporaries, knowing them to be wrong, was also discredited by Warfield. In his eyes such a theory would undermine all confidence in the veracity of our Lord or of his inspired messengers. Not only would such a theory undermine their doctrine of inspiration, but it would just as surely discredit any other doctrine taught by them.³ Warfield was convinced that Christ in his human nature was limited in knowledge, but he considered it impossible that Christ was ever in error either through

¹Warfield's evaluation of the kenotic theory is very clearly expressed in an extensive book review of the year 1899. See Benjamin B. Warfield, review of The Conditions of Our Lord's Life on Earth, by Arthur James Mason; The Doctrine of the Incarnation, by Robert L. Ottley; The Principle of the Incarnation, by H. C. Powell; The Incarnation, by E. H. Gifford; Studies in the Mind of Christ, by Thomas Adamson; and The Kenotic Theory, by Francis J. Hall, in PRR 10 (1899):700-725. Warfield concludes that the so-called 'Kenotic doctrine' is not only without positive support from Scripture, either express or constructive, but stands in conflict with (1) the didactic teaching of Scripture, (2) the dramatized life of Jesus in the Gospel narrative, (3) the Scriptural doctrine of the two natures of Christ, (4) the Scriptural doctrine of the work of Christ as the revelation of God to men, with a number of other teachings of Scripture, and with the historical faith of the Church and the ineradicable demands of the Christian heart, which needs a Redeemer who is both God and man. Ibid., pp. 723-25.

²Benjamin B. Warfield, Review of The Church and Her Doctrine, by R. B. Girdlestone et al., in PRR 3 (1892):591.

³In Bible, pp. 189-95 (c.d. 1893) Warfield analyzes and rejects the attribution of accommodation to common prejudices on the part of the apostles by James Stuart (1843-1913) in his book The Principles of Christianity (London: Williams and Norgate, 1888), because it is a clear impeachment of their veracity.

ignorance or by knowingly accommodating his teaching to the erroneous conceptions of his time.¹

All the diverse and mutually conflicting theories to weaken the teachings of Christ and the apostles in regard to the nature of Scripture Warfield considered involuntary acknowledgements of the fact that they did teach plenary verbal inspiration. Nothing was more certain to him than that the high doctrine of Scripture ". . . is held by all the New Testament writers. There is not a dissenting voice, there is not a discordant note concerning it, from the first chapter of Matthew to the last chapter of Revelation."² How he actually arrived at this conclusion is considered in the last part of the chapter.

Biblical Criticism: True and False

In choosing as a subject for his inaugural address "Inspiration and Criticism," Warfield showed a keen awareness that the doctrine of plenary verbal inspiration was being challenged in the name of Biblical criticism. Yet despite the challenge, his evaluation of this discipline was positive, as he made clear in an article entitled "The Rights of Criticism and of the Church."³ To

¹Warfield quotes, e.g., with approval a remark of Handley C. G. Moule (1841-1920) that "it is a grave mistake to class under the idea of a willing Humiliation such a voluntary acceptance of the capacity to be mistaken--and to mislead" (emphasis Moule's). Review of The Church and Her Doctrine.

²"The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration," p. 174.

³Writings, 2:595-603 (o.d. 1892). This is the most trenchant article from Warfield's pen on the subject of Biblical criticism and the most important, though it is by no means the only source used in the discussion which follows.

the complaint of an alleged suppression of the right of criticism, he boldly responded, ". . . we know no one who denies the right of Criticism. Everybody uses it; and everybody knows it. It is the instrument by which we test the truth."¹ Not only did he allow for the right of criticism, but he saw it as absolutely necessary. Especially the Bible, because of its unique and far-reaching claims, should be submitted to the most rigorous criticism, for who would cast his soul's eternal welfare on an uncriticized way of life?²

While he acknowledged the right of criticism, Warfield did not accept that all criticism was right. He distinguished between true criticism and false criticism.³ How could the former be distinguished from the latter? Early in his career Warfield defines criticism as an investigation with three essential characteristics: "1) a fearless, honest mental abandonment, apart from presuppositions, to the facts of the case, 2) a most careful, complete and unprejudiced collection and examination of the facts, and 3) the most cautious care in founding inferences upon them."⁴

¹Ibid., p. 595.

²Ibid., pp. 595-96. Warfield consistently acknowledges the right and the necessity of criticism. In his review of Sanday's book The Oracles of God he writes, "Much of it is simply a plea for the right and duty of criticism, to which all true lovers of the Bible will say a hearty Amen. No one will trust himself to the teaching of a book which is not subject to criticism, and which will not endure criticism; only so can he satisfy himself that he has in it the very word of God." PRR 2 (1891):710-11.

³This distinction is very pervasive in his writings. See, e.g., Bible, p. 429 (o.d. 1880); "Present Problem," p. 411; Writings, 2:597 (o.d. 1892); Bible, pp. 171-72 (o.d. 1893).

⁴Bible, pp. 429-30 (o.d. 1880). Later he wrote, "Criticism consists in careful scrutiny of the facts, and is good or bad in proportion to the accuracy and completeness with which the facts are

The very opposite of this is an investigation guided by bondage to preconceived opinion, a careless, incomplete or prejudiced collection and examination of the facts, and rashness of inference. Much of the criticism of his day Warfield saw as belonging to this negative kind of criticism.

We noticed earlier Warfield's polemic against the anti-supernatural bias of many of his contemporaries, even of professed Christian scholars. He did not think that "detailed refutations of the numerous critical theories of the origin of the Biblical writings," no matter how complete and logically final they might seem, would avail very much against negative criticism "so long as its two fixed points remain to it--its starting-point in unbelief in the supernatural and its goal in a naturalistic development of the religion of Israel and its record."¹ Rooted in an anti-supernatural bias the process of criticism and its results are in his view vitiated from the outset.

In the controversy concerning the nature of the Bible, Briggs and other scholars defended the necessity and rights of higher criticism. Warfield had no argument with them about the term, nor about its necessity or right. He was convinced that "the processes of study connoted by it are not only legitimate but useful, and not

apprehended and collected, and the skill and soundness with which they are marshaled and their meaning read." Writings, 2:596 (o.d. 1892).

¹Studies, p. 6 (o.d. 1897).

only useful but necessary."¹ He held that every part of Scripture was first conceived in a man's heart and thence given to the people. This human element pervading the Scriptures he considered the legitimate province of higher criticism to discover, elucidate, and actualize. "But," he warned, "it must not be permitted to 'press beyond its mark,' and in too exclusive a devotion to the human in Scripture, not merely forget, but even deny the co-presence of the divine."²

It was to the false premises and methods of what he called "bad criticism"³ that Warfield took exception. The method of criticism used by the prevalent school of Old Testament criticism he considered completely discredited and refuted both in principle and in results by "such Old Testament critics as possess enough independence of scholarship and judgment not to be swayed beyond their center of gravity by the reigning faction."⁴ The method, as

¹Benjamin B. Warfield, review of A Glance at the Higher Criticism, by Meade C. Williams, in Princeton Theological Review (hereafter abbreviated as PTR) 3 (1905):142.

²"Paul's Doctrine," p. 400.

³Briggs made a distinction between "evangelical" higher criticism on the one hand and "rationalistic" higher criticism on the other. See Charles Augustus Briggs, Biblical Study: Its Principles, Methods and History (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1883), p. 104. Warfield considered this distinction useless. One "might as well talk of 'evangelical' and 'rationalistic' mathematics. There are no other varieties except good and bad higher criticism and though a man has an evangelical or a conservative outlook, it will avail him nothing in his criticism, if his criticism itself is bad." Review of Williams, p. 142.

⁴Writings, 2:598 (o.d. 1892). Warfield most likely had primarily in mind the work of his colleague William Henry Green, though he undoubtedly included other Old Testament scholars in this statement. For the significance of Green, see p. 114, n. 1.

it seemed clear to Warfield, degenerated into a circular argument because the critics first created the documents by distributing all the elements of one kind to each alleged document and then proved the reality of these documents by pointing to this constant difference.

However, Warfield was not much concerned with refuting negative criticism by means of a detailed analysis of its methods or results. He left such work to others, for instance, his colleague William Green. His principal concern was to show that criticism had not really invalidated the Biblical doctrine of inspiration, the plenary verbal inspiration of Scripture and its effect, the absolute authority and errorlessness of Scripture. In order to invalidate this doctrine, criticism had only three options, according to Warfield:¹ (1) to show that a more careful and a more exact exegesis proves that this is not the Biblical doctrine; (2) to show that, though it is the Biblical doctrine, the Biblical books from which the doctrine is derived are not the authentic and authoritative writings of the apostles and their disciples, but the product of forgeries of the postapostolic Church; or (3) to show that, though it is the Biblical doctrine and the writings from which the doctrine is derived are the authoritative writings of the apostles, the Biblical doctrine is inconsistent with the facts--facts of all kinds, literary, historical, scientific, which prove that the Bible contains numerous errors and discrepancies. If such errors or discrepancies could be

¹The basic structure of this argument is presented in Warfield's article "The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration," pp. 168-81, but it was already present in his inaugural address. See Bible, pp. 423-42. Though the fullest presentation of the argument is found in these two articles, it manifests itself in a partial form in many of his other articles.

proven beyond any doubt, then the Biblical doctrine of inspiration would be invalidated. It is not our purpose here to pursue Warfield's argument in showing that none of these options had been proven. His argument concerning exegesis has already been discussed,¹ and the results of his own exegesis of the Biblical data in their bearing on the doctrine of inspiration will be presented later. The authenticity of the New Testament books he considered settled beyond reasonable doubt, and he himself contributed some noteworthy articles to the debate on that issue.² His argument in regard to the inerrancy of Scripture is also taken up later.³

False or bad criticism is characterized by Warfield according to its two most devastating effects as "biblioclastic" and "antichristic."⁴ By declaring that a large part of the historical record of the Scriptures is unhistorical and that even its moral religious teachings contain erroneous statements, false criticism undermines faith in the authority and trustworthiness of the Bible as a divine revelation. But worse still for Warfield is its curtailment of the trustworthiness of the witness of Him who is Truth

¹See above, pp. 224-25.

²Warfield made, for instance, a significant contribution to the debate about the authorship and authenticity of Second Peter. See "The Canonicity of Second Peter," in Writings, 2:48-79 (o.d. 1882), and "Dr. Edwin A. Abbott on the Genuineness of Second Peter," Southern Presbyterian Review 34 (1883):390-445. Sanday referred to the first article as "a very able defence of the Epistle." Inspiration, p. 385.

³See below, pp. 293-98.

⁴This is according to the subheadings of his article, "The Right of Criticism and of the Church." See Writings, 2:598, 600 (o.d. 1892).

himself. Critics suggested that Christ in matters of science, history, and logic was on a level with his contemporaries, and Warfield quotes one of them, William Aitken, as saying: "You are not surprised that Christ, in his manhood, was not the equal of Newton in mathematical knowledge; why should you be surprised if he prove not to have been the equal of Wellhausen in literary criticism?"¹ Not without a certain indignation Warfield questions:

What Christ is this that Aitken pictures before us? Not the Christ of the Bible, who is our prophet and our guide; who is the Truth itself incarnated; who is dramatized before our eyes in the length and breadth of the Gospels, not as a child of his times, limited by the mental outlook of his day, but as a teacher to his and to all times, sent from God as not more the power of God than the wisdom of God; and whose own witness to himself was, "Verily, verily I say unto you, we speak that we know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you of earthly things and ye believed not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you heavenly things?"²

A criticism which starts from wrong presuppositions, uses wrong methods, and then rushes headlong into the very face of the Truth himself is in Warfield's eyes an intolerable wrong which no Christian heart can calmly bear.

In other words we may say that for Warfield only such criticism of the Bible is valid which presupposes the possibility of the supernatural, allows the Bible to speak for itself, collects and examines all the facts without a selective prejudice, and is extremely cautious in drawing inferences from these facts. Such criticism is not only necessary but a duty.

¹Ibid., p. 601. This statement was made by William Hay M. H. Aitken (b. 1841), but Warfield gives no source reference for it. Aitken was a Church of England clergyman.

²Ibid., p. 602.

Definition of Inspiration: Distinctions
and Connections

Discussions of the definition of inspiration usually occur at the beginning of Warfield's articles on inspiration.¹ He sets forth the definition before he presents the Biblical data or proofs from which the definition is derived. This procedure can easily give the impression that his definition is based on a priori reasoning and scholars who disagree with him have not failed to impute such reasoning to him. Warfield, as we have seen already, denied the charge.² Apparently he started out with a discussion of the definition because he wanted to impress upon his readers the fact that there was a firmly established concept of inspiration, one which had been held by the Christian Church since its origin.³ Also he probably wanted to make clear from the outset what he considered to be the right definition and to explain certain implications that grew out of it.

Whatever reasons Warfield may have had for his procedure, we follow him in first studying with him the definition of inspiration before passing on to the Biblical proofs from which the definition is derived. We also have to enter into a brief discussion of the way in

¹See, e.g., Bible, pp. 420-22 (o.d. 1880); Hodge and Warfield, Inspiration, pp. 5-7; "The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration," pp. 164-67; Writings, 2:614-17 (o.d. 1894); Bible, pp. 131-33 (o.d. 1915).

²See above, pp. 217-18.

³Interesting in this respect is the following remark: "It is certainly a most impressive fact,--this well-defined, aboriginal, stable doctrine of the church as to the nature and trustworthiness of the Scriptures of God, . . . Surely the seeker after the truth in the matter of the inspiration of the Bible may well take this church-doctrine as his starting-point." Bible, p. 106 (o.d. 1894).

which he perceives the distinction and connection between such important concepts as the divine origin of Scripture, revelation, canonicity, and the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit on the one hand and inspiration itself on the other.

Definition of Inspiration

As Warfield points out in some of his articles, the words inspiration and inspire as used in the English Bible and in technical theological usage are translated from the Latin terms inspiratio (inbreathing) and inspirare (to breathe into) and are derived from the Vulgate Latin Bible.¹ The Latin terms in turn are translations of several Hebrew and Greek words, of which the most significant is the Greek word $\Theta\epsilon\acute{o}\nu\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma$ which occurs only once, in 2 Tim 3:16. This word had traditionally been understood as being passive in meaning and as referring to the divine origin of Scripture. It seems that it was so understood in the article "Inspiration" which A. A. Hodge and Warfield co-authored in 1881.²

It is evident, however, that by 1889 Warfield had shifted in his understanding of the term. In his article "Paul's Doctrine of the Old Testament" he acknowledged that $\Theta\epsilon\acute{o}\nu\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma$ could mean "breathed by God," in the sense of "given out by," "made by God's breath," but usage of the word, so far as it could be traced in the meager material available, favored the sense "breathed into by God," "filled with God's breath," or "redolent of God."³ He selected the

¹Writings, 2:614 (o.d. 1894); Bible, p. 131 (o.d. 1915).

²Hodge and Warfield, Inspiration, p. 5.

³"Paul's Doctrine," p. 394.

latter meaning as the correct one, so he tells us, under the influence of August Hermann Cremer (1834-1903).¹ Whereas the former meaning emphasizes the divine origin of Scripture, the latter stresses the divine quality and influence of Scripture.

It was not until more than ten years later that Warfield, after very thorough research and in-depth study of all the evidence, changed his mind again. The fruit of his research is recorded in his article "God-Inspired Scripture" at the end of which he comes to the conclusion that θεόπνευστος "is primarily expressive of the origination of Scripture, not of its nature and much less of its effects."² The term is best translated "God-breathed" and affirms 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," concludes Warfield, "that all the high attributes of Scripture are built."³

Though Warfield changed his mind probably two times in regard to the meaning of θεόπνευστος, it seems that he was more consistent in his understanding of the word "inspiration." In his opinion, "inspiration" could hardly be considered a Biblical term. He certainly agreed with Hodge that it had "gradually acquired a

¹Bible, p. 250 (o.d. 1900). According to Warfield the new meaning was first suggested by Cremer in his article "Inspiration" for the second edition of Herzog's Realencyklopaedie and was then reiterated in later editions of that encyclopedia. Ibid., p. 247. Wrote Cremer, "Es muss . . . dabei verbleiben, dass θεόπνευστος entweder 'von Gott beatmet, von Gottes Geist erfüllt' oder 'Gottes Geist atmend' heisst." August H. Cremer, "Inspiration," Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche, 3rd ed. (1901), 9:184.

²Bible, p. 296.

³Ibid.

specific technical meaning independent of its etymology."¹ The earliest available definition written by Warfield is the one he used in his inaugural address of 1880. It reads:

Inspiration is that extraordinary, supernatural influence (or, passively, the result of it,) exerted by the Holy Ghost on the writers of our Sacred Books, by which their words were rendered also the words of God, and, therefore, perfectly infallible.²

In a further explanation of this definition, Warfield emphasized (1) that this influence of the Holy Spirit is supernatural and therefore different from the inspiration of the poet or man of genius; (2) that it is extraordinary and therefore different from the ordinary action of the Spirit in conversion and sanctification; and (3) that the infallibility of the words written under this influence is absolute, extending to the very word and to all the words. In the article Hodge and Warfield published more than a year later, Hodge preferred the word "superintendence" over the word "influence." He considered the superintendence by God's Spirit over the writers the essence of inspiration.³ Warfield certainly agreed with Hodge in seeing the divine superintendence as the essence, but in later definitions he continued to use the word "influence" as well as the word "superintendence."⁴ It is not our purpose at this

¹Hodge and Warfield, Inspiration, p. 5.

²Bible, p. 420 (o.d. 1880). For some other definitions of inspiration by Warfield, see Bible, p. 422 (o.d. 1880); "Present Problem," p. 411; Bible, p. 173 (o.d. 1893); "The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration," pp. 166-67; Writings, 2:615 (o.d. 1894); Writings, 1:31-32 (o.d. 1898); and Bible, p. 131 (o.d. 1915).

³Hodge and Warfield, Inspiration, p. 6.

⁴He even uses the phrases "an influence of the Holy Ghost" and "the Spirit's superintendence" in one and the same breath,

point to analyze further the different elements of Warfield's definition as to the mode, extent, and effects of inspiration; this is done later. Here we merely highlight the function of the definition in Warfield's approach to the question of the inspiration of the Bible.

Warfield acknowledges that originally the word "inspiration" was employed "to express the entire divine agency operative in producing the Scriptures." It is obvious to him, however, that it has become necessary in the process of theological analysis to distinguish between "the various modes in which the divine enters into the production of Scripture."¹ Already in the article authored jointly with Hodge a clear distinction is made between "revelation, which is the frequent, and inspiration, which is the constant attribute of all the thoughts and statements of Scripture." He also distinguishes between the question of the "genesis or origin of Scripture on the one hand" and the "mere fact of inspiration on the other hand."² In his later writings on inspiration Warfield continued to stress these distinctions. He asserts that:

Exact writers no longer use the term inspiration in so broad a sense as to make it inclusive of all the divine activities operative in the production of the Scriptures, or in a sense synonymous with or inclusive of revelation; but confine it to the

obviously referring to the same activity of the Holy Spirit. "Present Problem," p. 411, and Bible, p. 173 (o.d. 1893).

¹Writings, 2:615 (o.d. 1894). Cf. the remark, "It is important that distinguishable ideas should be connoted by distinct terms, and that the terms themselves should be fixed in a definite sense." Hodge and Warfield, Inspiration, pp. 5-6.

²Ibid., p. 6.

definite and fixed sense of the particular divine activity exerted in securing a trustworthy record.¹

Despite the definitions which Warfield quotes from a number of scholars to support his assertion that exact writers no longer use the term "inspiration" in a broad sense, other scholars strongly disagreed with the "definite and fixed sense" in which he uses the term "inspiration."² Warfield does not doubt, however, that the restriction of the meaning of the word inspiration to a narrower sphere is in harmony with the faith of the Christian Church from the first.³

When such scholars as Marvin Vincent and Paterson Smyth assert that "Scripture does not define the nature and extent of its own inspiration" or that "God has nowhere revealed to me exactly what it [inspiration] is," Warfield admits "that the Bible does not give us a formal description of the nature and extent of its own

¹Writings, 2:615-16 (o.d. 1894). Warfield presents quotations from Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology, 3 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner and Co., 1871-72; reprint ed., Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), 1:154; Augustus Hopkins Strong, Systematic Theology, 4th ed. (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1893), p. 95; William Greenough T. Shedd, Dogmatic Theology, 3 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1888-94), 1:88; Basil Manly, The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1888), p. 37; and Henry Boynton Smith, The Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, a sermon delivered before the [Presbyterian] Synod of New York and New Jersey, October 18, 1855 (New York: Gray, 1855), pp. 8-9.

²Briggs was opposed to "the false doctrines that dogmaticians have taught" by "sharpening the definitions of the Westminster symbols by undue refinements and assumed logical deductions, such as, (a) the addition of the adjective verbal to inspiration, and (b) the use of the term inerrancy with reference to the entire body of the Scriptures." Whither?, pp. 63-64 (emphasis Briggs's).

³See Hodge and Warfield, Inspiration, p. 18. This is in the part written by Hodge, but Warfield certainly agreed with it.

inspiration."¹ To admit that there is no formal statement or definition of inspiration does not mean for him that the Bible does not contain a doctrine of inspiration. On the contrary, it teaches such a doctrine in the same way and with the same authority that it teaches other doctrines such as the doctrine of the Trinity or the doctrine of the person of Christ. It does so, not "in already formulated scientific statements, but with pervasive constancy and invariable clearness, implying and asserting, in every part of the volume, all the elements of a complete doctrine."² In spite of the fact that in Warfield's judgment the term "inspiration" "is not a Biblical term and its etymological implications are not perfectly accordant with the Biblical conception of the modes of the divine operation in giving the Scriptures," he thinks that the term is "too firmly fixed, in both theological and popular usage, as the technical designation of the action of God in giving the Scriptures, to be replaced." He is thankful that the native implications of the word "lie as close as they do to the Biblical conceptions."³ In view of the foregoing considerations it seems logical when he insists in his last article on the subject that the term "inspiration" "shall receive its definition from the representations of Scripture, and not be permitted to impose upon our thought ideas of the origin of Scripture derived from an analysis of its own impli-

¹"The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration," p. 164. The statements of Vincent and Smyth were taken by Warfield from Vincent, "The Septuagint and the Inspiration of the Bible," p. 15, and from Smyth, p. 64.

²Ibid., p. 165.

³Bible, pp. 153-54 (o.d. 1915).

cations, etymological or historical."¹

From Warfield's insistence on the fact that a definition of inspiration must be derived from the representations of Scripture, it is evident that in any evaluation of his definition three issues need special scrutiny: (1) whether his definition is really derived from the Scriptural data alone; (2) whether the conclusions which he has drawn from the Scriptural data are legitimate; and (3) whether he has ignored any Scriptural data that would necessitate a change in his definition. To these issues we have to pay special attention in the concluding part of this chapter and in the final chapter.

The Divine Origin of Scripture and Inspiration

One distinction that Hodge and Warfield consider important and necessary in their 1881 article is the distinction between "the problem of the genesis of Scripture" on the one hand and "the mere fact of inspiration" on the other.² They see the subject of the genesis or origin of Scripture as much broader than that of inspiration. The former includes historic processes, divine revelations, and the preparation of the Biblical writers for their task in a "divinely-regulated concurrence of God and man, of the natural and the supernatural, of reason and revelation, of providence

¹Ibid., p. 154. This statement by Warfield seems to have answered in anticipation the criticism of William Abraham that "what Warfield fails to recognize is that there is also a conceptual dimension of our theme that is logically distinct from both exegesis and biblical theology." William J. Abraham, The Divine Inspiration of Holy Scripture (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 57.

²Hodge and Warfield, Inspiration, p. 6.

and grace."¹ The latter refers specifically to the superintendence by God of the sacred writers in the entire process of their writing by which their words become the words of God and guarantees the absolute infallibility of the record they produce. Inspiration, therefore, for these two authors, is not "the first religious truth which we embrace," but rather "the last and crowning attribute of those sacred books from which we derive our religious knowledge."²

This distinction between the divine origin of Scripture and inspiration is most sharply accentuated by Warfield in some of the earliest and in the very last of his writings on Scripture and inspiration with just enough evidence in between to show that it was always present in his thinking. In 1882, the year after the publication of the article co-authored with Hodge, a tract entitled The Divine Origin of the Bible appeared from Warfield's hand.³

Looking upon the Bible simply as one of the facts of the universe, Warfield undertakes to answer the question: "What kind of a cause must be assumed to account for it just as it is and just as it arose in the world?" His approach to the question is inductive,

¹Ibid., p. 14.

²Ibid., pp. 7-8.

³This essay has been reprinted in Revelation, pp. 429-47, but unfortunately nowhere else. It occupies a rather unique place among Warfield's writings on Scripture and he never covered the same ground again. Closest in this respect is perhaps his article "The Bible the Book of Mankind," in Writings, 1:3-22 (o.d. 1915), but although there is some similarity the variance between the two is considerable, due undoubtedly to their difference in purpose. Apart from the 1881 article and the 1882 tract, a clear discussion of the distinction is only found in the article "Inspiration" in Writings, 2:615 (o.d. 1894) and in the article "The Biblical Idea of Inspiration" in Bible, pp. 154-60 (o.d. 1915). The latter passage presents the most penetrating statement of the subject. Implicitly the distinction is also present in the article "God's Providence Over All," in Writings, 1:110-15 (o.d. 1894).

through a closely reasoned process. He considers first the history of the Bible, then its structure, and finally its teaching. He reaches the conclusion that it is impossible to account for the fact of the Bible on the hypothesis that it had only a human origin. All attempts to account for the origin of the Bible on such a hypothesis "have pitiably failed," he says, and there is "no particular reason to look for anything more cogent to be advanced in the future." If the origin of this book cannot be accounted for apart from God, "we seem shut up to account for it as from him."¹ For Warfield the only rational course is to accept the Bible as from God until it can be reasonably accounted for without His interference. He closes the tract with the observation that the same facts and arguments which have been adduced in a general way to prove the divine origin of the Bible raise a strong presumption for the further conclusion that this book has been "specifically inspired in the giving, that thus its every word is from him, and that it is worthy of our reverent and loving credence in its every particular."² It seems reasonable to assume that it was evidence such as he had presented in The Divine Origin of the Bible that was in the back of his mind when in subsequent articles he spoke of the immense weight of the evidence for the Biblical doctrine of inspiration.

When Warfield returned to the subject on two other occasions, he emphasized the importance of making a clear distinction between the deeper and wider problem of the divine origin of Scripture on the one hand, and inspiration in its technical theological sense, on

¹Revelation, p. 447.

²Ibid.

the other.¹ While highlighting God's providential guidance in the complex of many processes through long periods of time by which the Scriptures were brought into being,² Warfield stressed the point that inspiration is only the final, concluding action of God superinduced on this whole complex of processes. This final action gives a divine quality to the Scriptures unattainable by human powers alone. There can be no doubt that Warfield in agreement with Hodge saw this divine quality primarily in the fact that inspiration everywhere in Scripture secured "the errorless expression in language of the thought designed by God."³ Yet Warfield attributed more effects to inspiration than merely inerrancy, as will become evident when we discuss his views on the effects of inspiration.

The distinction between the origin of the Scriptures as a result of the concurrence of various divine and human operations on the one hand and inspiration on the other is for Warfield not just a convenient theory; it is the conception of the Biblical writers

¹Bible, p. 154. Cf. Writings, 2:615-16. The brief discussion of the distinction that follows is mainly extracted from these two sources.

²Warfield specifies some aspects of this complex of processes such as the preparation of the material which forms the subject matter of the Biblical books. This includes sacred history, religious experience, logical elaboration of the contents of revelation, and the progressive revelation of divine truth itself. Another important aspect is the preparation--physically, intellectually, and spiritually--of the men who were to write the books of the Bible. For example, "If God wished to give His people a series of letters like Paul's, He prepared a Paul to write them, and the Paul He brought to the task was a Paul who spontaneously would write just such letters." Bible, p. 155. The role of God's providence in the production of the Bible is very forcefully presented in Writings, 1:111-13 (c. d. 1894).

³Hodge and Warfield, Inspiration, p. 16.

themselves. After presenting a number of Biblical passages to illustrate this point,¹ he states his conclusion on the matter very forcefully:

It is beyond question, therefore, that the New Testament writers, when they declare the Scriptures to be the product of the divine breath, . . . are thinking of this operation of the Spirit only as the final act of God in the production of the Scriptures, superinduced upon a long series of processes, providential, gracious, miraculous, by which the matter of Scripture had been prepared for writing, and the men for writing it, and the writing of it had been actually brought to pass. It is this final act in the production of Scripture which is technically called "inspiration"; . . .²

Although Warfield dealt specifically with the above-mentioned distinction only a few times, there is reason to believe that it is very basic to his concept of the Biblical doctrine of inspiration. For him this distinction determines to a large extent the exact locus of inspiration in the structure of theology and clarifies its function in the complex of operations, both divine and human, which together brought the Scriptures into being. It seems that hardly any attention has been paid to this distinction whether by those who agree with Warfield's views or by those who oppose them.³

Revelation and Inspiration

A second distinction which Warfield clearly enunciates is the distinction between revelation and inspiration. In a brief remark on

¹To show that the distinction is based on the Biblical data, Warfield refers to the following passages from Scripture: Rom 15:4; 4:23-24; 1 Cor 10:11, 6; Gal 1:15-16; Jer 1:5; Isa 49:1, 5, and 2 Cor 1:4-6.

²Bible, p. 160.

³James Orr recognizes the importance of this distinction but does not elaborate on it. See James Orr, Revelation and Inspiration (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), pp. 23, 213.

the definition of inspiration at the beginning of his inaugural address in 1880, Warfield observes that "It is purposely so framed as to distinguish it from revelation;--seeing that it has to do with the communication of truth not its acquirement."¹

This distinction between revelation as the way by which a knowledge of truth was received from God and inspiration as an influence of the Holy Spirit by which infallibility was secured for prophets and apostles in communicating that truth to others was at that time already a well-established distinction.² Revelation was understood as referring to direct divine communications and acts, such as theophanies, dreams, visions, and miracles. Though the gifts of revelation and inspiration were often enjoyed by the same person, this was not necessarily the case. People could be given revelations from God and never receive the special gift of inspiration, conversely, God could inspire people to write sacred books without

¹Ibid., p. 421 (o.d. 1880).

²Charles Hodge wrote: "The object of revelation is the communication of knowledge. The object or design of inspiration is to secure infallibility in teaching. . . . The effect of revelation was to render its recipient wiser. The effect of inspiration was to preserve him from error in teaching." Systematic Theology, 1:155. Cf. William Lee, The Inspiration of Holy Scripture, Its Nature and Proof, 4th ed. (Dublin: Hodges and Smith and Co., 1865), pp. 29-31. Hoefel thinks that it is questionable whether Warfield was influenced by William Lee. See Hoefel, pp. 214-15. However, Warfield had a high regard for Lee's work, for in reviewing his book after it had been republished in 1892, he wrote: "Despite all the advance in scholarly study of the Bible which the last forty years have registered, Archdeacon Lee's treatise [which had originally been published in 1854] remains still the most complete, the most sober, and the most satisfactory treatise on its great subject accessible." Benjamin B. Warfield, review of The Inspiration of Holy Scripture, by William Lee, in PRR 4 (1893):166.

granting them direct revelations.¹ It was certainly such a view of the matter that was in the mind of Hodge and Warfield when they wrote, "Thus we have come to distinguish sharply between revelation, which is the frequent, and inspiration, which is the constant attribute of all the thoughts and statements of Scripture, . . ."²

For many years Warfield did not elaborate his concept of revelation, undoubtedly maintaining the same view of the distinction between revelation and inspiration he had intimated earlier.³ But from 1894 onward he published a number of articles on revelation and related subjects in which he developed his views quite extensively.⁴ It is impossible here adequately to set forth his views on revelation. We must limit ourselves to a brief outline in which the stress falls on the distinction under study. Warfield discerns between two species or stages of revelation which "have been commonly distinguished from one another by the distinctive names of natural and supernatural revelation, or general and special revelation,

¹See Hodge, 1:155.

²Hodge and Warfield, Inspiration, p. 6.

³So, e.g., in Writings, 2:615 (o.d. 1894).

⁴These are: "Theories of Revelation," Presbyterian Messenger, December 20, 1894, pp. 7-8; "The Christian Doctrine of Revelation," New Observer, July 4, 1895, pp. 4-5; "Revelation," reprinted under the title "The Idea of Revelation and Theories of Revelation," in Revelation, pp. 37-48 (o.d. 1895); "Can Dreams Convey a Revelation?" Bible Student 4 (1901):241-50; "Christianity and Revelation," Writings, 1:23-30 (o.d. 1902); "Revelation," The Universal Bible Encyclopaedia (Toledo, Ohio: C. E. Browning and Co., [1904]), pp. 1158-64; "Dream," Writings, 2:152-66 (o.d. 1907); "God's Revelation of Himself to Israel," Writings, 1:82-87 (o.d. 1907); "Revelation," reprinted under the title "The Biblical Idea of Revelation," in Bible, pp. 71-102 (o.d. 1915). The latter article is the most comprehensive one in this list.

or natural and soteriological revelation."¹ The one is the revelation which God continuously makes to all men, the other He exclusively makes to His chosen people.² Natural or general revelation does not give saving knowledge, which can only be provided to sinful man through special revelation.

This special, supernatural, and redemptive revelation has been given by God from the beginning, when man fell in sin, progressively unfolding itself in a connected series of redemptive acts culminating in the coming of Christ. God the redeemer is the "central disclosure"³ of special revelation. Against any assertion

¹Bible, p. 74 (o.d. 1915).

²Ibid., p. 73. Warfield sees salvation and therefore special revelation as limited to God's elect. However, he does recognize a progressive, world-embracing scope for special revelation. Ibid., p. 79.

³Writings, 1:28 (o.d. 1902). Peter who enumerates four weaknesses in Warfield's position mentions as the first of these "basic weaknesses" his "failure to give a proper place to the fact of Jesus Christ" (emphasis Peter's). J. F. Peter, "Warfield on the Scriptures." Reformed Theological Review 16 (October 1957):77. According to Peter it is unacceptable that in an article entitled "The Biblical Idea of Revelation" only one page is devoted to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. He repeats and expands a criticism that had already been raised by John McIntyre, review of The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible, by Benjamin B. Warfield, in Reformed Theological Review 9 (June 1950):20. Peter criticizes Warfield especially for neglecting the prominence which the Biblical writers give to the place of Jesus Christ and for not making Christ the norm by which other modes of revelation are to be assessed. A similar criticism in a more substantial form is raised by Markarian in his doctoral dissertation. See Markarian, pp. 147-50. Cf. Klaas Runia, Karl Barth's Doctrine of Holy Scripture (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962), pp. 32-33. There seems to be some justification for the criticism of McIntyre, Peter, Markarian, and Runia that Warfield did not sufficiently allow the centrality of Jesus Christ as the supreme revelation of God to determine his doctrine of revelation. However, one should not lose sight of Warfield's historical and polemical situation. Warfield's primary concern was the doctrine of inspiration rather than the doctrine of revelation. His ultimate concern in maintaining the

that this special revelation has been communicated in deeds only, and not also in word, Warfield raises strong objection pointing out that such a presentation of the nature of revelation is unbiblical and does not meet man's need. To redemptive acts God adds the explanatory word so that man can and may come to a saving knowledge. The explanatory word is itself a redemptive act of God. Without explanation God's redemptive acts would not be adequately understood even by regenerated men. Warfield thinks that "it may be doubted whether even the supreme revelation of God in Jesus Christ could have been known as such in the absence of preparatory, accompanying and succeeding explanatory revelations in words."¹

Apart from the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, which is sui generis, Warfield in his last article on the subject distinguishes three modes of special revelation: (1) external manifestation or theophany; (2) internal suggestion or prophecy,

trustworthiness of the Scriptures was to uphold them as the God-given source of our saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. A thorough study of all Warfield's writings, we believe, shows that Jesus Christ is for him the supreme fact and the supreme revelation and the Scriptures only the witness, but the essential and absolutely trustworthy witness, to that revelation. The centrality of Christ in Warfield's theology can be seen in reading the many and varied articles in his book The Person and Work of Christ.

¹Revelation, pp. 45-46 (o.d. 1895). Warfield laid great stress on the objective explanatory word as characteristic of the Biblical idea of revelation. But we must be careful to let the whole Warfield speak and guard against evaluating his theology by polemical statements with a one-sided emphasis. Writing about the revelation of the Trinity, Warfield could say, "The revelation itself was made not in word but in deed. It was made in the incarnation of God the Son, and the outpouring of God the Holy Spirit. The relation of the two Testaments to this revelation is in the one case that of preparation for it, and in the other that of product of it. The revelation itself is embodied just in Christ and in the Holy Spirit." Studies, p. 33 (o.d. 1915).

especially through visions and dreams; and (3) concursive operation.¹ Although he thinks that each mode is characteristic for a specific period in redemptive history, he also says they all occur in every age and, broadly speaking, on the same level.² Theophanies occur when God intrudes into the natural life of man in a purely supernatural manner, bearing a purely supernatural communication. Prophecy occurs when God makes himself and his will known to his chosen instruments, the prophets, through a vision or dream. According to Warfield the consciousness of the prophet is under the complete and compelling control of the Spirit in this mode of revelation. The third mode of revelation, which is called "conursive operation," differs from prophecy, so Warfield tells us:

. . . precisely by the employment in it, as is not done in prophecy, of the total personality of the organ of revelation, as a factor. It has been common to speak of the mode of the Spirit's action in this form of revelation, therefore, as an assistance, a superintendence, a direction, a control, the meaning being that the effect aimed at--the discovery and enunciation of divine truth--is attained through the action of the human powers--historical research, logical reasoning, ethical thought, religious aspiration--acting not by themselves, however, but under the prevailing assistance,³ superintendence, direction, control of the Divine Spirit.

This description of concursive operation as a third mode of revelation suggests a shift in Warfield's views, for what he describes seems to be very similar to what he elsewhere describes as inspiration. J. F. Peter suspects, therefore, that although such inconsistencies in Warfield's presentation "might charitably be ascribed to the passing of the years having brought about changes in

¹Bible, p. 83 (o.d. 1915).

²Ibid.

³Ibid., pp. 94-95.

his terminology," they are in reality due "to his being himself not clear as to what constitutes a revelation."¹ Peter has gained the impression that Warfield "was convinced that the Bible is in itself a special and infallible revelation, and that that fact blinded him to the need for making a thorough investigation of what the concept 'revelation' really involves."² Peter is certainly right when he thinks that Warfield considers the Bible to be in itself a special and infallible revelation. Warfield plainly states the fact. Already in 1895 he had written that Scripture is much more than a record of past revelations. Rather, "it is itself the final revelation of God, completing the whole disclosure of his unfathomable love to lost sinners, the whole proclamation of his purposes of grace, and the whole exhibition of his gracious provisions for their salvation."³

Though Warfield's inclusion in 1915 of concursive operation under the modes of revelation can easily be explained as inconsistent with his earlier sharply defined distinction between revelation and inspiration, he himself gives a different explanation. In his article "The Biblical Idea of Inspiration," published in the same year, he points out that a sharp distinction between inspiration and revelation is correct when the term revelation is taken "in one of its narrower senses, of say, an external manifestation of God, or of an immediate communication from God in words." But when revelation is understood in its wider sense as "the modes in which God makes

¹Peter, p. 81.

²Ibid.

³Revelation, p. 48 (o.d. 1895).

known to men His being, His will, His operations, His purposes" with the purpose of making them wise unto salvation, then inspiration and its product, Scripture, must be counted as belonging among the modes of revelation.¹ Warfield's view of the relationship between revelation and inspiration is therefore twofold, depending on how the term revelation is used. If the word revelation is used in its narrower meaning, inspiration must be sharply distinguished from it; if used in its wider sense, inspiration is one of its modes.

Other Important Distinctions

The doctrine of inspiration is closely connected with other Christian doctrines, especially those that treat of the relationships between the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures other than that of inspiration, such as the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit and illumination. That to Warfield the doctrine of the Holy Spirit was of vital importance is evident from his theological as well as his devotional writings.² One aspect of the work of the Holy Spirit to which he often refers is the testimonium Spiritus Sancti internum, which fact leads one to regard as rather extreme Rogers and McKim's

¹Bible, pp. 160-61 (o.d. 1915).

²Among the first group should be mentioned such articles as "The Spirit of God in the Old Testament," in Studies, pp. 127-56 (o.d. 1895); an abridged form of the previous article under the same title in Writings, 2:711-17 (o.d. 1895); "On the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit," in Writings, 1:203-19 (o.d. 1900); "Holy Ghost," Johnson's Universal Encyclopaedia (New York: D. Appleton and Co., A. J. Johnson's Co., 1893-97), 4:338-39. The last group is represented by a brief meditation "The Love of the Holy Ghost," in Writings, 2:718-24 (o.d. 1895); a sermon under the same title in Benjamin B. Warfield, The Power of God unto Salvation (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1930), pp. 121-48; and another sermon "The Leading of the Spirit," *ibid.*, pp. 151-79.

claim that the "emphasis on religious experience and the inner working of the Holy Spirit was gradually subordinated and finally suppressed in the Princeton theology."¹

No one who makes a thorough study of Warfield's writings can say that he suppressed "the inner working of the Holy Spirit." The larger part of his article "Calvin's Doctrine of the Knowledge of God" consists of a penetrating study of "The Testimony of the Spirit" which Calvin emphasized. Warfield concludes his article with the unambiguous declaration that what "Calvin has given to the Reformed Churches . . . in his formulation of the doctrine of the testimony of the Spirit is a fundamental doctrine, . . ."² Even if we had to be deprived of this one noteworthy treatise there would still remain such a plethora of references to the testimony of the Spirit

¹Rogers and McKim, p. 274. These authors quote Ernest R. Sandeen, The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800-1930 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 310 [should be p. 118]; idem, "The Princeton Theology: One Source of Biblical Literalism in American Protestantism," Church History 31 (1962):310, in support of their judgment. Ibid., p. 312, n. 39; p. 313, n. 69. Sandeen had stated the case somewhat milder, namely, that "the witness of the Spirit, though not overlooked, cannot be said to play any important role in Princeton thought." Sandeen, Roots, p. 118. If Sandeen could have known better, Rogers and McKim certainly should have known better. Hoffecker's dissertation, with which they evidently are acquainted, provided sufficient evidence for a more balanced judgment. See Rogers and McKim, p. 312, n. 40, and Hoffecker, pp. 249-70; also W. Andrew Hoffecker, Piety and the Princeton Theologians: Archibald Alexander, Charles Hodge, and Benjamin Warfield (Philipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1981), pp. 101-10.

²Calvin, p. 130 (o.d. 1909). The latter part of the article dealing with "The Testimony of the Spirit" and its "Historical Revelations" comprises sixty pages. Ibid., pp. 70-130. Bernard Ramm evaluates this article as "in many ways . . . the finest presentation of the testimonium and an excellent view of Calvin's opinion." Bernard Ramm, The Witness of the Spirit (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1960), p. 133.

elsewhere in his writings, especially in his book reviews, that we would be able to delineate the structure and significance of Warfield's doctrine of this testimony quite sharply.¹

One issue on which Warfield decidedly differs from most of his critics is the relationship between the testimony of the Spirit and the inspiration of the Scriptures. Over against the idea that the testimony of the Spirit forms the primary evidence or proof of the inspiration of the Scriptures, Warfield maintains that the function of this testimony was to create in man's heart the full persuasion of the infallibility and authority of the Scriptures, not to prove the inspiration of this or that portion of Scripture. Early in his career he stated the matter succinctly:

What is Scripture cannot be determined by the simple test: "Does this strike me as true? Does this truth 'find me'?" Our "full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority" of Scripture is indeed "from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts." It is by his work alone that we are enabled to practically rest on Scripture as God's word to us. But the proof of inspiration is elsewhere, and in the case of a New Testament book must begin with this query: "Is there valid reason for believing that the apostles gave this book to the Church as authoritative?"²

As seen above the decisive proof or evidence for the fact of inspiration for Warfield lies in the claims and teachings of the

¹See, e.g., Westminster Assembly, pp. 210-24 (o.d. 1893); Critical Reviews, pp. 233-34 (o.d. 1910); review of The Living Christ and the Four Gospels, by R. W. Dale, in PRR 2 (1891):713-14; review of The Being of God as Unity and Trinity, by P. H. Steenstra, in PRR 3 (1892):178-79; review of The Witness of the Spirit in Relation to the Authority and the Inspiration of Scriptures, by William MacLaren, in PRR 7 (1896):174.

²Benjamin B. Warfield, "Inspiration, and the Spurious Verses at the End of Mark," Sunday School Times, January 20, 1883, pp. 36-37 (emphasis Warfield's).

Biblical writers and in all the evidence that shows their trustworthiness as divinely authorized teachers. When Charles Briggs, quoting from the Puritan scholar John Ball (1585-1640), writes that "the testimonie of the Spirit doth not teach or assure us of the Letters, syllables, or several words of Holy Scripture," but only "doth seale in our hearts the saving truth contained in those sacred writings" as proof that the Westminster divines did not teach verbal inspiration,¹ Warfield retorts that Briggs has misunderstood the clear intention of Ball, namely, to guard against making a wrong use of the testimony of the Spirit. Warfield argues that Ball does believe in verbal inspiration and draws the conclusion that "Ball's object . . . is not to suggest that the Scriptures are not verbally inspired; but to deny that this can be proved by "the testimonie of the Spirit".² He is convinced, however, that Ball teaches that such inspiration can be proved by other forms of testimony, which, of course, is Warfield's own position.

Similarly Warfield maintains that canonicity is not the object of the testimony of the Spirit. In disagreement with certain scholars who attributed to Calvin the teaching that the testimony of the Spirit is determinative for canonicity, Warfield is convinced that Calvin "determines the limits of the canon and establishes the integrity of the transmission of Scripture distinctly on scientific,

¹Whither?, p. 68. For the entire argument, see *ibid.*, pp. 64-68.

²"The Westminster Doctrine of Inspiration," in Howie, p. 65 (emphasis Warfield's).

that is to say, historico-critical grounds."¹ To substantiate this point Warfield refers to the fact that whenever Calvin discusses the canonicity of a specific book, he never proves its canonicity with an appeal to the testimony of the Spirit but on the basis of the evidence of valid tradition and apostolicity of contents.² To Warfield the relationship between canonicity and inspiration is close but he does not identify them. He admits that he can conceive of an inspired uncanonical writing although he is not acquainted with the actual existence of such a document. Succinctly he sums up the relationship in the words that "while inspiration is essential to canonicity, canonicity is not essential to inspiration."³ The essence of canonicity, according to Warfield, is not the spiritual instinct of the Christian consciousness, neither selection by the Church or even apostolic authorship, but apostolic authority or apostolic gift.⁴

Another distinction found in Warfield's writings is that between inspiration and illumination. In the article "Inspiration" published jointly with Hodge it is clearly stated that "spiritual illumination is very different from either revelation or

¹Calvin, p. 92 (o.d. 1909).

²Ibid.

³"Inspiration, and the Spurious Verses," p. 36.

⁴Warfield is very emphatic on apostolic gift or apostolic authority as the true principle of canonicity. All other criteria of canonicity were rejected by him. His position is repeatedly set forth in articles and book reviews. See Bible, pp. 411-16 (o.d. 1892); Writings, 2:14-15 (o.d. 1892); 48-49 (o.d. 1882); 612-13 (o.d. 1886); Critical Reviews, p. 233 (o.d. 1910); review of A Recently Proposed Test of Canonicity, by W. M. McPheters, in PRR 2 (1891):348. His concern was not with apostolic authorship, which he knew could not always be established, but with apostolic authority. Bible, p. 415 (o.d. 1892).

inspiration," but that it nevertheless "had, under the providence of God, a large share in the genesis of Scripture, contributing to it a portion of that divine element which makes it the word of God."¹ To this illumination we owe the inspired records of the religious experience of the Biblical writers such as the Psalms. Warfield does not elaborate on the distinction between inspiration and illumination, but he considers the theory which identifies inspiration with spiritual illumination as one of the lower theories of inspiration. One element which such theories share, in his opinion, is that they "confine inspiration to the divine agency in the production of true religion, denying that it directly enters into the production of the Biblical books as such."²

In summary we can say that the distinctions between inspiration on the one hand and, on the other, the divine origin of Scripture, revelation, illumination, canonicity, and the internal testimony of the Spirit are important to Warfield. They clarify what inspiration is and what it is not. They show its specific place and significance in the complex of divine processes through which the Scriptures came into existence, and they help expose what he regards as wrong views of inspiration. For most of these distinctions Warfield does present Biblical reasons, but criticism such as Peter's and others' suggests that there is need for a very thorough study of Warfield's views on such subjects and of the Biblical data on which he bases his doctrinal distinctions. It is to those Biblical data

¹Hodge and Warfield, Inspiration, p. 15.

²Writings, 2:622 (o.d. 1894).

from which he derives his doctrine of inspiration that we must now turn.

Scriptural Evidence of Divine Inspiration

To establish the Biblical doctrine of inspiration, Warfield thinks it essential that we start with the Bible as the only legitimate source and that we use the true inductive method. For him the relevant data for that induction are claims to inspiration, statements concerning inspiration, allusions to the subject of inspiration, and the attitude towards Scripture manifested by the Biblical writers.¹ We have seen already that for him the emphasis falls heavily on New Testament data, not because he despised the Old Testament evidence, but because he considers the teachings and attitude of Christ and the apostles in regard to the Old Testament as the principal phenomena in his inductive approach.² In one of his articles he tells us that "the induction must be broad enough to embrace and give full weight to a great variety of . . . facts."³ It is to include not only direct assertions of divinity and infallibility for Scripture but also a variety of expressions of confidence in and ways of using Scripture which are irresistible in their teaching when it is once fairly apprehended.

¹Bible, pp. 205-6 (o.d. 1893). For Warfield's concept of the genuine inductive method, see above pp. 213-21.

²See above pp. 221-24.

³Bible, p. 119 (o.d. 1894). Phenomena which evince the human element or aspect of the Scriptures are not overlooked by him but usually come up when he discusses the difficulties raised as objections against the teaching of the absolute trustworthiness of the Bible.

Among the latter he enumerates the lofty titles which are given to Scripture and by which it is cited; the significant formulae by which it is quoted; modes of adducing Scripture which reveal that the writers identify it with God in such a way that even its narrative parts are conceived as direct utterances of God; the attribution to Scripture, as such, of divine qualities and acts; the ascription of the Scriptures, in whole or in part, to the Holy Spirit as their author while the human authors are treated as merely his media of expression; the reverence and trust shown, and the significance and authority ascribed, to the very words of Scripture; and the general attitude of entire subjection to every declaration of Scripture of whatever kind, which characterizes every line of the New Testament.¹

Even this enumeration is not exhaustive. A careful survey and analysis of all the articles or parts of articles in which Warfield studies the relevant Biblical data² reveal that his reference to "a great variety of facts" is not exaggerated. But in

¹ Ibid.

² To give a full listing here is hardly feasible. The most significant of Warfield's surveys of the relevant Biblical data (not of his detailed exegetical studies) are found in Bible, pp. 423-27 (o.d. 1880); Writings, 2:539-40 (o.d. 1889); "Present Problem", pp. 413-14 (quoting Richard Rothe); Bible, pp. 411-12 (o.d. 1892); pp. 176-78 (quoting Rothe again), 213 (o.d. 1893); "The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration," pp. 164, 169-72; "Warfield Replies," pp. 216-17 (quoting Herman Schultz); Writings 2:634-35 (o.d. 1894); Limited Inspiration, pp. 15-17; Studies, pp. 140-41 (o.d. 1895); Writings, 1:32-33 (o.d. 1898); Bible, pp. 131-65 passim (o.d. 1915). The last article mentioned contains the most extensive discussion of the relevant Biblical data by Warfield. To gain a balanced view of the scope, emphasis, and constancy of Warfield's appeal to those data, it is necessary to study all the surveys in close connection of course with his more detailed studies.

order to evaluate correctly the relation between his inductive study of the Biblical data and the doctrine of inspiration, which he ultimately derives from them, it is necessary to keep in mind his observation that the New Testament teaches the doctrine of inspiration, like many other doctrines, not "in already formulated scientific statements, but, with pervasive constancy and invariable clearness, implying and asserting, in every part of the volume, all the elements of a complete doctrine."¹

It can hardly be said that Warfield's presentation of the Biblical evidence of inspiration is original or unique. Nineteenth-century works on inspiration are replete with discussions of the "proofs" of inspiration,² and with most of these works Warfield was well acquainted. Many of the specific phenomena had already been pointed out by others. The uniqueness of Warfield's contribution can probably best be found in the thoroughness of his detailed exegetical studies and the broad spectrum of Biblical phenomena on the basis of which he concluded that the Biblical doctrine of inspiration is that of plenary verbal inspiration.

The following analysis of the Biblical evidence presented by Warfield in his articles and of the conclusions which he draws is of

¹"The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration," p. 165.

²So, e.g., F. S. R. Louis Gaussen, The Divine Inspiration of the Bible, trans. David D. Scott (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel Publications, 1971), esp. chap. 2, "Scriptural Proof of the Divine Inspiration" (his book was originally published in French in 1840); Lee, esp. lecture 6, "Scriptural Proof"; James Bannerman, Inspiration: The Infallible Truth and Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1865), esp. chap. 8, "Proof of Inspiration--Old Testament," and chap. 9, "Proof of Inspiration--New Testament"; Patton, esp. chap. 5, "Plenary Inspiration"; and many others.

necessity succinct. It is divided in two sections--the first dealing with the teachings and attitude of Christ and the apostles in regard to the Old Testament and the second with their teaching and attitude in regard to the New Testament.

The Teaching and Attitude of Christ and the
Apostles in Regard to the Old Testament

Direct assertions of divine origin and infallibility. Three passages of Scripture are given special emphasis by Warfield as teaching the divine origin and infallibility of the Old Testament, namely, 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:19-21; and John 10:34-35.¹ Warfield does not hesitate to call 2 Tim 3:16 "the primary passage" of the New Testament testimony to the divine origin and qualities of the Old Testament,² and his article "Paul's Doctrine of the Old Testament" is entirely devoted to an exposition of 2 Tim 3:15-17. In the first half of this article Warfield discusses the contextual setting and the most significant linguistic problems of the passage, including an exegetical study of the term θεόπνευστος.³ He sums up the result

¹These three passages he describes in 1894 as "direct assertions of divine infallibility and authority for Scripture" in Writings, 2:634 (o.d. 1894), but he does not discuss them together in a special way except in his final article on inspiration of 1915. See Bible, pp. 133-40.

²Ibid., p. 163.

³For the shift in Warfield's understanding of the word θεόπνευστος, see above, pp. 238-39. Warfield was fully aware of the different possibilities in translating 2 Tim 3:16 and discusses them in "Paul's Doctrine," pp. 392-93, and more than twenty-five years later in Bible, p. 134 (o.d. 1915). In both articles he would translate the expression πάντα γραφή as "every Scripture" rather than "all Scripture," but he seems to change his mind from one article to the other on the question whether θεόπνευστος should be translated as an attributive adjective (which he seems to prefer in

of his study in stating that "Paul here simply asserts that the Scriptures of the Old Testament are divine--in the highest and truest sense, God's word."¹ He considers 2 Tim 3:16 as providing proof for the plenary inspiration of the Old Testament, less directly as evidence for verbal inspiration or inerrancy,² and his emphasis on this passage has been misunderstood as if he regards it as primary proof for the latter.³

The second passage 2 Pet 1:19-21 (together with 2 Tim 3:16) is already mentioned by Warfield in his inaugural address of 1880 as a didactic statement directly affirming the inspiration of the Old Testament. His most extensive interpretation of this passage is found in his final two articles on inspiration and revelation written in 1915.⁴ He is not sure whether the phrase "every prophecy of

the later article) or as a part of the predication (which he seems to favor in the earlier article). This being said, he does not think that there is a great difference between these translations, for "in both cases these sacred Scriptures are declared to owe their value to their divine origin; and in both cases their divine origin is energetically asserted of their entire fabric." Bible, p. 134.

¹"Paul's Doctrine," p. 397.

²This seems implied in his final remarks on 2 Tim 3:16 in 1915 when he writes, "Their spiritual power, as God-breathed, is all that he [Paul] had occasion here to advert to. Whatever other qualities may accrue to them from their divine origin, he leaves to other occasions to speak of." Bible, p. 135.

³James Dunn begins his remarks on the weakness of the Warfield position by stating that "it is difficult to see how this verse requires inerrancy." Dunn, p. 108. Warfield did not derive the inerrancy of Scripture directly from this verse. It is only in connection with many other Biblical data that Warfield seems to present this text as an argument for verbal inspiration or the infallibility of the Bible. In some of his surveys it is not mentioned at all.

⁴Bible, pp. 135-37, and p. 91. The next few observations are taken from these passages.

Scripture" in vs. 20 refers to the whole of Scripture as prophetic, that is to say of divine origin, or only to that portion of Scripture which is called prophetic in its strict sense as containing immediate revelations. He holds the former to be the more likely view and accordingly sees the phrase as an equivalent to Paul's "every Scripture" in 2 Tim 3:16. However, the passage in 2 Peter goes beyond the 2 Timothy statement since it not only asserts the divine origin of Scripture but by using the word *ἀπόθεω* in vs. 21, which Warfield translated as "borne," also accentuates the Holy Spirit as the active agent and the holy men of God as the passive instruments in the origination of an immediately divine word. This is why their word is a sure word, which affords a more sure basis of confidence than even the testimony of human eyewitnesses. According to Warfield "the proximate stress" of the passage is laid "on the divine trustworthiness of Scripture."¹ Like 2 Tim 3:16 the passage in 2 Peter is mentioned only in connection with many other texts as teaching verbal inspiration.

It is the third passage John 10:34-35 which more than the other two is understood by Warfield as teaching explicitly the supreme trustworthiness and irrefragable authority of Scripture. Already the fact that Jesus adduces a statement from the Psalms as part of "your law" is highly significant to Warfield, for he infers from this that the entire Old Testament was not only conceived of as "prophecy" but also as "law," and that "these three terms, the law, prophecy, Scripture, were indeed, materially, strict synonyms."²

¹Ibid., p. 137.

²Ibid., p. 139.

The further fact that the Lord sharpens to the utmost his appeal to Scripture--and that to "one of its most casual clauses"--by adding the emphatic statement that "the Scriptures cannot be broken" means that "in the Saviour's view the indefectible authority of Scripture attaches to the very form of expression of its most casual clauses" and "to its most minute particulars."¹ The words of Christ in John 10:35 in regard to Scripture affirm "its verbal trustworthiness throughout."² The efforts on the part of critical scholars to negate or weaken the force of Jesus' strong affirmation in this passage are to Warfield a striking demonstration of the fact that the high doctrine of inspiration is indeed the doctrine of Christ and his apostles.

Although these three passages are singled out by Warfield as "direct assertions of divine infallibility and authority for Scripture,"³ a thorough examination of his entire corpus of writings on inspiration makes it clear that he perceived them as only one set of evidence among a multiplicity of Biblical data which together prove to him that the Biblical view of inspiration is that of plenary verbal inspiration with all that that view implies.⁴ Critics of Warfield's position, who think that they have proved that

¹Ibid., p. 140.

²"The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration," p. 170.

³Writings, 2:634 (o.d. 1894).

⁴In his inaugural address he briefly mentions 2 Tim 3:16 and 2 Pet 1:21 at the end of a considerable list of Biblical data from which he draws the conclusion that it is quite certain if one accepts the best results of modern critical exegesis "that the New Testament writers held the full verbal inspiration of the Old Testament." Bible, p. 426 (o.d. 1880).

position untenable once they have invalidated his appeal to what Setzer designates as the loci classici,¹ may not have sufficiently taken into account the wide spectrum of evidence from which he derives his doctrine of inspiration, nor of the relative place of the three passages in that spectrum.² It is this spectrum that awaits our analysis.

Titles given to the Old Testament in the New. To Warfield the lofty titles "Scripture," "the Scriptures," and "the oracles of God" used by the New Testament writers to refer to the Old Testament clearly imply their full belief in its inspiration.³ This phenomenon is mentioned in practically all Warfield's surveys and worked out in three of his detailed exegetical studies.⁴ From a careful study of the more than fifty occurrences in which the singular and plural

¹Setzer, pp. 191-242.

²This, e.g., seems to be the weakness of Mike Parsons who asserts that from the three verses under discussion "it cannot be deduced that Jesus ascribed legal authority to all Scripture," but admits that Warfield has a strong point when he insists that the argument of John 10:35 "must be seen in the light of Jesus' cumulative use of Scripture, particularly his frequent citation with the formula gegraptai." Mike Parsons, "Warfield and Scripture," Churchman 91 (1977):213.

³Bible, p. 426 (o.d. 1880).

⁴These exegetical studies have been mentioned above. See p. 201, n. 2. The three here referred to are "The Oracles of God," in Bible, pp. 351-407 (o.d. 1900); "The Terms 'Scripture' and 'Scriptures' as Employed in the New Testament," in Bible, pp. 229-41 (o.d. 1908); and a more extended version of the latter, "'Scripture,' 'The Scriptures,' in the New Testament," in Revelation, pp. 115-65 (o.d. 1910). These form a major contribution to the study of the titles for the Old Testament used in the New Testament. Bernard Ramm could write in 1961 that to his knowledge "nothing yet has been produced to parallel the detailed work of Warfield." Ramm, Special Revelation and the Word of God, p. 152, n. 18. The observation still seems valid today.

forms of the Greek term γραφή are employed in the New Testament, Warfield concludes that:

. . . the meaning is the same; in either case the application of the term to the Old Testament writings by the writers of the New Testament is the outgrowth of their conception of these Old Testament writings as a unitary whole, and designates this body of writings in its entirety as the one, well-known authoritative documentation of the divine revelation. This is the fundamental fact with respect to the use of these terms in the New Testament from which all the other facts of their usage flow.¹

In the occasional use of the singular γραφή to indicate particular passages of Scripture, for which Classical Greek would have used the term γράμμα or other terms, Warfield sees a new development on Jewish or Judaeo-Christian ground from the pregnant use of γραφή for the Scriptures as a whole.² The later use presupposes the former. The basic concept that underlies both uses is that of the Old Testament as a single document different from all other documents by reason of its unique divinity and indefectible authority. Consequently the Old Testament is appealed to either in its entirety or in its single declarations as the final arbiter of belief and practice.

The use of the expression τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ on the part of the New Testament writers in Rom 3:2 and Heb 5:12 and of λόγια ζῶντα in Acts 7:38 is further evidence to Warfield that they regard the Old Testament writings as a divine oracular book, which not merely contains but is the very word of God. He reaches this conclusion after a very extensive and careful analysis of the usage of the term

¹Revelation, pp. 135-36.

²Bible, p. 236.

λόγια in Classical, Hellenistic, and Patristic Greek.¹ This analysis shows that the term λόγια does not refer to simple "utterances" but rather to distinctively "oracular utterances," divinely authoritative communications, before which men stand in awe and to which they bow in humility. The term is not indicative of a special linguistic form but designates the sacred nature of the utterances.²

The designation of the writings of the Old Testament by these highly significant titles indicated beyond doubt for Warfield that the New Testament writers held the Old Testament Scriptures to be "the very word of God in the highest strictest sense that term can bear," and therefore, "the express utterance, in all their parts and each and every of their words, of the Most High."³

Formulae used in quoting the Old Testament. Warfield sees a close correlation between the lofty titles by which the Old Testament writings are designated and the formulae "it is written" or "it is said" by which they are often cited in the New Testament.⁴ The formulae γέγραπται and γεγραμμένου ἐστίν, so commonly found in

¹Ibid., p. 406.

²Ibid., p. 403. Gerhard Kittel in his discussion of "λόγιον in the New Testament" reaches some conclusions similar to those of Warfield, but he does not seem to be acquainted with the latter's article on the subject. See Gerhard Kittel, "λέγω, etc. D. Word and Speech in the New Testament," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964-76), 4:138-39.

³Bible, p. 407.

⁴This correlation can be found in all his surveys but is most adequately explained in Bible, pp. 239-40, and Revelation, pp. 144-49.

the reports of our Lord's sayings, are especially expressive of final and divine authority. Whether these formulae are used in connection with an intimation of the place where the cited words are to be found, or whether they stand alone as bare formulae of authority, their adduction in this decisive manner carries with it the connotation that the appeal is made to Scriptures as clothed in all their parts and in all of their declarations with the authority of God Himself.¹

Identification of the word of Scripture with the word of God.

References to the phenomenon of identifying Scripture with the word of God, like the previous ones, can be found in Warfield's writings from 1880 onward. The first of his thorough exegetical studies on the doctrine of Scripture, entitled "'It Says,' 'Scripture Says,' 'God Says,'" is devoted to it.² In this article he discusses initially two classes of passages: those in which the Scriptures are spoken of as if they were God, such as Gal 3:8 and Rom 9:17, and those in which God is spoken of as if He were the Scriptures, such as Matt 19:4-5 and Acts 13:35. In Warfield's opinion both sets of passages are evidence of such a habitual identification in the minds of the writers of the words of Scripture with God as speaking that

¹Bible, p. 240.

²Ibid., pp. 299-346 (o.d. 1899). James Dunn acknowledges that Warfield's observation on the identification implied in the introductory formulae is correct, but criticizes him for failing to deal with the question how the Scripture quoted actually functions as authority--as word of God. Dunn, p. 202. There may be some justification for this criticism, but it should be recognized that Warfield's primary concern in this article is to show the general principle implied in the use of the formulae and not how this principle functions in each particular case.

the expressions "Scripture says" and "God says" are virtually identical. Warfield also observes the same identification in certain catenae of quotations from the Old Testament, as for instance, in Heb 1:5-13. Here one finds some passages in which God is the speaker. In other passages God is not the speaker, but He is addressed or spoken of. However, all the passages are indiscriminately assigned to God, because "they all have it in common that they are words of Scripture, and as words of Scripture are words of God."¹

By far the largest part of the above-mentioned article deals with a closely related phenomenon of New Testament passages in which Scripture is cited with a subjectless λέγει or φησι. Warfield recognizes that commentators are divided in their opinion as to whether God or Scripture is here presupposed as subject or whether these introductory formulae are to be taken as impersonal verbs. It is neither necessary nor possible in the limits of this context to follow the detailed argument of Warfield's discussion. Whoever makes the effort to do so will probably recognize the validity of his conclusion that it is inconceivable that the New Testament writers with their high conception of "Scripture" should have adduced Scripture with an impersonal "it is said"--somewhere, by someone--; rather they used the expression "It says" with "the implication that this 'It says' is the same as 'Scripture says,' and that this 'Scripture says' is the same as 'God says.'"² It is this implied identification which for Warfield is the fundamental fact

¹Bible, p. 147 (o.d. 1915).

²Ibid., p. 348 (emphasis Warfield's).

in the case. It is all summed up for him in the pithy phrase "What Scripture says, God says."

Formulae of citation expressing immediate divine authorship.

Another striking evidence for Warfield that the New Testament writers treat the Old Testament as divine in its entirety and in all its parts is the way they ascribe its utterances to God or to the Holy Spirit. God is said to speak by the prophets, as in Matt 1:22, 2:15; by the mouth of his servants, as in Acts 4:25; and even in the narrative parts, as in Heb 4:4; and such words in the Old Testament itself which are not spoken by Him, as in Acts 13:35. The writers of Scripture are mentioned as writing in the Spirit, as in Matt 22:43, and the Holy Ghost as speaking through them, as in Acts 1:16.¹

Warfield stresses especially the fact that quite a number of times "Scripture is cited, not as what God or the Holy Spirit 'said,' but what He 'says,' the present tense emphasizing the living voice of God speaking in Scriptures to the individual soul (Heb 3:7; Acts 13:35, Heb 1:7, 8, 10; Rom 15:10)."² This fact, combined with others such as the use of the title "oracles of God," demonstrates to Warfield that the New Testament writers in citing the Old Testament "were acutely conscious that they were citing immediate words of God."³ When Henry P. Smith asserts that such formulae of citation are limited to cases of "a distinct revelation, promise or prophecy," Warfield disagrees with him and points out that even the imprecations

¹The Biblical evidence here mentioned is drawn from Warfield's inaugural address. Bible, p. 426 (o.d. 1880). It is frequently repeated in later articles, but he never wrote a detailed study on this subject as he did on others.

²Ibid., p. 148 (o.d. 1915).

³Ibid., p. 149.

of the so-called imprecatory Psalms are adduced as spoken by the Holy Spirit, as in Acts 1:16 and 20.¹

Formulae of citation expressing human authorship and their relation to divine authorship. Warfield recognizes that passages of Scripture are frequently cited with reference to the human authors. In his 1915 article on inspiration he provides a list of such instances.² He notes, however, "that when thus Scripture is adduced by the names of its human authors, it is a matter of complete indifference whether the words adduced are comments of these authors or direct words of God recorded by them."³ Expressions like "Moses says" or "David says" are just another way of saying "Scripture says," and Warfield finds here another evidence of the identification of the human word with the word of God. This observation is strongly enhanced by the fact that in a number of introductory formulae the human author is mentioned as the instrument through whom God or the Holy Spirit speaks or who speaks in the Spirit (Mark 12:36; Acts 1:16; 4:25; etc.). On the basis of the pervasive evidence for the human authorship of Scripture and the no less pervasive evidence for its divine authorship, Warfield concludes that "Scripture is the product of man, but only of man speaking from God and under such a control of the Holy Spirit as that in their speaking they are 'borne' by Him."⁴

¹For Smith's assertion, see Henry Preserved Smith, Inspiration and Inerrancy: A History and a Defense (Cincinnati: Robert Clark and Co., 1893), p. 282. Warfield's reaction is found in Limited Inspiration, p. 15.

²Bible, p. 152.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 151. Warfield's view of the relationship between

Other phenomena indicative of divine inspiration, its nature, and effects. Besides the Biblical data already discussed, Warfield refers to a number of other phenomena which contribute to our understanding of the Biblical doctrine of inspiration. Of special significance to him are a few places where Christ or Paul quote the Old Testament in such a way that they formulate an argument on the basis of a particular word or a particular tense, as in John 10:34; Matt 22:32, 43; and Gal 3:16. This strongly suggests that they considered the very words of Scripture to be inspired.¹

The constant affirmations on the part of Christ and the apostles that certain events happened because Scripture must needs be fulfilled (Matt 26:54; Luke 22:37; Acts 1:16; etc.) are another evidence of its indefectible authority based on the fact that it is the word of God in its entirety.² Then there are the attribution to Scripture of divine qualities, the attitude of utter submission to Scripture on the part of Christ as well as on the part of his followers, and the persistent appeal to Scripture to justify the Gospel they preach in every detail.³

For Warfield this spectrum of phenomena showing the teaching and attitude of Christ and the apostles in regard to the Old Testament Scriptures and their use of them constitutes the essential

the divine and the human is more fully considered in our study of the mode of inspiration. See below, pp. 279-84.

¹Ibid., p. 149. Elsewhere Warfield observes that "it is in connection with one of these word-arguments that He [Christ] declares of the whole Scripture that it cannot be broken, thus affirming its verbal trustworthiness throughout." "The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration," p. 170.

²Bible, p. 145.

³Writings, 2:635 (o.d. 1894).

evidence for establishing the Biblical doctrine of inspiration. In this analytical description of the phenomena as presented by Warfield, the constituent elements of the doctrine of inspiration he derives from them have already become visible. The final step of our investigation is to follow him as he sets forth on the basis of the accumulated evidence the Biblical doctrine of inspiration as to its mode, its extent, and its effects. Before we do that, however, we must briefly trace the phenomena on the basis of which he concludes that the same inspiration claimed for the Old Testament also pertains to the New Testament.

The Teaching and Attitude of Christ and the
Apostles in Regard to the New Testament

It is evident that the question of the inspiration of the New Testament must be determined in a manner different from that of the Old Testament. Whereas in the time of Christ the Old Testament was generally recognized by the Jews as divine Scripture, the New Testament, written after his earthly life had been completed, could not be used or appealed to as an established body of divine oracles by Biblical writers in like manner as the Old Testament. Warfield, therefore, presents, in a rather sketchy form, different lines of evidence which indicate to him that the inspiration claimed for the Old Testament pertains equally to the New.¹

Promises of supernatural guidance made by Christ. Special promises of divine guidance were made by Christ to his disciples at

¹The evidence on this point is discussed most extensively in Bible, pp. 424-25, 427 (o.d. 1880); Writings, 2:539-40 (o.d. 1889); Bible, pp. 163-65 (o.d. 1915). The following survey is based mainly on the first passage mentioned.

the beginning of their ministry (Matt 10:19-20) but most emphatically just before his crucifixion (Mark 13:11; Luke 21:12-15; and in John 14 and 16).

Claim of speaking and writing with divine authority.

Warfield finds the claim for speaking and writing with divine authority especially in the writings of Paul (2 Cor 10:7-8; Gal 1:7-8; 1 Thess 4:2, 11; 2 Thess 3:6-14) and observes that this claim is made by Paul not only for the word he speaks but also for his writings (1 Cor 14:37; 2 Thess 2:15). The same consciousness of writing with divine authority is also manifested elsewhere, as in Rev 22:18-19.

Claim of divine inspiration. Warfield asks the question on what the immense claim of authority on the part of the apostles is grounded, for if it is a mere human claim it is most astounding impudence. He finds the answer in the fact that the apostles are conscious of and distinctly claim divine inspiration. Peter claims that the apostles preached the gospel in the Holy Spirit (1 Pet 1:12) and the word Paul preaches is not the word of men, but in truth the word of God (1 Thess 2:13). Very interesting is Warfield's appeal to 1 Cor 7:40, which text according to "the best and most scientific modern exegesis proves that Paul claimed for his 'opinion' expressed in this letter direct divine inspiration, . . ."¹ But it is especially the words of Paul in 1 Cor 2:13, "Which things, also we

¹Bible, p. 425. Warfield sees in the phrase "and it seems to me that I have the Spirit of God" an expression of meiotic irony, not of modesty or doubt. Unfortunately he does not refer to any specific sources on which he draws for "the best and most modern exegesis" of this verse.

utter not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit; joining spiritual things with spiritual things," that Warfield finds not merely a general claim of inspiration, but very distinctly a claim of verbal inspiration.¹

The recognition of certain New Testament writings as Scripture. Throughout his writings on inspiration Warfield never ceases to stress the fact that in two places in the New Testament-- 1 Tim 5:18 and 2 Pet 3:16--other New Testament writings (namely, the Gospel of Luke and the Epistles of Paul) are quoted or referred to as Scripture in conjunction with the Scriptures of the Old Testament. From this fact Warfield can only draw one conclusion: ". . . as they [the New Testament writers] indubitably hold to the full--even verbal--inspiration of the Old Testament, it follows that they claim the same verbal inspiration for the New."²

This in a concise form sums up the Scripture evidence from which Warfield derives his doctrine of inspiration. To evaluate that doctrine without seriously considering the Biblical data which he adduces as its source and foundation is bound to lead to inadequate conclusions. In some recent studies of Warfield's theology the critical thrust is directed at his philosophical presuppositions, while his appeal to the Bible as the only source of his doctrine and the vast body of Biblical evidence on which he bases that doctrine is

¹Ibid. A. A. Hodge as well as Warfield considered this verse a clear evidence that the Bible teaches that inspiration pertains not only to thoughts but also to verbal expressions. Hodge and Warfield. Inspiration, p. 23; Bible, p. 163 (o.a. 1915).

²Ibid., pp. 425-26.

largely ignored or minimized.¹ Whatever weaknesses may attach to Warfield's methodology, a truly critical evaluation of his doctrine of inspiration must do justice to his explicit appeal to the Bible as the source of his doctrine and take full account of the broad induction of Biblical data on which it is based. One writer, who probably more than most others has studied the "positive exposition of the Biblical basis" of Warfield's doctrine, concludes that it "may well never be surpassed."²

The Biblical Doctrine of Inspiration:
Its Mode, Extent, and Effects

In surveying Warfield's methodology, his definition of inspiration, the way in which he distinguishes inspiration from closely related concepts, as well as the wide induction of Biblical data from which he derives his doctrine of inspiration, the features of that doctrine in regards to the mode, the extent, and the effects of inspiration have already become manifest in a fragmentary way. To conclude our analytical survey, it is necessary to bring these features into focus so that they may be seen in all their distinctiveness.

The Mode of Inspiration

Explaining the definition of inspiration set forth in the introduction of his inaugural address of 1880, Warfield first of all

¹So, e.g., in Rogers and McKim, pp. 323-48; John C. Vander Steelt, Philosophy and Scripture: A Study in Old Princeton and Westminster Theology (Marlton, N.J.: Mack Publishing Co., 1978), pp. 165-84.

²John Wenham, Christ and the Bible (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter Varsity Press, 1973), p. 7.

remarks that it purposely declares nothing as to the mode of inspiration. The reason he gives for this silence is that "the Reformed Churches admit that this is inscrutable. They content themselves with defining carefully and holding fast the effects of the divine influence, leaving the mode of divine action by which it is brought about draped in mystery."¹ Not only from this remark but also from later statements,² it is apparent that Warfield's primary concern was with the effects of inspiration rather than with its mode. The divine action in inspiration is a mystery and is left, as he still held in his last article on inspiration, "if not without suggestion, yet without specific explanation."³

That he nevertheless addresses the question of the mode of inspiration in a number of articles and book reviews⁴ is therefore not with the intention to explain that which is unexplainable, but because "inadequate or positively false conceptions of the nature and mode of inspiration are being continually suggested" with the aim "to be rid of the effects which are ascribed to inspiration in the

¹Bible, pp. 420-21 (o.d. 1880).

²So, e.g., Benjamin B. Warfield, review of Studies in Theology, 3 vols., by Randolph S. Foster, in PRR 4 (1893):684. Cf. Writings 2:542 (o.d. 1894).

³Bible, pp. 152-53 (o.d. 1915).

⁴The most significant of these articles is "The Divine and Human in the Bible," in Writings, 2:542-48 (o.d. 1894). Other discussions of the subject can be found in Writings, 2:604-11 (o.d. 1888); Review of Horton and Cave, p. 330; "Some Recent German Discussions on Inspiration" [Title of a very extensive book review appearing on the front cover of PRR], review of Die Inspiration der heiligen Schrift und ihre Bestreiter, by W. Rohnert et al., in PRR 4 (1893):487-99; Writings, 2:629-31 (o.d. 1894); Bible, pp. 150-54 (o.d. 1915).

Scriptures and the formularies of the Church, on the plea that inspiration is not to be so conceived as to require these effects."¹ In view of these false theories of the mode of inspiration and their correlation to distorted views concerning the effects of inspiration, Warfield raises two important questions: (1) "How are the two factors, the divine and the human, to be conceived to be related to each other in the act of inspiration?" and (2) "How are the two consequent elements in the Bible, the divine and the human, to be conceived to be related to each other in the product of inspiration?"² From his answer it becomes evident that for Warfield these two issues, though distinct from each other, are inseparable.

Three sets of solutions to the two questions raised are discussed by Warfield in his main article on the subject. First, there are the extreme conceptions in which "one factor or element is so exaggeratingly emphasized as to exclude the other altogether."³ On the one hand there is the view in which the human writers are conceived as mere implements in the hands of the Holy Ghost, as his pens rather than his penmen or amanuenses. This theory conceived the act of inspiration essentially as an act of dictation and its product, the Scriptures, as altogether divine. This theory, the so-called mechanical theory of inspiration, was held by a number of seventeenth-century divines,⁴ according to Warfield, but he does

¹Writings, 2:542-43.

²Ibid., p. 543.

³Ibid.

⁴Warfield ascribes this so-called mechanical theory of inspiration to Quenstedt, Calov, and Hollaz among the Lutherans; Heidegger and Buxtorf among the Reformed; Richard Hooker among the Anglicans; and John White among the Puritans. Writings, 2:543. It is

not think that in his own day anyone "so emphasizes the divine element in Scripture as to exclude the human altogether."¹ Elsewhere he emphatically disavows holding or teaching this theory.² Exceedingly common in his time, on the other hand, was in his opinion the opposite extreme in which the origin and nature of the Scriptures are conceived as purely human, at best as a human record including divine revelations.³ Warfield is convinced that neither extreme is properly conceived, because each excludes either the divine or the human factor or element in conflict with the Biblical evidence.

The second set of theories conceives of the divine and the human elements both in the act as well as in the product of inspiration as in some way limiting each other. Warfield is concerned that even so thoughtful a writer as William Sanday can speak about "an encroachment of the human element upon the divine."⁴ If on the basis of such a conception "every discovery of a human trait in Scripture is a disproving of the divinity of Scripture," then, Warfield thinks, the logical outcome will be a

not possible to entertain in this context the question whether Warfield's evaluation was correct in each individual case. Robert Preus would certainly deny that it was in regard to the Lutheran dogmatists. See Robert D. Preus, The Inspiration of Scripture: A Study of the Theology of the Seventeenth Century Lutheran Dogmatists, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1957), pp. 50-75.

¹Writings, 2:544.

²So in Bible, pp. 421, 437-38 (o.d. 1880).

³Complains Warfield: "The book market is flooded at present with treatises teaching this hopelessly one-sided theory." Writings, 2:544.

⁴Ibid., p. 545. Quotation is from Oracles, p. 17.

completes denial of the divinity of the Bible, because "the whole fabric of the Bible is human."¹

For Warfield there is only one conception of the mode of inspiration that does justice to all the Biblical data and this is the concept of concursum with, as its correlate, the conception of the Bible as a divine-human book, in which every word is at once divine and human. No doubt, Warfield's emphasis is on the effect of inspiration rather than on its mode in all that he has to say about this subject. He tells us that "the fundamental principle of this conception [concursum] is that the whole of Scripture is the product of divine activities which enter it . . . not by superseding the activities of the human authors, but confluent with them."² Warfield's discussions of the mode of inspiration of necessity remain vague, as when he speaks of the influence or superintendence of the Holy Spirit. In his final article on inspiration, he speaks about it as "a process much more intimate than can be expressed by the term 'dictation,' . . . a process in which"--and Warfield sees this as the only safe inference we can draw from the Biblical data--"the

¹Ibid., pp. 545-46.

²Ibid., p. 547. Warfield uses the word concursum here in a specific sense in reference to the activity of the Holy Spirit in inspiration. As such he has elsewhere referred to it as one of the modes of revelation (taking revelation in its wider sense). See above pp. 253-55. Warfield's specific use of concursum in reference to the activity of the Holy Spirit in inspiration is in analogy to a similar immanent working of the Holy Spirit in other spheres such as conversion and sanctification. See Bible, p. 422 (o.d. 1880); cf. ibid., p. 153 (o.d. 1915). Concursum in a wider sense is an important concept for Reformed theology. See Hodge, 1:598-605; Benjamin B. Warfield, review of The Divine Immanence, by Francis J. McConnell, in PTR 6 (1908):157.

control of the Holy Spirit was too complete and pervasive to permit the human qualities of the secondary author in any way to condition the purity of the product as the word of God."¹ Warfield thinks that the Scriptural conception of the mode of inspiration is better expressed by the figure of "bearing" than by the figure of "inbreathing," because the Biblical writers do not conceive of their work in producing the Scriptures "as working upon their own initiative, though energized by God to greater effort and higher achievement," but rather "as moved by the divine initiative and borne by the irresistible power of the Spirit of God along ways of his choosing to ends of his appointment."²

From Warfield's own words it is evident that his conception of concurus is an inference derived from many Biblical data. It presupposes the Christian idea of God as immanent as well as transcendent in the modes of his activity. The main Biblical data on which it is based are those mentioned previously in the discussion of the formulae expressing immediate divine authorship and those expressing human authorship and the relationship of the latter to the former.³

From Warfield's use of the word "inference," the question may legitimately be raised whether Warfield's concept of concurus is the result of a purely inductive method. To this question we will return later.

¹Bible, p. 153.

²Ibid., pp. 154, 153.

³See above pp. 273-74. See further below under "The Extent of Inspiration."

The Extent of Inspiration

The term "extent of inspiration" is hardly used by Warfield, though this does not mean that he showed no concern for it.¹ In fact, the second question in his article "The Divine and the Human in the Bible"--How should the relation between the two elements in the Bible be conceived?--is in reality the question of the extent of inspiration. Over against all theories of partial inspiration, limited inspiration, or degrees of inspiration, Warfield maintains that the only true conception of the Bible is that of a divine-human book, in which every word is at once divine and human or, as he states the matter more fully:

. . . the Scriptures are the joint product of divine and human activities, both of which penetrate them at every point, working harmoniously together to the production of a writing which is not divine here and human there, but at once divine and human in every part, every word and every particular. According to this conception, therefore, the whole Bible is recognized as human, the free product of human effort, in every part and word. And at the same time, the whole Bible is recognized as divine, the Word of God,² his utterances, of which he is in the truest sense the Author.²

This concept that all of the Bible is the word of God and at the same time all of it is the word of man is consistently set forth in all Warfield's writings on the subject over a period of thirty-five years.³ He conceives of these two elements in the Scriptures

¹The expression "the teaching of Scripture as to the nature, extent and effects of inspiration" occurs in Bible, p. 226 (o.d. 1893) and a parallel phrase about the clear conception on the part of the New Testament writers "of the nature and extent and effects" of the influence of the Holy Spirit by which Scripture was constituted is used in "The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration," p. 165.

²Writings, 2:547 (o.d. 1894).

³See, e.g., Bible, pp. 420-22 (o.d. 1880); p. 173 (o.d. 1893); p. 150 (o.d. 1915).

"as the inseparable constituents of one single and uncompounded product."¹ To him only such a concept does full justice to both elements in the Bible.

The doctrine that the Scriptures are in their entire extent both the word of God and the word of man is of far-reaching significance for Warfield. First and foremost it means to him that "all the qualities of divinity and humanity are to be sought and may be found in every portion and element of the Scripture" and, conversely, that "no quality inconsistent with either divinity or humanity can be found in any portion or element of Scripture."² It is especially the second half of the inference drawn here which is essential to Warfield's doctrine of the effects of inspiration, as we soon shall see. The fact that the one word is at once all divine and all human has for Warfield also a vital bearing on the interpretation of the Bible. Not only is one to approach each book as the word of God but also as the words of Peter, or of Paul, or of John. It means that:

We must seek to understand its human author in his most intimate characteristics, in his trials, experiences, and training, in the special circumstances of joy or sorrow, of straits or deliverance in which he stood when writing this book, in his relation to his readers, and to the immediate needs and special situation of his readers which gave occasion for his writing--in all, in a word, which went to make him an author, and just the author which he was--in order that we may understand the Word of God which these words of his servants are.³

¹Writings, 2:547 (o.d. 1894). Early Warfield stated that once the correct idea of the nature of inspiration was grasped, one would realize how impossible it is "to separate in any measure the human and the divine. It is all human--every word, and all divine." Bible, p. 422.

²Writings, 2:547.

³Ibid., p. 15 (o.d. 1892).

Because of his emphasis on the divine aspect of the Scriptures--and no one denies that it is a strong emphasis--it is easy to overlook or minimize Warfield's emphasis on the human aspect of the Bible. To do so is an injustice to Warfield's approach to Scripture and his understanding of the nature of its inspiration. Warfield was too much of an exegete not to realize the tremendous importance of a careful and sympathetic study of the human characteristics of Scripture.¹ Probably in opposing the tendency of many contemporary scholars to stress the human element of the Bible at the expense of its divine element, he felt compelled to emphasize its divine inspiration and, especially, the effects of that inspiration.

Warfield is convinced that this concept of Scripture as fully divine and human is not only the Biblical doctrine but also the doctrine generally held by the Church of all ages. Two crucial terms express in a concise way the essence of this doctrine. "It has received the name of the doctrine of plenary inspiration," in contradiction with all theories of partial or incomplete inspiration; and "it has received the name of the doctrine of verbal inspiration"

¹Even so sympathetic a student of Warfield as Hoefel seems to take a dim view of Warfield's emphasis on the human element in inspiration. See Hoefel, p. 276, n. 70. However, Warfield attached great importance to the human aspect of the Bible. This comes to expression in perceptive small articles such as "Why Four Gospels?" and "The Gospel of John" in Writings, 2:639-42 (o.d. 1887) and 643-46 (o.d. 1891); also in a more extensive article such as "Some Characteristics of the Book of Acts." Ibid., pp. 21-47 (o.d. 1902). Warfield said in his inaugural address: "The human characteristics are to be noted and exhibited; the divine perfection and infallibility, no less." Bible p. 422 (o.d. 1880). A judicious discussion of Warfield's regard for the human aspect of the Bible is given by A. N. S. Lane, "B. B. Warfield on the Humanity of Scripture," Vox Evangelica 16 (1986):77-94.

in contradiction with that concept of inspiration which confines inspiration to the thoughts, ideas, or concepts and denies that it extends to the choice of the words in which these thoughts, ideas, and concepts are expressed.¹ Although Warfield explains clearly the difference in emphasis between the expressions "verbal" and "plenary" inspiration, an attentive student of his writings soon perceives that he uses them interchangeably. He does not hesitate to assert that they "are but two names for the same thing."²

That this doctrine is indeed, in Warfield's eyes, the doctrine of the Biblical writers rests on such an abundance of Biblical evidence that he is confident that "so long as the principles of historico-grammatical exegesis are in vogue, this finding must stand beyond the reach of doubt."³ This evidence, as we have seen before, rested for Warfield not merely on such texts as 2 Tim 3:16, 2 Pet 1:19-21, and John 10:35, significant as they are, but on a wide range of phenomena⁴ which demonstrate that Christ and the apostles regarded and appealed to the Old Testament Scriptures as a unitary book of divine oracles of which every portion and passage is clothed with the divine authority which belongs to the whole. The constraining force of the evidence presented by Warfield is probably best demonstrated in the fact that even such scholars as James Barr, James Dunn, and

¹Writings, 2:627(o.d. 1894) (emphasis Warfield's).

²Ibid., p. 552 (o.d. 1892).

³"The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration," p. 169.

⁴This evidence includes, of course, much of what has been presented in the previous part of this chapter entitled "Scriptural evidence of divine inspiration."

John Setzer, who are severely critical of Warfield's doctrine of inspiration and inerrancy, in a greater or lesser degree, acknowledge the force of that evidence.¹

Repeatedly in his writings Warfield tries to meet objections raised against the doctrine of verbal plenary inspiration, and no objection more emphatically than the identification of that doctrine with a mechanical theory of inspiration. In full agreement with A. A. Hodge, he holds that verbal inspiration does not mean verbal dictation,² that "the human agency, both in the histories out of which the Scriptures sprang, and in their immediate composition and inscription is everywhere apparent," and also that "the very

¹James Barr admits that "conservative evangelical argumentation . . . might be deemed to have made some sort of a case for the authority and even for the inspiration of the Bible," but he qualifies this statement immediately by stating that "it is a much weaker case than that made by many other sorts of theology: . . ." James Barr, Fundamentalism (London: SCM Press, 1977), p. 84. Barr is not discussing the argumentation as presented by Warfield but very similar arguments set forth by John Wenham and James Packer. James Dunn is willing to acknowledge the force of the argument for the identification of the words of Scripture with the words of God, but thinks that Warfield focuses too exclusively on the introductory formulae and not on how the authority of the quotations functions. Dunn, p. 202. Setzer, after a survey of Biblical evidence presented by fundamentalists (again very similar to Warfield's evidence), goes so far as to conclude that "the overall testimony of the New Testament seems to be that, most likely to a man, the writers believed in the inerrant verbal inspiration of the Old Testament, and were of the opinion that Jesus and his disciples did also." Setzer, p. 251. But, of course, for him that carries little weight, for "such a concession does not in the least subvert the critical premise that this possibly unanimous opinion of the Biblical writers may be in error (emphasis is Setzer's)." Ibid., p. 252. Warfield would probably have added Setzer to his list of critical scholars who on exegetical grounds admit that the Biblical doctrine of inspiration is the doctrine of verbal inspiration, but who on other grounds reject that doctrine.

²Hodge and Warfield, Inspiration, pp. 18-19. The following remarks are quoted from this book, pp. 12, 16.

substance of what they write is evidently for the most part the product of their own mental and spiritual activities." This means that the writers in their work draw on a wide variety of sources of knowledge, both natural and supernatural: the natural knowledge coming from such sources as "traditions, documents, testimonies, personal observations and recollections--by means also of intuitions, logical processes of thought, feeling, experience, etc." Yet the whole process was under the superintendence of the Holy Spirit. Consequently "every word indited under the . . . influence of inspiration was at one and the same time the consciously self-chosen word of the writer and the divinely-inspired word of the Spirit." Warfield "cannot help thinking that it is through failure to note and assimilate this fact, that the doctrine of verbal inspiration is so summarily set aside and so unthinkingly inveighed against by divines otherwise cautious and reverent."¹

The Effects of Inspiration

The observation by Warfield "that Christian men are more concerned with the effects of inspiration than with its nature or mode"² is certainly in agreement with the emphasis in his own writings. Many of his articles are dominated by questions concerning the effects or results of inspiration. Our use of the phrase "effects of inspiration" is in harmony with Warfield's own terminology. Frequently he uses also the term "qualities," meaning the divine qualities of Scripture that pertain to it as the inspired word of God. Although he employs quite a number of words to describe

¹Bible, p. 422 (o.d. 1880).

²Writings, 2:542 (o.d. 1894).

these qualities,¹ a survey of his writings brings to light that the following concepts stand out: authority, infallibility, inerrancy, trustworthiness, truth, and immediateness. For the sake of clarity and conciseness we briefly set forth these concepts separately and in the sequence in which they are mentioned, with the proviso that infallibility, inerrancy, and trustworthiness be grouped together.

The authority of Scripture. There can hardly be any question that Warfield's concern for the doctrine of inspiration is ultimately a concern for Scripture as the authoritative word of God. Men need "a sure word of God to them," an "external authority" which provides a sure ground for faith and hope.² "Such a word of God, Christ and his apostles offer us, when they give us the Scriptures, not as a man's report to us of what God says, but as the very word of God itself, spoken by God himself through human lips and pens."³ Warfield repeatedly stresses the point that the authority of the Scriptures rests on the authority of the apostles and through

¹He speaks, e.g., about inspiration as giving "to the books written under its 'bearing' a quality which is truly superhuman; a trustworthiness, an authority, a searchingness, a profundity, a profitableness which is altogether divine." Bible, p. 158 (o.d. 1915).

²We have tried to capture in one sentence the essence of the argument set forth in Bible, p. 124 (o.d. 1894). He quotes there with obvious approval the French Protestant preacher and writer Adolphe Monod (1802-57), who wrote: "The more I study the Scriptures, the example of Christ, and of the apostles, and the history of my own heart, the more I am convinced, that a testimony of God, placed without us and above us, exempt from all intermixture of sin and error which belong to a fallen race, and received with submission on the sole authority of God, is the true basis of faith." Sarah M. Monod, ed., Life and Letters of Adolphe Monod (London: J. Nisbet and Co., 1885), p. 357.

³Bible, p. 125.

them on the authority of Christ.¹

One needs only to remember the wide spectrum of phenomena to which Warfield appeals in support of the doctrine of inspiration to see that much of that same evidence also attests the authority of the Scriptures.² He asserts that Scripture's "authority rests on its divinity and its divinity expresses itself in its trustworthiness."³ In a concise way this describes his view of the relationship between the inspiration of Scripture and its authority and trustworthiness. Not only in the words just quoted but also in other places in his writings, Warfield reckons authority among the qualities of Scripture "which would naturally flow from its divine origin."⁴

No adjective was strong enough for Warfield to characterize this divine authority of the Bible. He designated it as an absolute authority, an irrefragable authority, an unquestionable authority, and an indefectible authority.⁵ It is this qualification of the authority of Scripture as absolute and irrefragable with an absolute infallibility as its correlate that has been called into question by

¹In the article in which he deals most directly with the subject, "The Authority and Inspiration of the Scriptures," in Writings, 2:537-41 (o.d. 1889), we find the point tersely stated: "All the authority of the apostles stands behind the Scriptures, and all the authority of Christ behind the apostles" (p. 537).

²See above, pp. 261-79 (passim).

³Bible, p. 150 (o.d. 1915).

⁴This phrase is used in Writings, 1:32 (o.d. 1898). In the survey of Biblical data which follows authority is mentioned as one of the divine qualities shared by the Old and New Testaments. Cf. Bible, p. 158 (o.d. 1915).

⁵See, e.g., "The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration," p. 166; Bible, pp. 139-41 (o.d. 1915); 424, 428 (o.d. 1880).

many scholars both in Warfield's time and since.¹ Markarian, among others, after analyzing Warfield's defense of the formal authority of the Scripture, reaches the conclusion that Warfield in attempting to "save" the formal authority of the Biblical canon had in reality brought that authority into jeopardy. He had done so, Markarian alleges, "by bringing it too much under the necessity of vindication on grounds separate from the personal experience in regeneration" and by thinking of Biblical authority "as a Platonic ideal whose truth was outside of the conditioning of history both at the time of its writing and at the time of its being apprehended." This error allowed Warfield "to think of it in strictly objective terms with its authority separate from its impact upon human life."² It can be questioned whether Markarian's analysis and the conclusion he reaches do justice to Warfield's concept of Biblical authority; nonetheless, there can be no doubt that Warfield in confrontation with what he on one occasion called "a widespread revolt against 'external authority'"³ considered it his duty to defend the objective authority of Scripture. There was no question for Warfield that to defend the authority of Scripture meant to defend and to maintain its plenary verbal inspiration.

Infallibility, inerrancy, and trustworthiness. The discussion of the terms "infallibility," "inerrancy," and "trustworthiness" together is based on the conviction that, after having analyzed

¹See, e.g., Thomas M. Lindsay, "The Doctrine of Scripture: The Reformers and the Princeton School," Expositor, 5th series, 1 (1895):278-93, esp. pp. 285-91; Kraus, pp. 189-93; Dunn, p. 115; et al.

²Markarian, pp. 176-77.

³"Warfield Replies," p. 219.

their use in Warfield's articles on inspiration, Warfield intended to express through them the same basic truth. However, over the years there appears to be a certain shift in his use of these terms in connection with the controversy concerning the doctrine of inspiration. In his earliest writings on the subject, the dominant words are "infallibility" and "infallible."

In the definition of inspiration set forth at the beginning of his inaugural address, Warfield specifies its effect by stating that the words of the writers "were rendered also the words of God, and, therefore, perfectly infallible."¹ He qualified this further as "an absolute infallibility (as alone fitted to divine words), admitting no degrees whatever" by which "every part of Holy Writ is thus held alike infallible true in all its statements, of whatever kind."²

From his formal definition of inspiration and from the entire argument in his inaugural address, it is evident that for Warfield this absolute infallibility is the necessary effect of verbal inspiration, so that the Biblical evidence which proves the inspiration of the Scriptures also proves their infallibility. Vice versa, if the Scriptures can be shown to be patently fallible, because they exhibit the same errors and mistakes, the same phenomena of inaccuracy and contradiction as uninspired writings, then their very character as fallible writings will "disprove their claims to

¹Bible, p. 420 (o.d. 1880).

²Ibid. Elsewhere in the article he speaks of "the absolute truth and infallibility" of Scripture (p. 421) and qualifies it as "infallible in all its statements,--divine even to its smallest particle!" (p. 441).

infallibility" and consequently disprove the doctrine of verbal inspiration. This is one of the main objections with which he deals in the address.¹ Warfield is convinced, however, that criticism has not been able to prove a single case of error from the phenomena of Scripture and, therefore, that the verbal inspiration and the infallibility of Scripture stand secure.

The same position and the same basic line of argument are presented in a different way in the article on inspiration which he authored jointly with Archibald Hodge a year later. Infallibility to both authors distinctly means errorlessness, specifically of the "Ipsissima verba of the original autographs . . . ascertained and interpreted in their natural and intended sense," and pertaining to "all the affirmations of Scripture of all kinds, whether of spiritual doctrine or duty, or of physical or historical fact, or of psychological or philosophical principle."² Warfield, the author of the last part of the article, boldly states: "A proved error in Scripture contradicts not only our doctrine, but the Scripture claims, and therefore its inspiration in making those claims."³ Probably few statements from his pen have been quoted more frequently or been challenged more vigorously.⁴

¹Ibid., p. 429.

²Hodge and Warfield, Inspiration, p. 28.

³Ibid., p. 41.

⁴Wrote Briggs, ". . . the awkward fact stares us in the face, that these Princeton divines risk the inspiration and authority of the Bible upon a single proved error. Such a position is a serious and hazardous departure from Protestant orthodoxy. It imperils the faith of all Christians who have been taught this doctrine. They cannot escape the evidence of errors in the Scriptures." Whither?, pp. 72-73.

In view of Warfield's strong affirmation that Scripture is without error, it comes as a surprise to learn that he used the term "inerrancy" rather sparingly and nearly exclusively during the period when the controversy with Charles Briggs and Henry Preserved Smith was at its height. In 1883 Francis Patton, in discussing the question of contra-confessional beliefs (beliefs contra the Westminster Confession of Faith), asserted that "any opinion inconsistent with the inerrancy of Scripture (meaning by Scripture the autograph copies of Scripture) is contra-confessional."¹ Charles Briggs reacted the same year by branding the word "inerrancy" as "neither a scriptural nor a symbolical nor a historical term in connection with the subject of inspiration," and reconfirmed this verdict in his book Whither? by asserting that the Westminster divines taught neither verbal inspiration nor the inerrancy of the original autographs.²

In the face of this challenge Warfield could hardly remain silent. Late in 1889 he published an article "The Westminster Doctrine of Inspiration" and, quoting extensively from the writings of several Westminster divines, set out to prove that they did teach "both the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures and the inerrancy of the original autographs."³ In the five following years he used the term quite frequently. In 1893 he published an article entitled "The

¹Francis L. Patton, "The Dogmatic Aspect of Pentateuchal Criticism," PR 4 (1883):363.

²Briggs, Biblical Study, p. 241, and Whither?, pp. 64-73.

³In Howie, p. 64.

Inerrancy of the Original Autographs."¹ This article is important for it shows that Warfield thinks that the phrase "the inerrancy of the original autographs" has been forced to the front to make it appear the sole "bone of contention." This he considers as the skilful manipulation of a mere phrase to confuse the true issue, which is not "the bare 'inerrancy' of the Scriptures, whether in the copies or in the 'autographs.'" Rather:

It concerns the trustworthiness of the Bible in its express declarations, and in the fundamental conceptions of its writers as to the course of the history of God's dealings with his people. It concerns, in a word, the authority of the Biblical representations concerning the nature of revealed religion, and the mode and course of its revelation. The issue raised is whether we are to look upon the Bible as containing a divinely guaranteed and wholly trustworthy account of God's redemptive revelation, and the course of his gracious dealings with his people; or as merely a mass of more or less trustworthy materials, out of which we are to sift the facts in order to put together a trustworthy account of God's redemptive revelation and the course of his dealings with his people.²

There can be no question that Warfield believed the concept of "the inerrancy of the original autographs" to express true Scriptural doctrine, yet he did not consider the phrase "an altogether happy one."³ The interesting fact is that after the crisis concerning inspiration had abated he seems to have avoided the term in his articles on inspiration.⁴ Even the term "infallibility" receded somewhat into the background and the preponderant term

¹Writings, 2:580-87 (o.d. 1893). The article is distinctly polemical and in essence a rebuttal of the major arguments raised against the concept of inerrancy by Briggs and others.

²Ibid., pp. 581-82.

³Ibid., p. 582.

⁴It is remarkable that he does not use the term in his article "The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration" of late 1893. In his major exegetical studies from 1899 through 1910 the word does not occur.

in his later articles is "trustworthiness." It is not without significance that Warfield's final article on inspiration starts out with defining inspiration as "a supernatural influence exerted on the sacred writers by the Spirit of God, by virtue of which their writings are given Divine trustworthiness."¹ Throughout the article the words "trustworthiness" and "trustworthy" recur frequently,² but one looks in vain for the term "inerrancy" or even "infallibility." It is not suggested here that Warfield changed his view in regard to the absolute infallibility of the Scriptures--there is no evidence that he did so. It seems clear that in his later years he preferred the term "trustworthiness" because to him it better expressed the real issue at stake in the controversy concerning Scripture and perhaps because it was closer to Biblical terminology.

Some objections. A number of objections were raised and are still being raised in the 1980s against Warfield's doctrine of the inerrancy, or for that matter the infallibility or the trustworthiness, of the Scriptures in the original autographs. Some of these objections cannot detain us here, such as the objection that this doctrine is an innovation. Warfield answered this objection especially in regard to the Westminster divines, providing substantial evidence that this doctrine was held by them.³ More

¹Bible, p. 131 (o.d. 1915). The effect of inspiration described in his first definition of 1880 as "perfect infallibility" is here replaced by "divine trustworthiness;" the emphasis may be different, the basic conviction is the same.

²Ibid., pp. 137-38, 149-50, 154, 158, and 161.

³For the objection see Briggs, Whither, pp. 64, 69. Warfield answered this objection in his articles on the Westminster

incisive, and more pertinent to our study, is the twofold charge that his doctrine is based on an a priori assumption and is not the result of sound exegesis. To state the matter in another way, Warfield was accused of making an unwarranted deduction which was not the outcome of an inductive study of the Biblical data. In one form or another this objection was raised by opponents of Warfield's doctrine of his own day--i.e., Briggs, Evans, Smith, and others.¹ It has been raised again, perhaps with even greater force, by such contemporary scholars as Dunn, Barr, and others.²

Warfield himself was convinced that his method was inductive and that his doctrine of inspiration, also in respect to its effects--infallibility, inerrancy, or trustworthiness--was based, not on an a priori assumption, but on a sound historico-grammatical exegesis.³ Scholars such as Dunn contend that inerrancy is not an

doctrine of Scripture and inspiration. For a list of these articles, see above, p. 204, n. 2.

¹Briggs, Biblical Study, p. 242, and Whither?, pp. 66-69; Llewellyn John Evans, "Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration," in Inspiration and Inerrancy, ed. Alexander Balmain Bruce (London: James Clarke and Co., 1891), pp. 113-15; and Henry Preserved Smith, "Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration," in Inspiration and Inerrancy, pp. 265, 268.

²Dunn, p. 111; Barr, pp. 84-85; Donald Westblade, "Benjamin Warfield on Inspiration and Inerrancy," Studia Biblica et Theologica 10 (1980):37-38.

³Warfield expresses his conviction, e.g., in Writings, 2:634 (o.d. 1894), that the doctrine of the divine inspiration, infallibility, trustworthiness, and authority of the Scriptures "rests on a wide induction from all the phenomena of the use made of the Old Testament by the New." Warfield asserts frequently in his writings that the doctrine of verbal inspiration is based on the application of the scientific principles of historico-grammatical exegesis. Bible, pp. 423, 426-27 (o.d. 1880); pp. 175, 179-80 (o.d. 1895); "The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration," pp. 169-72. Verbal

exegetical conclusion but a dogmatic deduction drawn from a concept of God. It is the conclusion of a simple syllogism: "If every utterance in the Bible is from God and if God is a God of truth . . . then the Bible must be wholly truthful or inerrant."¹ It can hardly be denied that this line of argument is basic to the doctrine of inerrancy, and the evidence suggests that it was also a basic element in Warfield's thinking.²

In view of these facts two questions must be raised: (1) Was Warfield's method consistently inductive? and more important (2) Can a truly Biblical doctrine of inspiration be established by purely inductive reasoning? While we have to defer the consideration of these questions to the final chapter, it is necessary in the context of our discussion of the effects of inspiration to look briefly at one aspect of the issue, namely Warfield's view of the truth of Scripture.

Truth. Although Warfield's definitions of inspiration focus on infallibility and trustworthiness as the effect of inspiration, a

inspiration implied for him inerrancy. The exegetical foundation for the one was therefore at the same time the exegetical basis for the other. It is this identification of inspiration with inerrancy that is denied by his opponents.

¹Dunn, p. 111. Dunn quotes here a statement from James Boice, Does Inerrancy Matter? (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 1981), p. 20. The syllogism is familiar. A recent statement of it by a proponent of inerrancy can be found in James I. Packer, Beyond the Battle for the Bible (Westchester, Ill.: Cornerstone Books, 1980), p. 52.

²Warfield writes, for instance, "that the Old Testament is human is not inconsistent with its being also divine; but that it is divine in all its parts is inconsistent with its being everywhere--or anywhere--stained to its core with human error and human sin." "Paul's Doctrine," p. 400.

careful analysis of his writings seems to point to the concept of truth as summing up the essence of the effect of inspiration. We are told with emphasis that inspiration secures no more than this: "truth, simple truth."¹ This does not mean, however, that the words and phrases written under the influence of inspiration "are the best possible to express the truth, but only that they are an adequate expression of the truth."² When he speaks about truth there can be little doubt that Warfield has foremost in mind religious truth, the importance of which is preeminent. "The truth concerning God, his nature, his will, his purpose is the fundamental fact upon which both religion and theology rest. The truth of God is, therefore, the greatest thing on earth."³ This truth is given to us in the Scriptures, and its faithful transmission is guaranteed by inspiration. Consequently, we find that Warfield closely connects such concepts as infallibility, trustworthiness, inerrancy, and truth. He equates inerrancy, for instance, with "that entire truthfulness which is everywhere presupposed in and asserted for Scripture by the Biblical writers."⁴ For Warfield a denial of the inerrancy of Scripture is a denial of its entire truthfulness, a truthfulness which pertains not only to religious truth but also to all the affirmations of Scripture of whatever kind.

Nowhere have we found a clearer expression of Warfield's

¹Hodge and Warfield, Inspiration, pp. 44. (emphasis Warfield's). Cf. p. 42, "We do not erect inspiration into an end, but hold it to be simply a means to an end--viz. the accurate conveyance of truth." Also Bible, p. 438 (o.d. 1880).

²Hodge and Warfield, Inspiration, pp. 62-63.

³Writings, 2:668 (o.d. 1896).

⁴Bible, p. 173 (o.d. 1893).

concept of truth than in his sermon "Incarnate Truth," based on John 1:14--"the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of . . . truth." His first point is "that since Jesus Christ our Lord, the manifested Jehovah, was as such the incarnation of truth, no statement which ever fell from his lips can have contained any admixture of error."¹ With an appeal to such passages of Scripture as Luke 16:10, John 2:24-25, and 3:11-12, Warfield asserts that the plenitude of Christ's truth pertained not only to the great and eternal verities of religion but also to the pettier affairs of earth and man. Therefore, for the follower of Jesus, the testimony of his Lord to the truthfulness of the Scriptures is decisive. Warfield phrases this as a question: "What is left us of the Truth Indeed, who proclaims himself no more the Way and the Life than the Truth, if his testimony cannot be trusted as to the nature, origin, authority, and meaning of the Scripture of which his own Spirit was the inspirer; . . .?"²

Scriptures, the immediate speech of God. One other effect of

¹Writings, 2:458-59 (o.d. 1893).

²Ibid., p. 460. Warfield recognized a certain analogy between Christ and the Scriptures, but considered it "'only a remote analogy,' which amounts to no more than that in both cases divine and human factors are involved, though very differently." Bible, p. 162 (o.d. 1915). Still, he did think that the analogy may enable us to recognize that just as the human nature of Christ, though truly human, could not sin, so the human factors in the production of Scripture, though they acted as human factors, could not "have fallen into that error which we say it is human to fall into," because they were under the unerring guidance of the divine factors. But Berkouwer thinks that "a confusing use of the analogy occurs here, and [that] it remains necessary to view this apologetic critically, even though the intention is undoubtedly to honor Scripture." G. C. Berkouwer, Holy Scripture, trans. and ed. Jack B. Rogers (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975), p. 202.

inspiration receives special emphasis in Warfield's writings, though less frequently perhaps than authority and trustworthiness. Inspiration in causing the words of men to be at the same time the word of God "speaks this divine word immediately to each reader's heart and conscience; so that he . . . can listen directly to the divine voice itself speaking immediately in the Scriptural word to him."¹ Especially the designation of the Scriptures as the oracles of God and the use of formulae of introduction in the present tense which quote Scripture "not as what God or the Holy Spirit 'said,' but what He 'says'," emphasize "the living voice of God speaking in Scriptures to the individual soul."²

Conclusion

The primary focus of this study has been Warfield's model of Biblical inspiration. What we have tried to set forth and analyze is his concept of the Biblical doctrine of inspiration, not his concept of the historical doctrine of inspiration held by the Church throughout the centuries. He considered them to be identical, but that only because he esteemed the latter to be derived from the former. It has been necessary to observe other limitations. Questions of Warfield's epistemology and apologetics, important as they are, to a great extent had to be excluded. Even such closely related subjects as revelation and canonicity could only be examined in their relation to and distinction from inspiration.

In the brief résumé of the context and corpus of Warfield's

¹Bible, p. 158 (o.d. 1915).

²Ibid., p. 148. See above, p. 273.

writings on inspiration, we noticed that his writings can be roughly divided into three periods, yet a chronological study of those writings does not bring to light any major change in Warfield's views on inspiration.¹ Still, it does enable us to detect a certain shift of emphasis in his use of the words "infallibility," "inerrancy," and "trustworthiness" in describing the effect of inspiration. It also helps us to appreciate the fact that the articles from the middle period (1888-96), being written at the height of the controversy concerning inspiration, often manifest a stronger polemical spirit and thrust than his later writings. Questions of methodology receive greater emphasis in the former group, while thorough exegetical studies are characteristic for the latter group.

Careful analysis of Warfield's circa forty articles on the subject of inspiration, as well as many of his other publications in order to ascertain his model of Biblical inspiration, has led us to consider the subject under four aspects: (1) the question of the correct method, (2) the definition of inspiration and its locus in relation to other subjects as manifested in certain distinctions and connections, (3) the Biblical evidence from which the doctrine of inspiration is derived, and (4) the main features of that doctrine in regards to mode, extent, and effects. Because Warfield's concept of

¹This is also the opinion of F. F. Bruce, who in commenting on Warfield's treatment of the Biblical doctrine of inspiration and authority, concludes that "from 1879 at least, when he delivered his inaugural lecture as Professor of New Testament in Western Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh . . . down to the day of his death forty-two years later, it is difficult to trace any material change or 'development' in his views on this subject." F. F. Bruce, "Warfield on Inspiration," review of The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible, by Benjamin Brackinridge Warfield, in Evangelical Quarterly 22 (1950):69.

inspiration comes to us in the form of many articles of a diverse nature, the analysis had to become to some extent a synthesis as well, though caution has been exercised not to impose an extraneous structure on his views.

The analysis of those views reveals that the question of methodology is very important for Warfield. He differentiates between the "correct" inductive method and the "so-called" inductive method according to the facts on which the induction proceeds. For him facts relevant to the determination of the Biblical doctrine are not the so-called phenomena or characteristics of the Bible, but the teachings of Scripture--its claims to inspiration, its statements and allusions in regard to the subject, and every fact indicative of the attitude towards Scripture on the part of the Biblical writers. Warfield holds that the characteristics of Scripture can only legitimately be used and should only be used to test the truths of the claims of the Bible.

Not only does Warfield differentiate between a correct inductive method and a faulty one, he also makes a distinction between true and false Biblical criticism. He strongly affirms the right and necessity of criticism as an instrument to test the truth of the claims of the Bible. But in order for criticism to be valid, it must be characterized by a fearless abandonment to the facts of the case, by a careful, complete, and unprejudiced collection and examination of the facts, and by great caution in drawing inferences from those facts. False criticism, on the other hand, manifests the opposite characteristics: bondage to preconceived opinion, a careless, incomplete, or prejudiced collection and examination of the

facts, and rashness of inference. Most of the Biblical criticism of his day Warfield sees as vitiated from the outset because of its anti-supernatural bias.

In view of Warfield's observation that in the quest for a Biblical doctrine of inspiration "the conclusions actually arrived at . . . seem practically to depend on the logical method adopted,"¹ it is of great importance to ascertain which method is the correct method. It is this issue first of all that needs our consideration in the concluding chapter. Equally important is the question of which function or role Biblical criticism should have in this process and the prior issue, raised so clearly by Warfield, of the characteristics of a true criticism.

A second major issue that arises from our analysis is the question of the locus of inspiration in relation to and in distinction from other Biblical doctrines, such as the doctrine of revelation and what Warfield designates as the divine origin of the Scriptures. Especially the distinction between the latter, as the larger concept encompassing a concurrence of many human and divine operations contributing to the origin of the Scriptures, and inspiration, narrowly defined as that operation of the Spirit which is the final act of God in the production of the Scriptures by which the absolute truthfulness of the Scriptures is guaranteed, determines and explains for Warfield the place of inspiration in the larger scheme of Biblical theology. Whether from a Biblical perspective this distinction is indeed valid is a significant question, the

¹Bible, p. 225 (o.d. 1893).

answer to which, however, may prove to go beyond the scope of this study.

One fact stands out as a result of a thorough analysis of Warfield's writings on inspiration, namely, his persistent emphasis on the teachings of Christ and the apostles and their attitude in regard to the Old Testament. Warfield finds the justification for this emphasis on the teachings of the New Testament in the principle of the progressive delivery of doctrine. Yet one wonders if not a certain impoverishment in our understanding of Scripture's inspiration must result from this emphasis on the teaching of the New Testament.

From the high titles by which the Old Testament is designated in the New, from the introductory formulae by which it is cited, from the obvious identification of words of Scripture as words of God, as well as from many other Biblical data, Warfield can only come to one conclusion: "What Scripture says, God says." In other words, Scripture does not merely contain the word of God, it is the word of God. This conclusion that the New Testament writers conceive of the Old Testament Scriptures in their entirety as one oracular word of God is for Warfield the dominant fact in establishing the Biblical doctrine of inspiration. This fact, however, does not make him oblivious of the equally obvious fact that all Scripture has a human origin and displays the characteristics of its human authors throughout. His emphasis on the human aspect is pervasive and clear to one who studies his views carefully.

Few scholars have questioned the significance of Warfield's exegetical studies or even the validity of the primary conclusion to

which these studies lead. They do question the doctrine of plenary verbal inspiration and the infallibility or inerrancy of Scripture which he derives from his induction of the Biblical data. For Warfield himself there is no doubt that the New Testament writings not only everywhere imply but also explicitly teach the doctrine of verbal plenary inspiration. But even if they admit this fact, scholars critical of Warfield's view still hold that the doctrine of inerrancy is not based on a careful induction and exegesis of the Biblical teachings and is an unwarranted deduction negated by testing that doctrine by the Biblical phenomena, the validity of which test is affirmed by Warfield. Warfield denies persistently that one error or inconsistency has been conclusively demonstrated in the autographic text of Scripture. Whether this denial can be maintained or not is a question that goes beyond the limits of this study. The criticism that his doctrine of inerrancy is not a result of exegesis but rather a conclusion deduced from the character of God and the fact that Scripture in its entirety is the word of God seems to be corroborated by evidence from his writings. This does not necessarily mean that the doctrine of inerrancy is unbiblical, but it certainly does raise the question whether a Biblical doctrine of inspiration in regard to its mode, extent, and especially in regards to its effects can be derived by means of a purely inductive method.

An interesting result of the preceding analysis is the fact that in the latter part of his life, Warfield seems to have avoided the use of the term "inerrancy," giving preference to the word "trustworthiness" as expressing more adequately the true issue at stake in the controversy concerning the Scriptures, namely, that in

all their assertions they are true to fact. Here we are touching the heart of Warfield's concern: the truth and authority of Scripture as a sure word of God to man, which man can believe and obey without question and without doubt. That Scripture is such an absolutely truthful and authoritative word of God finds its guarantee--of this he is convinced--in the teaching of Christ and the apostles that Scripture in its entirety and in all its parts is the product of inspiration.

In the final chapter we return to the questions raised in this and the preceding chapter, comparing and evaluating the two models of Biblical inspiration presented by Sanday and Warfield. From the study of their views it has become clear that especially such issues as the correct methodology, the true criteria of inspiration, and the extent and effect of inspiration must constitute the focal points in the final part of our study.

CHAPTER V

EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

Introductory Remarks

The effectiveness of a comparison between the views of two or more theologians is dependent on a thorough analysis and delineation of their views. Superficiality of the latter vitiates the former. An adequate description and analysis is usually sufficient by itself, without a formal comparison, to suggest significant similarities and differences. Yet, as a result of differences in context, approach, or use of terminology, some similarities or differences may be more apparent than real. The possible presence of such distorting differences necessitates at times a painstaking comparison to ascertain as far as possible the real similarities and differences between the views of the theologians being studied.

The purpose of this final chapter is to make such a comparison of Sanday's and Warfield's models of Biblical inspiration. However, not merely a descriptive but an evaluative comparison is in view. An attempt is made to assess the consistency of each model, its adherence to its professed starting-point and methodology. Because in both models the Scriptures are considered as the only source and starting-point in the quest for a Biblical doctrine of inspiration, special attention is given to the use made of the Biblical data by each scholar. Criticism of each other's views

constitutes an important factor in the process of evaluation. The problem is that this is mainly a one-way street, for criticisms of Sanday's views occur quite frequently in Warfield's writings, but not vice versa. For Sanday's estimate of Warfield's views we have to depend on indirect arguments. Critical observations by other scholars directly dealing with Sanday's or Warfield's views or with views very similar to theirs place this comparative evaluation in the larger context of scholarly discussion concerning Biblical inspiration.

Source and Methodology

Scripture as Source

In his earliest lectures on the subject of inspiration Sanday enunciates as a fundamental principle that "a true conception of what the Bible is must be obtained from the Bible itself"¹ and that nothing is to be feared from going straight to the Bible. Although Warfield in reviewing the book Oracles does not refer to this statement there is no reason to doubt that he fully endorsed this principle. It was Warfield's conviction that in determining the doctrine of inspiration there was but one consistent procedure, "to go straight and humbly to the Bible, 'rejecting nothing, selecting nothing and scorning nothing,' but simply transcribing its doctrine of inspiration."² It is not surprising, therefore, that Sanday's fundamental principle has sometimes been quoted with obvious approval

¹Oracles, p.47. In this last chapter we continue to use the same designations for publications by Sanday and Warfield as have been used throughout chaps. 3 and 4.

²Review of Smyth et al., p. 179.

in evangelical publications.¹ We do not know how Sanday would have reacted to this, but James Barr, who at present holds a professorial chair in the same university where Sanday once taught, considers such use of Sanday's statement "quite insincere," since those who quote it must be aware "that Sanday's actual opinion, and therefore the meaning of the words he used, was totally contrary to the use they make of them."²

Barr may think that evangelical writers in quoting Sanday's principle are insincere, but are they really? They evidently agree with the principle, but just as patently their application of the principle leads them to conclusions very different from those of Sanday. It is the conviction of John Murray that Sanday does not apply his fundamental principle consistently, and there is good reason to believe that Warfield would have confirmed Murray's judgment.³ The problem is that even though there is a formal

¹ Evangelical Belief (n.p.: Inter Varsity Fellowship, 1935), p. 22, quoted in James Barr, Fundamentalism (London: SCM Press, 1977), p. 348, n. 33; John Murray, "The Attestation of Scripture," in The Infallible Word: A Symposium, 3rd rev. printing, ed. Paul Woolley (Philadelphia, Pa.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1967), p. 9, n. 4.

²Barr, p. 348, n. 33. According to Barr, "there is no such thing as 'the Bible's view of itself'" and he considers it nonsense to say that "the Bible as a whole 'claims' to be inspired." Ibid., p. 78. In his opinion this is only possible if one starts with an unhistorical approach which takes the Bible as if it were a unitary system of thoughts and facts, all of which alike have come straight from God.

³Warfield in his review of Oracles agrees with Sanday that the consciousness of the sacred writers themselves "is the true starting-point for a really critical inquiry into the nature of Biblical inspiration." Oracles, p. 62. But he thinks that Sanday by starting out with a discussion of the human element in the Scriptures instead of the self-witness of its writers fails to reach the right conclusions. Review of Oracles, p. 711.

agreement between Sanday and Warfield that a true conception of Biblical inspiration must be derived from the Bible itself, the way they come to the Scriptures to ascertain that conception is different. This difference becomes clearer when we compare the development of their respective models of Biblical inspiration.

Methodology

The similarity between Sanday and Warfield in their efforts to establish the Biblical doctrine of inspiration seems to continue in their methodology. Both of them stress the need for a thorough induction from the facts, and consequently both profess to use the inductive method in pursuing their objectives. Their methodological approach reflects the nineteenth-century emphasis on Baconian induction as the true scientific method,¹ and it is evident that both were determined to pursue theology with the best scientific method available to them. In the case of Sanday, this emphasis on the inductive method was strengthened through his reading of Butler's Analogy,² while in Warfield's case, there is little reason to question that it was reinforced through the influence of Scottish Common Sense philosophy.³

¹For the nineteenth-century emphasis on Baconian induction see chap. 2, pp. 74-75, 84.

²The influence of Butler's Analogy on Sanday, especially Butler's disparagement of any a priori reasoning in ascertaining the Biblical concept of revelation (and mutatis mutandis its concept of inspiration), have been documented in chap. 3, pp. 120-21.

³That Warfield basically accepted Scottish Common Sense philosophy as a sound philosophy is supported by the evidence. Nowhere, perhaps, is this so clear as in the following statement: "Knowledge is no doubt produced by the interaction of sensation and reason; and sensation itself is no doubt as little a copy of outside

However, the similarity between Sanday's and Warfield's methodologies is more apparent than real since the primary facts on which the induction proceeds are not the same, although both take the Bible as their source. For Sanday the induction proceeds primarily on the linguistic, historical, geographical, and scientific data of the Bible, the so-called phenomena, and leads him to the conclusion that there is a strong human element in the Bible and that this human element is marked by errors and discrepancies. At the same time his inductive study of the Biblical data also proves to him the presence of a distinctly divine element in the Scriptures. His model of Biblical inspiration is structured on the basis of these two sets of findings.

Sanday's emphatic avowal to present an inductive theory of inspiration did not go unchallenged. Warfield's Princeton colleague, Tybout Purves, objected to the designation "inductive" because in his judgment Sanday's induction to a great extent excluded the primary

reality as the spectrum of a star is a copy of its constitution or its motion. Sensation needs interpreting to give knowledge, and reason is the interpreter. But our confidence in the truth of our interpreted sensation, i.e., in its conformity to outside reality, is ineradicable; and accordingly the common-sense view that knowledge is a copy of the real world outside us, which the author [Arthur Chandler] sharply criticises, will always rule. This confidence is resolvable ultimately, no doubt, into our confidence in God as Creator both of the external world and the perceptive mind; . . ." (emphasis is Warfield's). Benjamin B. Warfield, review of The Spirit of Man, by Arthur Chandler, in PRR 3 (1892):586. See also John H. Gerstner, "Warfield's Case for Biblical Inerrancy," in God's Inerrant Word, p. 121. The assertion of Rogers and McKim that "Warfield no longer acknowledged the philosophical and theological sources of the Princeton theology in Scottish realism and Turretin," Jack B. Rogers and Donald K. McKim, The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible: An Historical Approach (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979), p. 369, is not in harmony with the evidence and suggests a surreptitiousness on the part of Warfield which seems foreign to him.

Biblical data to determine the Biblical doctrine of inspiration, namely, the statements of Scripture about its own nature. Warfield agreed with Purves's critique.¹ Purves and Warfield no doubt referred to the fact that Sanday paid scant attention to prominent passages on the subject in the New Testament and that he practically invalidated what he himself designated as "the sanction of Christ."²

Warfield, as is clear from the preceding analysis of his methodology, judged any induction in which the so-called phenomena are taken as the primary factors or even as equal factors with the explicit teachings of Scripture in regard to its own nature, as inadequate. He observed that just as the Biblical doctrine of creation cannot be derived from the observed data of the natural world, so the Biblical doctrine of inspiration cannot be derived from the Bible's historical, literary, and other such data.³ To him it was self-evident that the teachings of Scripture must have priority over the phenomena in establishing such a doctrine. On this point the methods of Sanday and Warfield clearly diverged.

In more recent times the same issue has come to the fore, especially since the publication in 1963 of Dewey Beegle's, The

¹For Purves's critique, see chap. 3, p. 132. In a brief review of the third edition of Sanday's Inspiration, Warfield refers back to Purves's critical discussion of the first edition as careful and judicial and concurs with him that Sanday's recognition of the divine breath in Scripture does not satisfy all the claims which the Scriptures make for themselves. Benjamin B. Warfield, review of Inspiration, 3rd ed., by William Sanday, in PRR 7 (1896):562-63.

²Inspiration, pp. 406-21; cf. Oracles, pp. 102-12.

³For this comparison, see Bible, pp. 204-5 (o.d. 1893).

Inspiration of Scripture.¹ Beegle asserts in the first chapter of his book that in interpreting the data relevant to the doctrine of inspiration "the most crucial factor is that of method."² He then introduces the reader to two basic processes of reasoning of which the human mind is capable: the deductive and the inductive method. The deductive method, writes Beegle, "starts with an assumption or generalizations from which are deduced details or particulars," whereas the inductive method "begins with facts or details from which a generalization or principle is formulated."³ He grants the propriety and necessity of both kinds of reasoning, but judges that in order to obtain sound results, induction must precede deduction. He seems to echo Warfield when he tells us that every claim the Biblical writers make for their inspiration and every Biblical statement concerning the topic of inspiration constitute the primary data for the induction, but the difference from Warfield's approach becomes apparent when he adds immediately that "a truly Biblical

¹Dewey M. Beegle, The Inspiration of Scripture (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963). A revised edition appeared ten years later under the title Scripture, Tradition, and Infallibility (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1973). Both editions of this book called forth extensive comments from evangelical scholars. So, e.g., Carl F.H. Henry, "Yea, Hath God Said . . . ?," Christianity Today, April 26, 1963, pp. 26-28, 45-47; Frank E. Gaebelain, "Dust in a Land of Gold?," Christianity Today, pp. 39-41; Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., review of The Inspiration of Scripture, by Dewey M. Beegle, in Westminster Theological Journal 26 (1963-64): 230-38; Roger Nicole, "The Inspiration of Scripture: Warfield and Beegle," Gordon Review 8 (1964-65):93-109; Clark H. Pinnock, "How Trustworthy?" Christianity Today, April 26, 1974, pp. 37-38; Gordon H. Clark, "Beegle on the Bible: A Review Article," Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society (hereafter abbreviated as JETS) 20 (1977):265-86; et al.

²Beegle, The Inspiration of Scripture, p. 11.

³Ibid.

formulation of inspiration must give equal weight to the teaching and to the facts of Scripture."¹ Yet, although Beegle professes to give equal weight to the didactic statements and the phenomena, his scales of judgment seem to be more heavily weighted on the side of the phenomena.

Beegle's approach shows distinct similarity with that of Sanday both in his emphasis on the phenomena and in the conclusions he reaches.² Not surprisingly, his approach has met with criticism similar to that of Sanday. Robert Saucy, referring to both Sanday and Beegle, concludes that one reason why their induction fails is because it gives priority to the phenomena over the teaching of the Bible.³ In opposition to Beegle's approach, Roger Nicole maintains that "if the Bible does make certain express statements about itself, these manifestly must have priority in our attempt to formulate a doctrine of Scripture."⁴ Nicole adds the important observation that the application of Beegle's method in constructing other Biblical

¹Ibid., p. 14.

²There is only one reference in Beegle's book to William Sanday, in which he quotes Sanday's statement that there are lower and higher modes of inspiration in Scripture. Beegle, The Inspiration of Scripture, pp. 135-36. The quotation is from Inspiration, p. 398. It is evident, however, that Beegle's views on inspiration show a marked affinity with Sanday's views. Beegle, like Sanday, holds that there are degrees of inspiration, that some books in the Bible are on the fringe of the canon, and that some non-canonical writings are as much inspired as some of the canonical books. See, e.g., Beegle, The Inspiration of Scripture, pp. 135-41.

³Robert L. Saucy. "Difficulties with Inerrancy," JETS 9 (1966):19. Saucy remarks that "one looks in vain through his [Beegle's] recent study of the subject for a thorough inductive study of the Scriptural doctrine or of a reckoning with the exegetical studies of those who have made such studies." Ibid.

⁴Nicole, "Warfield and Beegle," p. 106.

doctrines, such as the relation of Christ in his human nature to sin or the doctrine of creation, would very likely lead to erroneous results.¹

It seems evident that the fundamental principle enunciated by Sanday, that a true conception of what the Bible is must be obtained from the Bible itself, is misunderstood and misapplied if the multifarious phenomena of Scripture are given preference over the express witness of Scripture in regard to its own inspiration and authority. Such a preference functions as an a priori principle and therefore tends to nullify the claim that the inductive method has been applied.²

However, not only Sanday's claim to use the inductive method must be and has been called into question. The query must be raised whether Warfield's method can justly be called an inductive method. That he himself emphatically asserted to follow the inductive method has been clearly demonstrated in the preceding chapter.³ The question is: Is his assertion justified? It seems likely that Sanday would have characterized Warfield's method as an a priori approach,⁴

¹Ibid.

²John Warwick Montgomery qualifies such a methodology "as false an induction and as flagrant a denial of the analogy of Scripture as is a morally imperfect Christology derived from questionable acts on Jesus' part. In both cases, proper induction requires that we go to the express biblical teaching on the subject (Jesus' deity; Scripture's authority) and allow this to create the pattern for treating particular problems." John Warwick Montgomery, The Suicide of Christian Theology (Minneapolis, Minn.: Bethany Fellowship, 1970), p. 358.

³See chap. 4, pp. 213-21.

⁴All of his life Sanday depreciated a priori reasoning but

but he never, at least in print, commented directly on his doctrine of inspiration or his methodology. This lack on Sanday's part has, however, been amply compensated for by others. Not only have some scholars contemporary with Warfield, such as Charles Briggs, charged him with a priori reasoning, but some recent scholars have characterized his method explicitly as a deductive method. William Abraham asserts that "Warfield and the whole tradition he elaborates approached the issue of inspiration deductively."¹ More specifically we are told that Warfield deduced the Bible's inerrancy from its divine inspiration. Abraham wants it to be understood that he sees no inherent flaw in the procedures of the deductive approach to inspiration, but their application must be tested by adequate criteria. He suggests two such criteria: first, we must make sure that the foundation idea from which the deductions are made is correct; and second, we must make sure that the strain between the deduced doctrine of inerrancy and the results of direct, inductive study of the Bible (he means the phenomena of the Bible) is not unbearable. In Abraham's opinion Warfield's deduction fails on both counts.

From a historical comparison between Warfield and Gausson, Abraham concludes that Gausson held to a dictation theory of inspiration, but that Warfield moved away from such a theory. Now Abraham admits that inerrancy can easily be deduced from divine dictation as the ground idea of inspiration, but holds that to

his descriptions of such reasoning remained vague and general. See, e.g., Oracles, pp. 102, 110, 111, and Inspiration, p. 423.

¹William J. Abraham, The Divine Inspiration of Holy Scripture (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 16.

abandon the idea of dictation necessitates the abandonment of inerrancy. He concludes, therefore, that Warfield's deduction fails because he does not deduce inerrancy from the foundation idea of dictation but from another foundation idea of inspiration. Abraham also finds Warfield's deductive method wanting because the strain of the doctrine of inerrancy vis-à-vis the results of an inductive historical critical study of the Bible is too great for any reasonable person to bear.¹

Rogers and McKim likewise see a shift in Warfield, though not like Abraham from a dictation model of inspiration to a non-dictation model. In their opinion Warfield's methodology has shifted from an earlier inductive approach on the part of his predecessors at Princeton to a deductive approach, from "inducing facts to deducing conclusions."² They recognize, what Abraham does not, that Warfield himself claimed "that theology was based on induction," yet they think that in reality he "actually worked increasingly by deduction."³ Still, despite the fact that Rogers and McKim

¹Abraham's argument as presented here is a concise summary of the line of argument in the first chapter of his book on inspiration, entitled "The Deductive Approach." Abraham, pp. 14-38. One of the weaknesses of the chapter is that it sets out to refute Warfield's doctrine of inspiration and especially Warfield's methodology without first presenting an adequate analysis of that doctrine and the methodology by which it is established. Abraham makes a number of assertions without substantiating them. He ascribes to Gausson apparently a mechanical theory of dictation, which Gausson emphatically repudiated, and he imagines a yawning gap between Gausson and Warfield of which Warfield himself is clearly unaware. See Bible, p. 421, n. 4 (o.d. 1880); Writings, 2:604-5 (o.d. 1888).

²Rogers and McKim, p. 325.

³Ibid. These two authors, in contrast to Abraham, do present an extensive analysis of Warfield's doctrine of inspiration and inerrancy, which contains many good insights. Unfortunately, it

repeatedly assert that Warfield's argumentation is dominated by logical deductions, they provide surprisingly few examples to substantiate their claim. They do provide some evidences that he deduced the inerrancy of the Scriptures from their plenary, verbal inspiration.¹ What they do not show is that Warfield also maintained the inerrancy of the Bible, rightly or wrongly, on exegetical grounds.² Nor do they make it clear whether deductive reasoning as such is wrong in formulating Biblical doctrines, or whether it is merely Warfield's deductive methodology which they consider to be at fault.³

Neither Abraham nor Rogers and McKim deal with the fact that Warfield explicitly claims to apply the inductive method in establishing the Biblical doctrine of inspiration. This is a strange omission in view of the fact that they so emphatically characterize his methodology as deductive. They also minimize the significance of the extensive induction on Warfield's part of the teachings of

is flawed at times by an exaggerated emphasis on certain philosophical presuppositions or assumptions, either of Thomistic scholasticism or Scottish realism, which supposedly determined Warfield's apologetics and theology. This may be an example of what John Woodbridge characterizes as Rogers and McKim's propensity for facile labeling. John D. Woodbridge, Biblical Authority: A Critique of the Rogers/McKim Proposal (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), p. 25.

¹See Rogers and McKim, pp. 344-48.

²See chap. 4, pp. 265-67, 299-301.

³Abraham acknowledges the legitimacy of deductive reasoning if the foundation idea from which the deductions are made is correct. Although Rogers and McKim seem favorable to the use of deduction in philosophical reasoning as found, for instance, in the philosophy of René Descartes, they apparently condemn its use in theological reasoning. See Rogers and McKim, pp. 167-69; 323-48.

Scripture in regard to its own nature.¹ Possibly the main reason why they characterize Warfield's method as deductive is that in their opinion he disregards the results of an inductive study of the Biblical phenomena as a decisive factor in establishing a Biblical doctrine of inspiration.²

Other scholars describe Warfield's method as a combination of induction and deduction rather than as a merely deductive method.³ They often recognize that Warfield himself claimed to follow an inductive approach and that he did, in fact, derive the doctrine of the plenary inspiration of Scripture from a wide induction of relevant Biblical passages. At the same time they seem to agree that his doctrine of inerrancy is the result of deductive reasoning rather

¹John Wenham in reviewing Abraham's book takes issue with Abraham's classification of Warfield's approach as deductive in view of the fact that "it is hard to think of a theologian more conscientiously inductive than he [Warfield]." Wenham points to the extensive accumulation in massive detail on Warfield's part of the New Testament teaching concerning the nature of Scripture. John Wenham, review of Freedom, Authority and Scripture, by J. I. Packer; Beyond Biblical Criticism: Encountering Jesus In Scripture, by Arthur Wainwright; and The Divine Inspiration of Holy Scripture, by W. J. Abraham, in Churchman 97 (1983):57.

²Rogers and McKim, pp. 346-47.

³So, e.g., Hoefel, who writes, "It would be a mistake to call Warfield's approach either inductive or deductive, it was a combination of both." Robert James Hoefel, "The Doctrine of Inspiration in the Writings of James Orr and B. B. Warfield: A Study in Contrasting Approaches to Scripture" (Ph.D. dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, School of Theology, 1983), p. 290. Cf. Wenham, review of Packer, Wainwright, and Abraham, p. 57; Donald Westblade, "Benjamin Warfield on Inspiration and Inerrancy," Studia Biblica et Theologica 10 (1980): 34-41; Roger Nicole, "Induction and Deduction with Reference to Inspiration," in Soli Deo Gloria: Essays in Reformed Theology, Festschrift for John H. Gerstner, ed. R. C. Sproul (n.p.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1976), p. 98; J. Barton Payne, "Higher Criticism and Biblical Inerrancy," in Inerrancy, ed. Norman L. Geisler (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979), p. 454, n. 35.

than an inference from a wide induction of Biblical data.¹ This assessment of Warfield's methodology is basically in harmony with the results of our analysis in the preceding chapter.² In view of these facts the conclusion seems justified that it is more correct to characterize Warfield's methodology as a combination of induction and deduction than to designate it as merely deductive.

Acceptance of the characterization of Warfield's method as both inductive and deductive does not entail acceptance of or agreement with his methodology. Donald Westblade, for instance, is of the opinion that Warfield did proceed inductively and in harmony with his own methodological desires "in establishing the fact that the Bible is indeed a God-breathed book and that what the writers of the Bible say, God himself says," but that "in assuming from the beginning that inspiration necessarily implies freedom from error of any kind, he [Warfield] lapsed, contrary to his own wishes and apparently unawares, into a distinctly deductive methodology."³

¹Wenham after pointing out how Warfield inductively arrives at the conclusion "that what Scripture says, God says," goes on to say "Only then does Warfield make one deduction: If the words of Scripture are the words of God, they are inerrant." Wenham, review of Packer, Wainwright, and Abraham, p. 57.

²See chap. 4, pp. 299-300.

³Westblade, pp. 39, 41. Westblade is, of course, on this point in agreement with other scholars who see Warfield's doctrine of inerrancy as an illegitimate deduction. So, e.g., Clark H. Pinnock, The Scripture Principle (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1984), pp. 58-59. Pinnock states on p. 59 that "the deductive tendency that would see inerrancy as a necessary corollary of inspiration works against honestly facing up to the data" and that "the inerrancy hypothesis lacks exegetical foundations." It is obvious that Pinnock has changed his mind in this respect, for in 1971 he held the opposite view. See his Biblical Revelation: The Foundation of Christian Theology (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971), pp. 73-75.

Important questions are raised by Westblade's assertions. First of all, a question mark must be placed by the phrase "in assuming from the beginning." Warfield would have rejected the attribution of an a priori assumption of inerrancy on his part. But even if we grant Warfield's objection, the question remains whether he lapsed against his own wishes from an inductive into a deductive method when he affirmed that the Scriptures are inerrant.

Quite likely Warfield would have denied that he was guilty of such a methodological deviation. The question is whether such a denial would have been defensible. Warfield apparently was convinced that his methodology was inductive throughout and there seems to be no evidence of any acknowledgement on his part that he used deductive reasoning in his formulation and definition of the Biblical doctrine of inspiration and its corollary, Biblical inerrancy.¹ Present-day scholars whose methodological approach and views of Biblical inspiration are similar to those of Warfield, such as James Packer and Roger Nicole, frankly admit that in reaching their conclusions they make use of both inductive and deductive reasoning.² It would

¹Warfield's estimate of theology as an inductive science is succinctly stated in the following words, "Theology has . . . an immense advantage over all other sciences, inasmuch as it is more an inductive study of facts conveyed in a written revelation than an inductive study of facts as conveyed in life." Studies in Theology, p. 74 (o.d. 1896). A few years later he wrote, "The chief gain that has been made by doctrinal study of later years is its acquisition of a more inductive method." Benjamin Warfield, review of What the Bible Teaches, by R. A. Torrey, in ERR 10 (1899):563.

²James I. Packer, Beyond the Battle for the Bible (Westchester, Ill.: Cornerstone Books, 1980), p. 52. Packer sees inerrancy and infallibility as entailed by inspiration on the basis of the following syllogism: (1) God speaks truth and truth only (that is, that what he says is infallible and inerrant); (2) all Scripture comes from God in such a sense that what it says, he says;

have been better if Warfield had made the same acknowledgement, for it seems hard to deny that he used both kinds of reasoning, particularly in the process by which he ascertained the inerrancy of Scripture.¹

A straightforward recognition that both inductive and deductive reasoning are involved in the process will bring into sharper focus the basic issue at stake, namely, whether the premises from which the deductions are made are sound premises and whether the deductions themselves are legitimate deductions. For although some critics of Warfield's methodology seem to criticize him for deductive reasoning per se, others, more to the point, question the correctness of his deductions rather than the legitimacy of reaching conclusions by means of a deductive process.² They question especially whether the doctrine of inerrancy is the conclusion of a sound deduction. This issue is taken up later in the chapter.

Warfield's method has been designated by some as deductive not only because he used deductive reasoning in reaching the doctrine of inerrancy but also because he did not allow the so-called phenomena of Scripture to function as a determinative factor in the process of ascertaining the Biblical doctrine of inspiration.³

(3) conclusion: Scripture must be infallible and inerrant, because it is God's utterance. Roger Nicole, "Induction and Deduction," pp. 96-97, spells out the basic steps of the inductive-deductive procedure.

¹The possibility remains that Warfield, if pressed with the question whether his method was a combination of induction and deduction, would have admitted the fact, for there seems to be no indication that he explicitly denied it.

²So, e.g., Abraham, p. 17.

³This is stated quite explicitly by Westblade, who refers to

Indeed, the term deductive is used by several scholars to describe that approach to the question of inspiration which starts from the didactic statements in the Scriptures, while by contrast they use the word inductive to designate the approach that starts from and emphasizes the phenomena.¹

However, in view of the preceding comparison of Sanday's and Warfield's methods, these designations seem unsatisfactory. One starts with and stresses the phenomena, while the other begins with the didactic statements and considers them the primary data. Neither method proceeds by pure induction or deduction. It may be questioned if such terms are adequate to describe the process of formulating the Biblical doctrine of inspiration--or any other doctrine.² Some scholars, convinced that the process of formulating and testing theological doctrines is more complex than can be designated by the words "inductive" and "deductive", have suggested other logical terms

Warfield's statement that "the characteristics of their [the Biblical writers] own writings are not relevant to the determination of their doctrine (emphasis Warfield's)." Bible, p. 206. See Westblade, p. 41.

¹Geisler, referring to Sanday and Beegle, remarks, "The fact that errantists have cast the defense of their view in terms of an inductive approach to the phenomena as opposed to what they call a 'traditional' or 'deductive' approach is ample testimony to the long-range effects of Bacon's inductivism." Norman L. Geisler, "Inductivism, Materialism, and Rationalism: Bacon, Hobbes, and Spinoza," in Biblical Errancy: An Analysis of Its Philosophical Roots, ed. Norman L. Geisler (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), p. 242, n. 51.

²Millard Erickson in a judicious remark about the so-called deductive and inductive approaches observes that "this terminology is somewhat misleading. Most theories of inspiration utilize both types of material. The crucial question is, Which type will be interpreted in the light of the other?" Millard J. Erickson, Christian Theology, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1983), p. 204.

such as "retroduction" and "abduction" to describe this process.¹ Whatever the merit of such suggestions may be, they point to the need for a more adequate description of the different methods and the presuppositions on which they are based.

Distinctions and Criteria

In view of the basic disparity in methodology between Sanday's and Warfield's approach, it is not surprising that their models of Biblical inspiration develop along diverging lines. This becomes more visible when we compare how they each deal with the question of distinctions, when we probe deeper into their selection of the relevant data for determining the Biblical doctrine of inspiration, and when we contrast their use of Biblical criticism.

Distinctions

Both Sanday and Warfield considered it to be one of the needs of the time in which they lived to make more careful distinctions and to frame more precise definitions in forming an exact idea of inspiration.² In recognizing the need for such distinctions they

¹So, e.g., Paul D. Feinberg, "The Meaning of Inerrancy," in Inerrancy, ed. Norman L. Geisler (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979), pp. 269-76. Feinberg, following John Warwick Montgomery, suggests abduction or retroduction as a more adequate methodological approach. Such a methodology retains both induction and deduction, but in an informal way through an informed and creative thinking process which derives doctrines from Biblical propositions and tests whether the doctrines fit the phenomena of the Bible. See Montgomery, The Suicide of Christian Theology, pp. 276-78.

²For Sanday, see Inspiration, p. 269; "Bible," p. 579; for Warfield, see Writings, 2:615 (o.d. 1894); Hodge and Warfield, Inspiration, pp. 5-6.

were certainly not alone.¹ Yet, when we compare the way in which these two authors tried to meet the perceived need, it becomes manifest that the attempt to make definite distinctions is more pronounced on the part of Warfield than on the part of Sanday. So much so that the scope of the comparison is restricted by the comparative lack of such deliberate distinctions in Sanday's writings.

A significant distinction for Warfield is that between the divine origin of Scripture and inspiration, and the emphasis on this distinction we were able to trace from his earliest writings on inspiration till the latest.² Warfield sees the divine origin of Scripture as the larger and more general concept including in it a complex of processes and a concurrence of many divine and human operations. In his essay "The Divine Origin of the Bible," he presents to us in a concise fashion from the history, the structure, and the teaching of the Bible, the evidence for this origin. So abundant and compelling is this evidence and so miserably have all attempts to account for the origin of the Scriptures apart from God failed, in Warfield's estimate, that there is no other conclusion for him than that "we seem shut up to account for it as from him."³ Inspiration he defines more narrowly as the final, concluding action

¹So, e.g., Basil Manly, The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1888), pp. 20-43; James Orr, Revelation and Inspiration (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), pp. 21-25.

²Warfield's discussion of this subject is delineated and documented in chap. 4, pp. 244-48.

³Revelation, p. 447 (o.d. 1882).

of God, superinduced on the whole complex of processes which together account for the divine origin of Scripture. The primary evidence for inspiration Warfield finds in the teaching of Christ and the apostles in regard to the nature of Scripture and the way in which they use and consider the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

Sanday, too, seems to make some kind of distinction between the divine element in the Scriptures in a general sense and, as he calls it, "in its special manifestations."¹ The evidence for this divine element in the more general sense he finds in the spiritual phenomena of the Bible, numerous sayings which testify of experiences which belong not to the sphere of this world but to the sphere of a higher spiritual life. Yet, the manifestations of the prophetic consciousness constitute for Sanday the more specific evidence and the clearest proof that God's voice has really spoken to us in the pages of Scripture.² Such manifestations are for him the primary evidence of divine inspiration.

Despite a superficial similarity in the foregoing distinctions, made by Warfield and Sanday, the differences are quite conspicuous. In the first place, Warfield's distinction is deliberate and clearly formulated, while Sanday's distinction is not explicitly stated as such but merely implied in his discussions of

¹This distinction seems to be implied in the fact that the third chapter of his book Oracles carries the heading, "The Divine Element Generally Considered," while the fourth chapter is entitled "The Divine Element in Its Special Manifestations." Whereas the former treats the verification of the divine element by history, the subject matter of the latter is the account which the sacred writers give us of themselves. Oracles, p. 48.

²Ibid.

the divine element in Scripture. Sanday does not stress the fact that he is making a distinction; Warfield does. A second difference is that Sanday's description of the divine element in Scripture in its general sense nearly exclusively focuses on the spiritual effect of this element,¹ whereas Warfield deals not only with the effect but also with the origin of the divine aspect of Scripture and the manifold divine operations involved in that origin. Thirdly, Warfield's delineation of the evidences for the divine origin of Scripture and the complexity of the processes involved in it is specific. So is his definition of inspiration. Sanday's description of the "divine element generally considered" contains many worthwhile thoughts, but is not as definite, penetrating, or comprehensive as Warfield's description of "the divine origin of Scripture." Nor does he give a specific definition of inspiration. This is indeed one of the anomalies in Sanday. His professed aim is to formulate an exact idea of inspiration, yet he never really seems to put forth a clear-cut definition.²

¹Although Sanday does recognize that some definite historical facts constitute the basis of the divine element in Scripture in a general sense, his overriding emphasis is on the spiritual effect of the Bible. This effect constitutes in his opinion the most immediate proof of the divine element in Scripture. A discussion of this point, under the caption "The Experimental Test," is found in chap. 3, pp. 134-36.

²Warfield alludes to this fact in his review of Sanday's book Inspiration which begins with the remark: "Dr. Sanday's able Bampton Lectures on the divine origin of the Christian religion--for it is that upon which he insists, and not upon the 'inspiration' of the Christian Scriptures in the more technical sense of those words--" Review of Inspiration, p. 562. Abraham observes that when Sanday develops his theology of inspiration "it is very difficult to determine what exactly he is claiming." Abraham, p. 43. He considers the elusiveness of Sanday's account of inspiration its most frustrating aspect.

Another distinction, important to both Sanday and Warfield, is that between revelation and inspiration.¹ Early in his career Sanday expressed the need for a more scientific definition of revelation. Warfield certainly shared this concern.² Here again, Sanday's attempt in defining revelation and in distinguishing it from inspiration is rather casual. In his Bampton Lectures he devotes just one footnote to this distinction. Following Andrew Fairbairn, Sanday defines inspiration as being possessed by God, as the process by which God gives to man, revelation as the mode or form--word, character, or institution--in which man embodies what he has received. The terms are considered by him as coextensive correlatives, inspiration denoting the process on the inner side, revelation on its outer side.³

The way Warfield distinguishes between revelation and inspiration is quite different. For him revelation denotes the divine activity in supernaturally communicating to certain chosen instruments the truths which God would make known to the world,

¹For the discussion of Sanday's and Warfield's views on the distinction of revelation and inspiration and the relationship between them, see above, pp. 144-48 and 248-55.

²Sanday expressed this need already in 1876 in his book The Gospels in the Second Century. An Examination of the Critical Part of a Work Entitled "Supernatural Religion" (London: Macmillan and Co., 1876), p. 9, but he published very little on the topic of revelation. Warfield on the contrary wrote a number of articles on the subject, although not as extensively as on inspiration. For Warfield's publications, see above p. 250, n. 4.

³Inspiration, p. 124, n. 1. Cf. his later remark, "It will be obvious that the two terms must be closely related. To a large extent they are strictly correlative. Revelation is in large part the direct product of inspiration." "Inspiration," p. 612. Sanday's way of defining the terms was certainly not traditional, but neither was it original with him.

whereas inspiration refers to the influence of God exerted on the sacred writers in their entire work of writing, rendering the written product the divinely trustworthy word of God.¹ That is to say, from the perspective of the prophet, revelation has to do with his reception of the knowledge of God, inspiration has to do with his communicating that knowledge to others. Warfield considers the close correlation of inspiration and revelation as merely two aspects of one process, in a fashion like that of Sanday or Fairbairn, to be a source of confusion.² He sees them as distinctive divine operations, which are often, but not always, combined.³ The seemingly reverse use of the words revelation and inspiration by Warfield and Sanday is certainly confusing and points to the need of a careful definition of both terms on the basis of the Biblical data.

The study of Sanday's and Warfield's views on revelation and

¹Writings, 2:615 (o.d. 1894). Cf. Critical Reviews, p. 237 where Warfield criticizes Reinhold Seeberg's construction of revelation and inspiration, because "it provides only for the acquisition of divine truth, not at all for its communication. 'Revelation' and 'Inspiration' are both absorbed in the attainment of truth by its chosen witnesses; nothing is left to safeguard its transmission to others."

²Discussion of the subject of inspiration is greatly confused, according to Warfield, by "persistence of the older and more inexact use of the word" on the one hand, and by "the recent introduction of a newer usage by a special school of thinkers, who would make inspiration merely the correlate of revelation" on the other. Writings, 2:616. This kind of correlation he finds to be common in theories "which confine inspiration to certain portions or elements in the Bible." *Ibid.*, p. 625.

³Hodge and Warfield, Inspiration, p. 6. It is true that Warfield also counts inspiration to be one of the modes of revelation if the latter is taken in its widest sense, but if revelation is taken in a narrower sense, for instance, as an external manifestation of God or an immediate communication from God in words, he maintains that the two should be sharply distinguished. Bible, p. 160 (o.d. 1915).

inspiration and the distinction between them in the preceding chapters shows that Warfield made a more thorough investigation into the Biblical data concerning the nature of revelation than Sanday.¹ Still even Warfield's treatment of these data lacks the exegetical penetration and depth characteristic of his profound articles on the nature of Scripture. Had Warfield been confronted with the neo-orthodox emphasis on revelation as encounter and its denial of propositional revelation, some significant studies on revelation might have flowed from his fruitful pen.² But this challenge had to be met by his spiritual successors.³

¹Sanday's only significant examination of the concept of revelation is in his article "Inspiration and Revelation." The article contains a general discussion of the concept but does not present a linguistic study of the term revelation as used in the Bible nor an exegesis of relevant passages on the topic. Warfield's article "The Biblical Idea of Revelation," which was published in the same year as Sanday's article, contains both and is marked by greater depth in its examination of the Biblical data. Warfield, as mentioned before, wrote a number of other articles on the subject as well.

²As we indicated above (p. 251, n. 3), there is some justification for the criticism of Peter and McIntyre that Warfield neglected the centrality of Christ in the Biblical idea of revelation and that his use of the word revelation lacks "integrative treatment," as McIntyre puts it. John McIntyre, review of The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible, by Benjamin B. Warfield, in Reformed Theological Review 9 (June 1950):20. But Peter overstates the case when he concludes "that what Warfield gives us is not 'the Biblical idea of revelation' at all, but an idea of 'revelation' at which he arrived on some other grounds, and for which he is able to adduce Scriptural statements which (there being certain suppositions already in mind) seem to give support to his view." J. F. Peter, "Warfield on the Scriptures," Reformed Theological Review 16 (October 1957):79.

³The most extensive modern study of the Biblical concept of revelation, with full recognition of the centrality of Christ and a thoroughly integrated concept of revelation, is to be found in the magnum opus of Carl F. H. Henry, God, Revelation and Authority, 6 vols. (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1976-1983). Henry's "integrative treatment" of divine revelation finds forceful expression in his

In conclusion we can say that Warfield's distinctions are more deliberate and more precise than Sanday's. In this respect Warfield fulfils more adequately than his Oxford colleague the need for exact definitions and distinctions which both of them so clearly perceived and enunciated.

Determinative Data

Crucial in the quest for the Biblical concept of inspiration is the issue: Which data in Scripture must be considered as determinative for establishing the concept? It is interesting that here again at first sight there is agreement between Sanday and Warfield. For Sanday "the clearest and simplest and most direct proof" of the divine element in Scripture "is to be found in the account which the sacred writers give us of themselves," or in other words, "in the consciousness of the sacred writers themselves."¹ Warfield heartily approves Sanday's appeal to the consciousness of the sacred writers as the true starting-point for a critical inquiry into the nature of Biblical inspiration.²

It soon becomes apparent, however, that once more the roads

fifteen theses on that subject, which form the substance of volumes 2, 3 and 4. Bernard Ramm in his book Special Revelation and the Word of God (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1961), also presents a Christocentric treatment of revelation. See especially chap. 5 "The Modality of the Incarnation," pp. 106-22.

¹Oracles, pp. 48, 62.

²Review of Oracles, p. 711. Warfield himself had stated it somewhat differently more than ten years earlier in these words: "It is evident . . . that such a doctrine must rest primarily on the claims of the sacred writers. In the very nature of the case, the writers themselves are the prime witness of the fact and nature of their inspiration." Bible, pp. 422-23 (o.d. 1880).

diverge. The basic criterion is not applied in the same way. The consciousness of the sacred writers refers for Sanday preeminently to the consciousness of the prophets of the Old Testament. He holds prophecy to be the central phenomenon of the Old and New Testaments. Significant marks of this phenomenon are (1) the consciousness of a distinctive divine call, often accepted with great reluctance, (2) the awareness of an external impulse, and (3) a deliberate speaking with divine authority manifested particularly in prophetic formulae. Prophetic inspiration with its distinctive marks is in Sanday's opinion the typical form of all true inspiration in both Testaments.¹ It becomes for him the criterion not only for the nature of inspiration but also for its extent.² Other forms, such as the inspiration of psalmists, wise men, and historians, are qualified by Sanday as secondary in comparison with prophetic inspiration. For him the man to whom God says, "I have put my words in thy mouth" (Jer 1:9), the prophet speaking and writing under the divine impulse and with divine authority, displays the true model of inspiration.

For Warfield the inspiration of the prophet in the Old Testament is certainly an important phenomenon,³ but even more important in his view are the claims made by the writers of the New Testament. What they teach concerning the nature of the Old Testament, its inspiration and authority, Warfield considers to be of primary significance for establishing the Biblical doctrine of

¹Oracles, pp. 48, 56, 63; Inspiration, pp. 128, 268.

²Inspiration, pp. 265, 396.

³See, e.g., Studies, pp. 140-41 (o.d. 1895); Bible, pp. 85-94 (o.d. 1915).

inspiration.¹ In harmony with the principle that the revelation of doctrine is progressive, Warfield finds a more fully developed doctrine of Scripture and inspiration in the New Testament than in the Old.² Especially Christ's attitude in regard to the Old Testament he holds to be of decisive importance. The teaching of Christ together with that of the apostles constitutes for Warfield the main criterion for determining the mode, extent, and effects of inspiration.

The contrast between Sanday's and Warfield's approach becomes clear in their differing attitudes towards this criterion. Sanday with emphasis states his belief that Jesus Christ is truly God and man, and finds in this belief the ground for investing every word spoken by our Lord with supreme authority.³ Nevertheless, for a number of reasons Sanday concludes that the usage of the Old Testament by Christ and the apostles is not decisive for determining

¹This principle has been discussed at length in the preceding chapter and Warfield's application of it amply documented. See above, pp. 221-30.

²The concept of progressive revelation is for Warfield clearly a Biblical concept. See Bible, pp. 79-82 (o.d. 1915). This includes both the great redemptive acts of God and their explanation, which for him is itself a part of God's redemptive acts. In harmony with this comprehensive view of revelation as progressive, the delivery or revelation of doctrine is also progressive. Warfield believed in a plenary inspired Bible, but this did not mean for him that everything in the Bible is of the same importance or that there is no development in Scripture. However, his concept of progressive revelation is not the liberal evolutionary concept of revelation as held by Sanday. The difference between these two concepts of progressive revelation is clearly set forth by James I. Packer, "An Evangelical View of Progressive Revelation," in Evangelical Roots: A Tribute to Wilbur Smith, ed. Kenneth S. Kantzer (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1978), pp. 143-58.

³Oracles, p. 104.

the doctrine of inspiration.¹ Because of Christ's kenosis in his incarnation, Sanday thinks that there was a "neutral zone" among the Lord's sayings. That is to say, Christ voluntarily condescended in his human condition to the level of knowledge of his contemporaries. Therefore his statements concerning such non-essential questions as the origin and authorship of Old Testament books cannot a priori be assumed to be without error.²

Warfield took sharp issue with Sanday's application of the theory of kenosis in his review of Sanday's book The Oracles of God. He wrote,

Let the mind once settle on this result: that our Lord on earth not merely was ignorant of some mysteries and confessed His ignorance, but shared the erroneous points of view of His contemporaries and gave expression to their errors; and we may not merely be able to discount His testimony to the Old Testament Scriptures, but may also find it not easy to refuse to discount His testimony to His Messiahship, to His relation to God, to the nature of His work, or to His saving powers.³

It is evident that both Sanday and Warfield perceived the issue whether Christ's statements in regard to the Old Testament should be accepted as determinative in formulating a doctrine of inspiration as a crucial issue. It was understood as crucial by

¹His argumentation on this point in Inspiration, pp. 406-21, is at times rather tortuous. The main argument, however, is that Christ in his incarnation accepted limitations of knowledge and that in matters not essential to his messianic office Jesus' statements were conditioned by his historical situation.

²That Sanday believed that Christ could be in error on such matters is evident from Oracles, pp. 109-10, where he discusses hypothetically the possibility that the Law was not written by Moses and yet attributed to Moses by Christ. He assured his readers that if Christ were in error, "the error of statement would belong in some way to the humanity and not to the divinity" (p. 110).

³Review of Oracles, p. 711. For Warfield's critique of the kenotic theory in general see above, pp. 228-29.

their contemporaries,¹ and it is still considered as crucial today.² James Barr, for instance, takes John Wenham to task for his didactic approach to the study of the Bible and for asserting that "Christ's view of Scripture can and should still be the Christian's view of Scripture."³ For Barr this assertion is nonsense, for in his opinion Christ does not make "claims" either about himself or about the Bible, nor does the Bible make "claims" about itself.⁴ And even if Jesus did make certain statements about Old Testament books and events, we should remember that Jesus' teaching is time-bound and situation-bound, definitely not eternal truth valid for all times and situations.⁵ Barr and others admit that Christ held a high view of the Old Testament and its authority,⁶ but they deny that statements of Christ and the apostles can be used to arrive at a

¹See above, p. 102.

²For some modern discussions by scholars who affirm that Christ's view of Scripture is decisive as a criterion, see Henry, God, Revelation and Authority, 3:28-47; James I. Packer, "Fundamentalism" and the Word of God (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1958), pp. 54-62; Clark H. Pinnock, "The Inspiration of Scripture and the Authority of Jesus Christ," in God's Inerrant Word, pp. 201-18; John W. Wenham, Christ and the Bible, (Downers Grove, Ill.: Varsity Press, 1973); and "Christ's View of Scripture," in Inerrancy, ed. Norman L. Geisler (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979), pp. 3-36. Positions of those who deny or minimize Christ's view as determinative are represented in Abraham, pp. 95-102; Barr, pp. 72-78; Harry R. Boer, Above the Battle? The Bible and Its Critics (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975), pp. 91-98. An overview of the debate about this subject especially in Britain is given by H. D. McDonald, "The Bible in Twentieth-Century British Theology," in Challenges to Inerrancy: A Theological Response, ed. Gordon Lewis and Bruce Demarest (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), pp. 100-105.

³Barr, p. 76.

⁴Ibid., pp. 77-79.

⁵Ibid., p. 171

⁶Ibid., p. 73; Abraham, p. 96; Boer, p. 91.

well-defined doctrine of inspiration.¹

It seems that in this respect Sanday faces the New Testament data with greater exegetical candor when he writes concerning the traditional idea of plenary inspiration, that "the one proof which in all ages has been the simplest and most effective as to the validity of that idea was the extent to which it was recognized in the sayings of Christ Himself."² However, this admission, that the sayings of Christ did provide exegetical proof for the doctrine of plenary inspiration, does not prevent Sanday from rejecting the doctrine. For him, as we show below, the results of Biblical criticism rather than the teachings of Christ determine the doctrine of inspiration.

Warfield, when facing in his own day arguments similar to those of Barr and Abraham, that not merely the teaching of Christ but the whole Bible does not contain a clearly defined doctrine of inspiration, responds that "it requires only the most cursory reading of the New Testament to assure us, that it has a doctrine of inspiration, and that it teaches such a doctrine in the same way and with the same authority that it teaches other doctrines," namely, by "implying and asserting, in every part of the volume, all the

¹It must be said that what these scholars deny particularly is that Jesus taught a doctrine of verbal inspiration and the inerrancy of the autographs. But their statements are often of a more general nature. So, for instance, Abraham who speaks of "the momentous silence about inspiration on the part of Jesus in the Gospels. There is no point where Jesus speaks explicitly of the inspiration of the Bible." Abraham, p. 97. He thinks that if inspiration was important to Jesus, we could at least have had a clear indication of this.

²Inspiration, p. 393.

elements of a complete doctrine."¹ In none of his articles on inspiration does Warfield focus exclusively on the teachings of Jesus recorded in the Gospels, yet there is no question that in his opinion Christ's teachings form the supreme source and standard for establishing the Biblical doctrine of inspiration. At the time when the conflict over the doctrine of inspiration ran high, he wrote, "This is indeed the essence of the whole controversy on inspiration as at the present pressed: is it safe to accept and trust Jesus' views of Scripture, its divinity, its authority, its truth?"² And why should we accept Jesus' views as the chief criterion? Warfield with an appeal to John 1:14 and many other passages of Scripture would answer that the reason "is this, that since Jesus Christ our Lord, the manifested Jehovah, was as such the incarnation of truth, no statement which ever fell from his lips can have contained any admixture of error."³

Here is a crucial difference indeed. Sanday believes that Jesus Christ is truly God and man and that for this reason we invest every word spoken by our Lord with supreme authority. But in the same breath he affirms that Christ could conceivably and probably did err in matters non-essential to salvation. Warfield also holds that Christ is the true God-man and as such is truth incarnate. For him, therefore, Christ's statements, whether about heavenly things or

¹"The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration." p. 165.

²Benjamin B. Warfield, review of Addresses at the Inauguration of Professors of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, Nebraska, September 5, 1893, in PRR 5 (1894):545.

³Writings, 2:458-59 (o.d. 1893).

about earthly things, cannot be in error. The conclusion seems clear that for Sanday and Warfield the question of the chief criterion for the Biblical doctrine of inspiration is ultimately a Christological question. This becomes clearer still when we compare their views on the function and limits of Biblical criticism.

It is hard to escape the further conclusion that Warfield's position on this vital issue is more consistent than Sanday's. To express belief in Jesus Christ as truly God and man, to acknowledge his words as invested with supreme authority, and yet to deny determinative status to his views in regard to the nature of Scripture is illogical. Well might we ask with Warfield,

Is, then, the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world gone out in darkness? What is left us of the Truth Indeed, who proclaims himself no more the Way and the Life than the Truth, if his testimony cannot be trusted as to the nature, origin, authority, and meaning of the Scriptures of which his own Spirit was the inspirer.¹

The Function and Limits of Biblical Criticism

If Sanday and Warfield differed widely on many vital issues, they certainly did not on the necessity of Biblical criticism. Warfield characterized Sanday's book The Oracles of God as being "simply a plea for the right and duty of criticism, to which all true lovers of the Bible will say a hearty Amen."² This was not mere rhetoric. Warfield no less than Sanday believed not only in the

¹Ibid., p. 460. Cf. the remarks of McDonald, "The Bible in Twentieth-Century British Theology," pp. 102-4, for an incisive criticism of the inconsistency of the kenotic reduction of the authority and trustworthiness of Christ's statements concerning the Scriptures.

²Review of Oracles, pp. 710-11.

right but the necessity of lower as well as higher criticism. Both of them, as we saw earlier, contributed works of competent scholarship in the areas of textual, literary and historical criticism. To attribute, as James Barr seems to do, an anti-critical aim to conservative scholars like Warfield, shows at best misapprehension and in any case misrepresentation.¹

There are other points of agreement on this matter between the two scholars. Warfield takes issue with any form of Biblical criticism which a priori rules out the supernatural. Sanday equally asserts that the higher criticism of the Bible "entirely refuses to be bound by any such postulate as the impossibility of the supernatural."² Both accept the principle that the Bible should be studied like any other book but reject the assumption that it therefore must be like any other book.³ Both also see Biblical criticism as the essential tool with which to analyze and scrutinize the unique claims of the Bible as divine Scripture as well as the

¹Barr, pp. 172-74. One wonders how much Barr has studied of the corpus of Warfield's writings. Paul Wells has pointed out that in Barr's book Fundamentalism "the disparity between Warfield's presence in the index and his absence in the footnotes is disquieting." Paul Ronald Wells, James Barr and the Bible: Critique of a New Liberalism (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1980), p. 182, n. 125.

²"Aims and Methods," p. 331. Cf. his caution that "the historical method must not be employed as a covert means of getting rid of the supernatural . . . where this is done the cause is sure to be ultimately traceable to that which is the direct opposite of the method; viz. philosophical presuppositions." "The Historical Method in Theology," p. 84.

³Inspiration, pp. 1-2. Cf. William Sanday, Outlines of the Life of Christ, 2nd ed., (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1906), p. 248, "It is one thing 'to read the Bible like any other book,' and another thing to assume that we shall only find in it what is found in other books."

rich spectrum of its human characteristics.¹

Again, regarding the basic principles and procedures of a critical approach there seems to be considerable agreement. Sanday would most likely have had no argument with the three essential characteristics of criticism spelled out by Warfield: (1) an honest mental abandonment to the facts of the case apart from presuppositions, (2) a careful, complete and unprejudiced collection and examination of the facts, and (3) great caution in drawing inferences from these facts.² It would not be strange to expect that these two scholars, who apparently are agreed on the necessity, the function, and the basic principles of Biblical criticism, would traverse more or less identical paths and reach quite similar conclusions in their critical approach to the Scriptures. Evidently, however, this is not the case.

Most conspicuously, Sanday and Warfield are wide apart in the conclusions they reach. They strongly disagree in regard to the trustworthiness and accuracy of Biblical history, especially Old Testament history. Sanday, accepting to a great extent the critical results of Kuenen and Wellhausen in regard to the development of Hebrew literature, considers extended tracts of Old Testament history

¹It is unfortunate that the clearest statements of Warfield's views on this matter were buried for a long time--and in some cases still are today--in old forgotten journal articles or book reviews. This is also true for Sanday's article "The Aims and Methods of the Higher Criticism," which is not mentioned in Souter's bibliography of Sanday's works.

²Bible, pp. 429-30 (o.d. 1880). Sanday wanted a critical investigation of the Scriptures without philosophical presuppositions, thoroughly inductive, and unhurried in drawing its conclusions. See, e.g., "Aims and Methods," pp. 29-31; Two Present-Day Questions, pp. 27-33.

as idealized and symbolical.¹ Comparing the writings of these great critical leaders of Continental opinion with works maintaining traditional views of Old Testament authorship and history, Sanday concludes that the critical argument is in the stronger and more capable hands. This he does in spite of the fact, as he states it, that Kuenen as well as Wellhausen "wrote in the interest of almost avowed naturalism."²

Although Warfield agrees with Sanday on the necessity of criticism, he thinks it unfortunate "that Dr. Sanday confounds the proposition that criticism is a right and a duty, with the very different one that the prevalent methods and results of Old Testament criticism are right, and that it is our duty to accept them at least provisionally; to which we demur in the name of criticism itself."³ Convinced that all criticism is not true criticism, Warfield considers the prevailing method of Old Testament criticism as discredited both in its starting-point--unbelief in the supernatural, and in its goal--a naturalistic development of the religion of Israel

¹His acceptance of what Sanday himself called "the critical view of the Old Testament," Inspiration, p. 115, can be traced throughout the entire corpus of his writings, but his negative estimate of the historicity of the Old Testament narratives is most explicit and emphatic in later publications. However, Sanday made no original contributions to the field of Old Testament studies except for some fleeting suggestions.

²Inspiration, pp. 116-17.

³Review of Oracles, p. 711. Warfield was appreciative of the cautious attitude expressed by Sanday in his book Two Present-Day Questions, but nevertheless observed: "We do not think as well of the presently popular school of Old Testament criticism as Dr. Sanday seems to do The right and duty of criticism certainly needs no defense; but a right to crude, hasty, ill-considered, borrowed criticism can never be made good." Benjamin B. Warfield, review of Two Present-Day Questions, by W. Sanday, in PRR 4 (1893):685.

and its record.¹ To be sure Warfield recognizes that many scholars such as Sanday and Driver, who accept the Wellhausian scheme of the development of Hebrew literature and Israelite history, profess faith in the supernatural. But in his estimate, their criticism of the Old Testament, denying its historicity in large parts, is not based on facts, but on wrong assumptions and circular reasoning.

The question whether the historical narratives of the Old Testament are factual history is clearly a crucial issue for both Sanday and Warfield because of its bearing on the doctrine of inspiration. Sanday, in agreement with what he accepts as established results of criticism, thinks that a difference must be drawn, in the Old as well as in the New Testament, between history and doctrine. Doctrine he attributes to divine inspiration, but history to natural methods of research subject to human weakness and error.² With the help of Biblical criticism he wants to penetrate through the husk to the kernel.³ It is just at this point that

¹Studies, p. 6 (o.d. 1897). It is not feasible to enter here into the question whether Wellhausen worked from an anti-supernaturalistic premise. Lothar Perlitt presents evidence that Wellhausen's views of the history of Israel were not determined by Hegelian philosophy or Darwinistic evolution. Lothar Perlitt, Vatke und Wellhausen. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 94 (Berlin: Verlag Alfred Töpelmann, 1965), pp. 153-64. Perlitt also seems to suggest that Wellhausen remained a Christian throughout his life, but concludes that he wrote his presentation of the religion and history of Israel "im Zuge der antidogmatischen Strömung seiner Zeit und auf den Spuren der grossen und von ihm auch verehrten Profan-historiker." Ibid., p. 243. It is not without significance that even Sanday perceived a naturalistic bias in Wellhausen.

²Oracles, pp. 68-70.

³So in C. Dunkley, ed., The Official Report of the Church Congress Held at Rhyl, October . . . 1891 (London: Bemrose and Sons, 1891), p. 174. The distinction between husk and kernel could

Warfield objects. To him such distinctions between kernel and husk, or substance and form, are misleading and must ultimately result in a denial of inspiration altogether, since inspiration as distinguished from revelation necessarily concerns the form of Scripture.¹ Warfield finds no warrant for separating a doctrinal or religious kernel from a historical husk in Scripture. Rather, inspiration pertains to "its whole contents, historical as well as doctrinal and ethical," rendering these contents "not only entirely trustworthy, but designedly framed for the spiritual profit of all ages."²

Warfield's criticism of Sanday's position becomes more incisive in later years as Sanday grows more outspoken in his criticism of the Bible. When Sanday in his article "Bible" attributes the Biblical narrative of the Flood to "the indistinct memory of a great destructive flood of the Euphrates or the Tigris," and of the giving of the Law to "the memory of some portentous volcanic eruption," Warfield detects a naturalizing tendency in Sanday's criticism.³ Still later, when Sanday explicitly rejects

be and was expressed in different ways. Elsewhere Sanday wrote concerning Scripture: "The body, the outward form, may be of the earth earthy, but the spirit by which it is pervaded and animated is from heaven." Oracles, p. 30.

¹Writings, 2:599 (o.d. 1892). In his critique of Reinhold Seeberg's attempt to reconstruct the old doctrine of revelation and inspiration, Warfield remarks that "'the kernel and the husk' has been the watchword of a century's criticism and reconstruction of Christian doctrine." Critical Reviews, p. 232 (o.d. 1910).

²Writings, 1:32 (o.d. 1898).

³Warfield speaks of this article as written with Sanday's customary grace and skill, but nevertheless "a most disappointing article," in which the author not merely presents the current

the possibility of miracles contra naturam, that is to say miracles which would imply "some definite reversal of the natural physical order," Warfield does not see how this position differs from conventional naturalism.¹ Warfield evaluates Sanday's naturalistic position in the light of earlier statements in which Sanday, on the basis of internal evidence, asserts the historical trustworthiness of the narratives of the virgin birth, the temptation and the resurrection of Christ. In the light of these earlier assertions Warfield concludes that Sanday's rejection of "nature miracles" does not rest on critical grounds. His most elaborate, thorough, and characteristic essays on criticism accredit them. If he, nevertheless, refuses to believe that such miracles occurred, he can ground his refusal on nothing but an a priori pronouncement that they are impossible.² Warfield judges that Sanday, after giving his life to the study of criticism, rejects the facts as ascertained by

destructive view of the composition of the Bible, but in which "Dr. Sanday does not hesitate to invent facts when he needs them in order to 'naturalize' supernatural occurrences." Benjamin B. Warfield, review of Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, vol. 2, ed. James Hastings, in PTR 8 (1910):272.

¹Benjamin B. Warfield, "Kikuyu, Clerical Veracity and miracles," in PTR 12 (1914):572. This article contains a most penetrating criticism of Sanday's distinction between miracles supra naturam and contra naturam, as presented by him in his pamphlet Bishop Gore's Challenge to Criticism. Warfield shows by means of a chronological survey of Sanday's previous published views on miracles that "his naturalistic opinions, here expressed with so keen a consciousness, have not been of quite so slow a growth and have not come to their present completeness quite so recently as might be supposed from the mere letter of the sketch of their development here given. Dr. Sanday had already indeed more than a quarter of a century ago given them expression quite as clearly and in much the same terms as now; . . ." *Ibid.*, p. 575. For Sanday's distinction, see p. 122, n. 2.

²*Ibid.*, p. 581.

critical inquiry in preference to a philosophical anti-supernaturalistic preconception in order to make Christianity more acceptable to "the modern mind."¹

In view of Sanday's earlier emphatic repudiation of anti-supernatural presuppositions, the question must be raised whether Warfield's critique is justified. The problem seems to focus on Sanday's concept of the supernatural. The evidence strongly suggests that for him the supernatural or the divine pertains to the spiritual rather than to the material, and that he draws quite a sharp line between the spiritual and the physical realms.²

Inspiration pertains for Sanday to spiritual matters but not to matters of science and history.³ In Scripture, as we noticed above, he distinguishes between the kernel and the husk or between the earthly outward form and the spirit from heaven by which it is pervaded and animated. Miracles may be supra naturam, but cannot be

¹Ibid., p. 582.

²In Divine Overruling Sanday describes three axioms or general principles which played a determining part in his rejection of miracles contra naturam. (1) Poetry comes before prose; the earlier narratives [in Scripture] are usually more or less colored by the imagination; exactness of statement is a scientific aim and belongs to the scientific period, which is latest in the world's history. (2) The true divine is not to be sought in the abnormal, though for long ages the tendency has been to think that it was. God is consistent with Himself and respects His own laws, which describe His permanent mode of action. (3) The true divine is really spiritual; it is seen in the presence of higher powers of the Spirit. Divine Overruling, pp. 64-66. The third axiom shows clearly Sanday's emphasis.

³This fact has been substantiated in chapter 3. See Oracles, p. 26; Inspiration, pp. 399-401; and especially his remark that "the knowledge which inspiration imparts is wholly exceptional and sui generis It is a knowledge--chiefly of values, of values in the spiritual sphere, of the spiritual forces at work in the world." "Inspiration," p. 614.

contra naturam. How this affects criticism Sanday illustrates by using Biblical phraseology.

I have always considered the ideal temper to be one that renders to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's; in other words, that gives to criticism all that properly belongs to it, and yet leaves room for the full impression of that which is divine. What we want to do is to keep a perfectly open mind towards that which transcends our experience as well as towards that which falls within it.¹

What does Sanday mean by all this? It means for him that he distinguishes between two spheres of reality: the spiritual or the sacred and the material or the secular. Each sphere has its distinct limits. "There are rights reserved in each of the two spheres; but these do not conflict with each other. Each respects the other's province."² It is hard to escape the impression that Sanday falls back on a separation of reason and faith. In the secular realm reason rules supreme; in the spiritual sphere, faith sways the scepter. In the sphere of the secular or the material, criticism is to perform its task untrammelled. Therefore, when Sanday asks the question whether there is anything which the Bible lays down in point of doctrine which would conflict with the phenomena ascertained by

¹Outlines of the Life of Christ, pp. 248-49.

²The Position of Liberal Theology, p. 31. Cf. Oracles, p. 40. Sanday asserts that one of the characteristics of the more primitive and simple way of thinking of the Biblical writers--primitive and simple as compared with the more scientific thinking of modern man--is that they are not accustomed to discriminate between the spiritual and the material. Oracles, p. 49; Divine Overruling, p. 74. One wonders what simple Samuel and primitive Paul would have thought of Sanday's assertion. Cuthbert Turner observes that Sanday "put matter and spirit into two separate boxes, as though the Creator of both had determined to keep them from any contact with one another for all time." Cuthbert H. Turner, "Dr. Sanday: A Fragmentary Sketch," Constructive Quarterly 9 (1921):356-57.

criticism,¹ his answer can be negative.

There is then a distinct element of truth in Warfield's critique that Sanday's view of Scripture proceeds from a naturalistic premise. By limiting the divine element in Scripture to its spiritual content, Sanday approaches questions of authorship, history, and science from an essentially naturalistic a priori. Because any charge of anti-supernaturalism would have been rejected by Sanday,² a critique of his approach to Scripture should center on the distinction which he makes between the spiritual sphere and the material sphere, assigning the divine element in Scripture to the former but not to the latter. This distinction is an a priori principle which is not derived from the Biblical data, but from an unscriptural dualism.

The same dualism emerges in Sanday's views concerning the person of Christ. He perceives the limitations of the Son of God in his incarnation as determined by his Messianic function. He makes a distinction in Christ's teaching between matters essential to his Messianic office and the kingdom of God on the one hand and, on the other, non-essential matters in which Christ was on the same level as

¹Oracles, p. 63.

²This is evident from Sanday's reaction to a similar charge leveled against British Old Testament scholars by Frank Weston, the bishop of Zanzibar. Speaking of A. B. Davidson, W. Robertson Smith, T. K. Cheyne, and S. R. Driver, Sanday states with confidence that "not one of these has been in the least inclined to minimize the divine part in the history of the Old Testament revelation." The Position of Liberal Theology, p. 36. Cf. the remark of Glover that the great British critics, among whom he reckons Sanday, "were all strong believers in the supernatural." Willis B. Glover, Evangelical Nonconformists and Higher Criticism in the Nineteenth Century (London: Independent Press, 1954), p. 48.

his contemporaries.¹ Sanday recognizes that in Christ's views on questions of Old Testament authorship and history "it is not possible to point to any anticipation of modern [critical] theories,"² but this he attributes to the limitations of his humanity.

The conclusion forces itself upon us that Sanday's critical study of the Scriptures is prejudiced from the outset by a dualistic view of reality which does not allow the Biblical data to tell their own story. Rather it imposes upon these data, including the teachings of Christ, a dualistic mold which is foreign to them. By confining the truly divine or supernatural to matters of the spirit but in other matters giving supremacy to man's critical reason, Sanday's quest for the Biblical doctrine of inspiration cannot do justice to his own principle of letting Scripture speak for itself.

For Warfield the function of criticism was ultimately limited by the authority of Christ's teachings. He saw an irrepressible conflict between the reconstruction of the Old Testament by the prevailing school of negative criticism and the testimony of Christ to the reliability and authenticity of the Scriptures which he himself revealed and inspired. Warfield succinctly stated the issue: "If it be a fact that he lived and taught as God-man, and being thus the very Word from heaven, made assertions as to matters of fact: then there is an end of all dispute as to the reality of the facts asserted by such lips."³ The difference is clear: for Sanday the affirmations of Christ in regard to matters of history and other

¹Inspiration, pp. 416-17.

²Ibid., p. 408.

³Writings, 2:126 (o.d. 1888).

non-spiritual matters were to be judged by the results of criticism; for Warfield the results of criticism were to be judged by the assertions of Christ on all matters of fact.

Mode, Extent, and Effects of Inspiration

In spite of a certain formal agreement between Sanday's and Warfield's approaches it has become evident that the differences are deep and decisive. When we complete our comparative evaluation with a study of their views in regard to the mode, extent, and effects of inspiration, these differences stand out conspicuously. The correlation in each of the two models between methodology, recognition of determinative data, function and limits of Biblical criticism, on the one hand, and concepts of the mode, extent, and effects of inspiration, on the other, is seen to be close.

Mode of Inspiration

The mode of inspiration is acknowledged by most scholars who accept inspiration as a distinct Biblical datum to be inscrutable because so little has been revealed about it.¹ This also is the case with Sanday and Warfield. Both recognize it as an operation of the Holy Spirit. But how Scripture was given through the Biblical writers is left, as Warfield puts it, "if not without suggestion, yet

¹So, e.g., Manly, pp. 61-63, who writes that "the Scriptures omit to give any theory, any account of the mode of inspiration, any explanation of the phenomenon," and argues that "much of the difficulty supposed to overhang the subject arises from ill-judged attempts at conceiving or describing how God inspired men, forgetful of the fact that every supernatural phenomenon is above explanation, and that both revelation and inspiration are so, . . ." (p. 62; emphasis Manly's).

without specific explanation."¹ Sanday thinks that "we are not called upon to formulate a theory, for which the data are perhaps insufficient, as to the exact mode in which God conveyed His will to them [the prophets]."² This statement, found in the context of a discussion on prophetic inspiration, can only be understood in view of Sanday's close correlation between revelation and inspiration. What Sanday describes as the mode of prophetic inspiration, Warfield would undoubtedly have defined as the mode of revelation. The divergence of their views on the relationship between revelation and inspiration³ makes it difficult to compare their concepts of the mode of inspiration.

Sanday's close correlation of revelation with inspiration, which our analysis in chapter 3 made manifest, is characteristic of his view that prophetic inspiration is the type of all true inspiration. To him inspiration as the necessary counterpart of revelation has to do with both reception from God and communication to others of divine thoughts by the prophet. Although Sanday frequently states that the impulse of the divine Spirit is external, the evidence shows that he perceives the actual process of revelation and inspiration to have been a process internal to the consciousness of the prophet. Most explicit in this respect are his later publications, in which he defines inspiration as an uprush of the

¹Bible, pp. 152-53 (o.d. 1915).

²Inspiration, p. 146.

³This divergence is discussed earlier in the chapter. See above, pp. 331-35.

subconscious or an inrush of the superconscious.¹ When the prophet says that he hears a voice or sees a vision, Sanday believes that we should not think of a voice audible to the bodily ear or a sight visible to the bodily eye. Rather, the prophet hears and sees in the spirit.

Although it seems true that prophetic visions are often perceived by the prophet alone while others in his presence do not see or hear anything, many Biblical passages describing divine revelation and theophanies cannot be explained in such a manner.² Sanday's understanding of the revelation-inspiration process is not really the result of an exhaustive induction and thorough exegesis of the Biblical data. Rather, it seems to be the corollary of his view that the working of the divine Spirit is immanent and pertains to things of the spirit. This conclusion is reinforced by the fact that he gives naturalistic explanations of divine manifestations which are accompanied by or associated with miraculous phenomena in the physical or material realm.

Since for Warfield revelation and inspiration are two distinct divine operations, which may or may not occur together in

¹Christologies Ancient and Modern, p. 231. This psychological explanation of the mode of inspiration is rather inadequate. The Biblical data indicate that in receiving divine revelations as well as in communicating them to others, the prophets are conscious of God's mind and will as clearly distinct from their own mind and will. This fact is recognized by Sanday himself. Inspiration, p. 148. In view of this recognition it seems inconsistent for him to attribute inspiration to an uprush of the subconscious or an inrush of the superconscious.

²E.g., when the Lord manifested Himself to Paul on the road to Damascus, Paul's companions heard a voice and saw a bright light, though they did not hear what the voice said nor did they see Him who spoke. Acts 9:7, 22:9.

the experience of one person, his view of the mode of inspiration differs from Sanday's concept. For him inspiration is the influence of the Holy Spirit on the Biblical writers which gives to their words a divine quality, a divine truthfulness and authority, which renders them the word of God expressed in the language of man. Warfield describes this process as a concurus of the divine Spirit and the human spirit in which the human spirit acts freely and spontaneously but is nevertheless carried along by the Spirit of God (2 Pet 1:21) in such a way that it conveys faithfully and accurately what God wants to convey.¹ In using the word "concurus" to designate the mode of inspiration, Warfield does not pretend to explain the mystery of the operation of the Holy Spirit on the mind of the Biblical writer in the process of writing. But on the basis of the Biblical evidence he is convinced that this operation applies equally to all the writers irrespective of the subject matter, literary genre, or style of writing.²

Such a sustained action of the Spirit, such a consistent concurus of the divine Spirit and the human spirit in the production

¹Warfield's concept of concurus has been delineated in chapter 4. See above pp. 283-84. In his discussions of concurus he has in mind the mode of inspiration as well as its effects in Scripture as the finished product of inspiration. See, e.g., Writings, 2:546-48 (o.d. 1894); 629, 631 (o.d. 1894).

²Hodge and Warfield, Inspiration, pp. 14-17. Cf. the remark that "no finding of traces of human influence in the style, wording or forms of statement or argumentation touches the question." Bible, pp. 437-38 (o.d. 1880). Warfield was fully aware of the fact of differences in style not only between different authors but even in writings attributed to the same author. This is evident from his discussion of the authenticity of the Book of Revelation, in which the difference of style and language between the Apocalypse and the Gospel of John is considered. Writings, 2:80-82 (o.d. 1884).

of the Holy Scriptures, Sanday denies. For him the inspiration of the prophets is the true type of inspiration, but as for priests, psalmists, wise men, and historians, "the manner of their inspiration, as compared with that of the prophets . . . must be described as secondary."¹ A historian like Luke, Sanday assures us, "nowhere assumes supernatural direction", but like other historians bases the merits of his work on careful research.² Sanday acknowledges that the prophetic spirit is manifested at times in other groups such as psalmists and wise men, but in a sustained manner it is present only with prophets and apostles. Even in their writings, however, he thinks he finds evidence that they did not always write under the immediate influence of the Spirit.³ Sanday does not make it clear why the action of the Holy Spirit on the Biblical writers is marked by discontinuity.

¹Inspiration, p. 397.

²Oracles, p. 72. Cf. Inspiration, p. 317. Sanday's assertion is based on an argument from silence which is not at all conclusive. From the earliest times the Gospel of Luke was accepted in the Church as inspired Scripture. Warfield points to the fact that the saying "The laborer is worthy of his reward" in 1 Tim 5:18 is introduced with the words "the Scripture says" as evidence that the Gospel of Luke was very early recognized as divine Scripture. See Bible, pp. 426-27 (o.d. 1880); 164 (o.d. 1915); Writings, 2:539 (o.d. 1889).

³For instance, Paul's "outbreak against the circumcision-party in Gal 5:12 could not have been written under the immediate influence of the Spirit," according to Sanday. Inspiration, p. 537. See also Sanday's remark about deductions to be made in the Book of Esther and in the Psalms. Ibid., p. 223. Pursuing such a line of argument must lead to a rationalistic reduction of the inspiration of Scripture. The attempt to "exonerate" God by ascribing moral difficulties in the Scripture to a purely human origin can attenuate Biblical authority to the vanishing point. See John Wenham, The Goodness of God (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter Varsity Press, 1974), pp. 188-89.

A comparison of the ways in which Sanday and Warfield conceive of the mode of inspiration shows that they both reason backwards from the extent and effects of inspiration to the mode. Because they differ strongly in their understanding of the extent and effects, it is not surprising that they also arrive at different views in regard to the mode. There is a significant difference in that Sanday mainly reasons back from the so-called phenomena, whereas Warfield finds the primary Biblical basis for the concept of concursum

. . . in the constant Scriptural representation of the divine and human co-authorship of the Biblical commandments and enumerations of truth; as well as in the constant Scriptural ascription of Bible passages to both the divine and the human authors, and in the constant Scriptural recognition of Scripture as both divine and human in quality and character.¹

These Biblical data are hardly discussed by Sanday even though he is not ignorant of them. It is evident that the different views of Sanday and Warfield in regard to the mode of inspiration are determined to a great extent by the difference in their methodological approach, especially by the difference in what they consider to be relevant data. This becomes even clearer when we compare their views on the extent of inspiration. Our discussion of these views also throws further light on the question of the mode, for the issues of mode and extent are very closely related.

However, before turning to the subject of the extent of inspiration we must discuss briefly an issue which in the present debate about Biblical inspiration has become prominent, namely, the question of the locus of inspiration. Paul Achtemeier argues that

¹Writings, 2:546, 547 (o.d. 1894).

the conservative and liberal concepts of inspiration are inadequate, because both maintain a prophetic model of inspiration.¹ This designation is used by Achtemeier for all models of inspiration which stress the inspiration of individual authors, and that would include for him the models of both Warfield and Sanday. According to Achtemeier, for conservatives the use of the prophetic model leads to a shift of the locus of inspiration from the inspired authors to the contents of the written record which are considered as inerrant, while by liberals, this model is applied in such a way as to enable a distinction between degrees of inspiration in the Bible. Both are mistaken, thinks Achtemeier, who is of the opinion that the majority of modern critical scholars would agree that "in the shape we have them, most books of the Bible cannot be associated with a single individual, least of all with a single individual whose identity we can clearly establish."² Achtemeier holds that the inspiration of Scripture must be located in three interrelated components of Scripture--tradition, situation, and respondent; that is to say the true locus of inspiration is not the individual author but the entire community of faith.³

¹Paul J. Achtemeier, The Inspiration of Scripture: Problems and Proposals (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980), pp. 100-104. Achtemeier in discussing different views concerning the locus of inspiration acknowledges his indebtedness to J. K. S. Reid, The Authority of Scripture: A Study of the Reformation and Post-Reformation Understanding of the Bible (London: Methuen and Co., 1957), esp. ch. 5, "The Inspiration of the Bible," pp. 156-76.

²Achtemeier, p. 100.

³It is evident that Achtemeier's concept of inspiration is a particular form of the so-called social concept of inspiration. This concept was first developed by Roman Catholic scholars, but has in recent years also been adopted by a number of Protestant

Neither Sanday nor Warfield wrote explicitly in terms of the locus of inspiration, so we cannot know for sure how they would have responded to Achtemeier's assertions or to his social concept of inspiration. It is to be questioned, however, whether the critical conclusions which move Achtemeier to adopt a social model of inspiration are essentially different from the critically "ascertained facts" which led a liberal like Sanday to stress the preeminence of the Biblical prophet as the true model of inspiration. Sanday, like Achtemeier, held that the authorship of many parts of Scripture is anonymous or pseudonymous and that many redactors had their hand in bringing Scripture to its present canonical form. Not only do similar critical considerations underlie Sanday's and Achtemeier's efforts to reformulate the concept of inspiration, they also reach the same conclusion that Scripture cannot be identified with the word of God.¹ For Sanday, the liberal, Scripture contains words of God; for Achtemeier, who seems to take a neo-orthodox approach, Scripture can become the word of God to us in and through the proclamation and witness of the community of faith. But both think it impossible to claim that Scripture is the word of God.

On this point Warfield would definitely have disagreed with

rheologists. See John L. Mackenzie, "The Social Character of Inspiration," Catholic Biblical Quarterly 24 (1962):115-24; Dennis J. McCarty, "Personality, Society and Inspiration," Theological Studies 24 (1963):553-76; Bruce Vawter, Biblical Inspiration (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1972; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972), pp. 104-13; Beegle, Scripture, Tradition, and Infallibility, pp. 202-5, 305-12; and Pinnock, The Scripture Principle, pp. 63-64.

¹Both writers are unambiguous in stating this conclusion. For Sanday, see Inspiration, p. 424; for Achtemeier, see Achtemeier, pp. 162-65.

Achtemeier, as he actually did with Sanday and others. For him the identification of Scripture as the inspired word of God is firmly rooted in the claims of Christ and his apostles. It seems equally certain that Warfield would have taken issue with the critical assertion of Achtemeier that most of the books of the Bible cannot be attributed to specific inspired individuals whom we know by name. It is not assuming too much to postulate that Warfield would have considered this assertion to be in conflict with the self-witness of the Biblical writers. However, to Warfield the fact whether the author of a Biblical book is known was not essential to its inspiration or canonicity.¹ What was crucial to him was the question whether the self-witness of the Biblical writers and the doctrine they teach are trustworthy. If this is not the case, so concluded Warfield, then not only their doctrine of inspiration but every other doctrine they teach is suspect.

As far as the locus of inspiration is concerned, it seems likely that Warfield would have maintained that the locus can be found in specific inspired individuals--whether or not they are known by name, not in the community of faith as a whole. However, Warfield's concern with Biblical inspiration expressed itself in terms of its extent and effect rather than in terms of its locus. The same seems to be true for Sanday. We continue our comparison, therefore, in terms of these concerns.

¹Benjamin B. Warfield, "Inspiration, and the Spurious Verses at the End of Mark," Sunday School Times, January 20, 1883, p. 36.

Extent of Inspiration

The question of the extent of inspiration, or in other words, the extent of the divine and the human elements in Scripture and their relationship to one another, is perceived by both Sanday and Warfield as a central issue in the endeavor to establish the Biblical doctrine of inspiration.¹ The conclusions they reach are diametrically opposite. In Sanday's view some parts of Scripture show a higher degree or level of inspiration than others and some parts, especially historical narratives, are written without any supernatural aid at all. Consequently, it cannot be said that the Bible in its entirety is the word of God, but rather that it contains words of God with "a considerable human element binding them together."² Despite his own remark that the two elements are not really separable,³ Sanday does in fact separate the human and the divine elements.

Warfield, on the contrary, comes to the conclusion that inspiration is plenary, in other words, that the Bible is inspired in its totality and in all its parts. To him the divine and human elements⁴ are inseparable and coextensive, so that the Bible is completely divine and human at the same time. He uses a number of terms to express this concurrence of the divine and the human, the

¹Inspiration, p. 423; Oracles, pp. 4-5; Writings, 2:542 (c.d. 1894).

²Inspiration, p. 424.

³Oracles, p. 16; Inspiration, p. 355.

⁴Warfield would prefer to speak about a human side or aspect to Scripture, rather than a human element in Scripture. Bible, p. 150 (c.d. 1915).

word concurus more often than others. He also designates inspiration as verbal, because the Biblical evidence proves to him that inspiration pertains not only to thoughts and concepts but also to the words in which these thoughts are expressed.

The conclusions reached by Warfield and Sanday present a glaring contrast and are mutually exclusive: the Bible cannot be plenary inspired and partially inspired. Although both our scholars claim to take the Bible alone as their starting-point and both profess to proceed by means of the inductive method, they come to opposite results. When we ask why they reach such conflicting conclusions, the difference in Biblical data on which the inductions proceed suggests itself as the obvious cause.

Sanday, starting from the multifarious phenomena of the Bible, finds abundant evidence of a distinct human element which, in his estimate, is riddled with all kinds of errors and defects. Since such things cannot be attributed to divine inspiration, he concludes that inspiration is graded and in some parts of Scripture completely lacking. Warfield, on the other hand, begins with the teachings of Jesus and the apostles concerning the nature of the Old Testament as the primary data and from these he derives the doctrine of plenary and verbal inspiration. That such is the Biblical view of inspiration he does not infer merely from a few passages such as John 10:35 and 2 Tim 3:16, important as they may be, but from a wide range of Biblical data.¹

¹We can here only refer the reader back to our fairly comprehensive survey of these data in chapter 4. See above, pp. 261-79.

That there is a correlation between methodology adopted and conclusions reached can hardly be denied. This correlation is tacitly acknowledged by Sanday, who admits that the view Jesus and the apostles held was essentially that of plenary and even verbal inspiration.¹ Because this view is unacceptable to him he must reject the methodology that leads to it. The analysis of his model of inspiration shows that this is exactly what he does. Through a kenotic theory he weakens the impact of Jesus' attitude and statements in regard to the Old Testament and either ignores or barely mentions the apostolic attitude and teaching. The dominant focus of Sanday's induction consists in a critical analysis of the human phenomena of Scripture.

A clear recognition of the correlation is expressed by Warfield in making the observation "that the conclusions actually arrived at by students of the subject seem practically to depend on the logical method adopted."² The primary inference which Warfield draws from the teachings of Jesus and the apostles, namely, that they held a plenary view of inspiration, is based on such a thorough exegesis of a wide range of New Testament data that attempts to disprove it can only be judged unsuccessful.³ It is not surprising, therefore, that criticisms of Warfield's views generally center on

¹Inspiration, p. 393; "Inspiration," p. 617.

²Bible, p. 225 (o.d. 1893).

³Many critics of Warfield's position do admit with Sanday that Jesus taught a high view of inspiration. Beegle, e.g., writes: "The inductive evidence of the New Testament indicates that Jesus taught a strong doctrine of inspiration and authority of Scripture, yet without claiming inerrancy." Beegle, The Inspiration of Scripture, p. 170.

the validity of his methodology and especially the validity of his further conclusions that inspiration is verbal and that its major effect consists in the inerrancy or the absolute trustworthiness of Scripture. It is on the issue of verbal inspiration that we must now focus our attention.

The concept of verbal inspiration is emphatically rejected by Sanday, who apparently associates it with ideas of divine dictation and mechanical transference of knowledge.¹ Unfortunately, his writings do not manifest an intimate acquaintance with the arguments set forth in support of verbal inspiration nor with the way in which this concept is understood; consequently, his criticism largely fails to deal with the real issues. Some prominent data from which Warfield concludes that inspiration pertains to words as well as to thoughts are the expression "the oracles of God" used by New Testament Scriptures, the statement by Paul that he speaks the things revealed or given by God in words "which the Holy Ghost teaches" (1 Cor 2:13), and the fact that Jesus and the apostles occasionally base an argument on a single word from the Scriptures as in John 10:34-35, Gal 3:16, and some other texts. These and other arguments Sanday does not even discuss.²

¹Oracles, p. 46; "Inspiration," p. 614; The Conception of Priesthood in the Early Church, 2nd ed., p. 64. Cf. the remark at the time of Sanday's death that his name together with that of Driver would be remembered by younger scholars as "those of two great teachers, who by laborious scholarship and cautious induction helped to deliver us from the tyranny of the belief in verbal plenary inspiration of Scripture, . . ." "In Memoriam William Sanday," Modern Churchman 10 (1920):413.

²It is noteworthy, for instance, that Sanday considers 1 Cor 2:7-16 to be a fundamental passage for the discussion of the psychology of inspiration and even quotes on one occasion 1 Cor 2:13

The characterization of verbal inspiration as dictation or mechanical inspiration betrays a misunderstanding on Sanday's part of the concept as held by Warfield and other scholars. Such an identification of verbal inspiration with dictation Warfield radically rejects.¹ Despite the disavowal, there has been a strong tendency among scholars critical of verbal inspiration to identify it with a dictation concept of inspiration.² Yet, for Warfield and

with the comment that it represents "the normal habitual level of inspiration of the apostles." "Inspiration," pp. 613-14; Inspiration, p. 353. Yet he does not discuss the significant phrase "in the words . . . which the Holy Ghost teaches." The whole passage and the phrase in vs. 13, in particular, are important for our understanding of the Biblical doctrine of inspiration. Walter Kaiser, Jr., in an enlightening article on this passage speaks of the statement in vs. 13, as "one of the most precise statements on the mode of inspiration, i.e., the connection and method by which the divine Spirit and the human author interacted in the transmission and recording of these 'deep things of God.'" Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "A Neglected Text in Bibliology Discussions: 1 Corinthians 2:6-16," Westminster Theological Journal 43 (1980-81):316. Kaiser, following Heinrich Meyer, sees Paul's use of the term $\delta\iota\delta\alpha\kappa\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ as excluding "all mechanical representations as if actual dictation of words by the Holy Spirit to the Biblical writers was what was meant here. Instead, there was a living assimilation of the truth as the Holy Spirit 'taught' it to the writers of Scripture." Ibid. Cf. Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistles to the Corinthians, trans. D. Douglas Bannerman (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1884), pp. 54-55. Beegle, discussing the passage (1 Cor 2:1-16) in a chapter on "verbal inspiration," admits that "Paul appears to claim that his teaching was verbally inspired" and then dismisses the idea on the basis of some data in Paul's letter which do not disprove the idea at all. The Inspiration of Scripture, pp. 76-77.

¹See above, pp. 281-82. This rejection of the identification of verbal inspiration with dictation is repeated over and over again by writers who hold the concept of verbal inspiration. Some penetrating remarks on this issue can be found in Packard, "Fundamentalism and the Word of God," pp. 178-81; Henry, God, Revelation and Authority, 4:138-42.

²Because the ideas of verbal inspiration and inerrancy are so closely correlated, frequently the idea of dictation is associated with both. Beegle, The Inspiration of Scripture, pp. 83-84; H. D.

his evangelical heirs, verbal inspiration is correlated with a concursum concept of inspiration rather than with a dictation concept.¹ Some recent opponents of verbal inspiration have recognized this fact. Nevertheless, their critique of verbal inspiration fails to provide a penetrating analysis of the concept of concursum and the exegetical data from which Warfield and others infer that the process of inspiration consists in a unique concursive action of the Spirit of God along with the spirit of man.²

Probably Sanday's weightiest objection against the idea of verbal inspiration rests in the phenomena of Scripture. Along with other critical scholars he holds that the so-called phenomena negate the concept of verbal inspiration as well as the affirmation that the Scriptures are infallible or inerrant. This objection is noted in the subsequent section, in which Sanday's and Warfield's views on the effects of inspiration, especially infallibility and inerrancy, are assessed.

On the question of the extent of inspiration it is hard to

McDonald, Theories of Revelation: An Historical Study 1860-1960 (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1963), pp. 218-28 passim.

¹The concept of concursum is held by such writers as Packer, "Fundamentalism" and the Word of God, pp. 80-81; Ramm, Special Revelation and the Word of God, pp. 59-60; Henry, God, Revelation and Authority, 4:142, 159-60; Erickson, pp. 187-88. Yet none of these writers seems to set forth this concept with the clarity and incisiveness that mark Warfield's discussions of it.

²Abraham, for instance, recognizes this fact early in his book The Divine Inspiration of Holy Scripture. Nevertheless one of his major objections against the traditional concept of inspiration is that it identifies Scripture with the speaking God (Abraham's emphasis) and is therefore a cryptodictation theory. Abraham, pp. 4, 105-106. He speaks somewhat sarcastically of "a kind of telepathic dictation" (p. 36), but his discussion of the exegetical data on which the idea of concursum is based is shallow and not convincing.

deny, as even Sanday admits, that the view of inspiration held by Jesus and the writers of the New Testament is that of a plenary and even verbal inspiration. Because of its association with the idea of dictation, the latter term has a distinct disadvantage, but it seems difficult to find a more adequate term to express the idea that the action of the Holy Spirit in inspiration pertains to words as well as thoughts. If retained, it should always be understood and explained in the context of the concept of concursum.¹

Effects of Inspiration

The sharp contrast between Sanday's and Warfield's views concerning the extent of inspiration also marks their concepts of the effects of inspiration, such as infallibility, inerrancy, and authority.² Sanday hardly finds any reason to attribute either

¹As Pinnock once remarked, "Inspiration can be plenary and verbal without being mechanical because of the mystery of confluence. In an inscrutable way, the Spirit employed an imperfect human instrument in order to give His church the written Word of God" (emphasis Pinnock's). Pinnock, Biblical Revelation, pp. 94-95. It is doubtful that this statement represents Pinnock's present conviction. He still sees Scripture as the product of a mysterious interplay between the divine and the human, but characterizes Warfield's understanding of this process as divine manipulation. Pinnock, The Scripture Principle, pp. 100-102. This seems a caricature which fails to do justice to the wide range of Biblical data from which Warfield derives his concept of concursum and also discredits his genuine emphasis on the human aspect of Scripture.

²It seems that for Sanday and Warfield the words infallibility and inerrancy were practically synonymous. In Sanday's writings the word infallibility is dominant throughout, while in Warfield's writings, as shown earlier, there is a certain shift from infallibility to inerrancy and later to trustworthiness. Modern attempts to distinguish between infallibility and inerrancy, and the contemporary debate about these words, find no anticipation in their writings. For different opinions on this distinction, see Stephen T. Davis, The Debate about the Bible: Inerrancy Versus Infallibility (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977); Henry, God, Revelation and

infallibility or inerrancy to Scripture. In the first three chapters of Oracles he concludes on the basis of his estimate of the phenomena of Scripture that infallibility cannot be claimed for its text, its grammar, its literary composition, its scientific statements, or for its history. This conclusion is reiterated and confirmed in all his subsequent writings, and because there are many ways "in which the Bible is not infallible," it follows for Sanday that it is "not in the strict sense authoritative."¹ It is true that he recognizes that prophets and apostles speak with divine authority and that Christ's words are invested with supreme authority, but he apparently perceives this authority as limited to spiritual ideas and values. In more mundane matters the critical process of the mind is adequate and autonomous in drawing its conclusions, and to Sanday "it would be an act of violence to the intellectual conscience to arrest the process and suppress its results even at the bidding of the highest authority,"² even the authority of Christ himself. But Sanday, as we have seen, does not think that there is any such bidding, because of the kenotic limitations of Christ's knowledge.

It needs no elaboration that Warfield's view of the infallibility and authority of the Bible is radically opposed to that of Sanday. From his inaugural address in which he asserted the

Authority, 4:22, 243-44; Robert K. Johnston, Evangelicals at an Impasse: Biblical Authority in Practice (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1979), pp. 15-47; Woodbridge, pp. 27-28.

¹"Bible," p. 579. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 571; review of An Eirenicon from Culture, pp.218-19; "Inspiration," p. 617; Divine Overruling, pp. 96-97.

²Inspiration, p. 414. Cf. Oracles, p. 109.

absolute infallibility and authority of the Scriptures till the affirmation of their divine trustworthiness and indefectible authority in his final article on inspiration, there is no essential change in Warfield's position. For him the high attributes of inspiration are firmly based on two sets of Biblical arguments: (1) the teachings and attitude of Christ and the apostles in regard to the Old Testament; and (2) the relation between the character of God and the divine authorship of Scripture. The dominant emphasis in Warfield's writings is on the first set of data, but the influence of the second set, though stressed less explicitly, is pervasively present.¹ In consonance with his basic methodology, Warfield will not permit the results of a critical study of the phenomena of Scripture to function as the primary determinant of the effects of inspiration. Such effects as are derived from the teachings of Christ and the apostles and from the divine character of Scripture can and should be tested and qualified by the phenomena, but not determined. Warfield admits that there is an a priori possibility that the study of the phenomena could produce results disproving the effects established on the basis of the foundational data, but he considers

¹The second set of arguments, which is essentially deductive in character, can hardly be found in explicit syllogistic formulations but seems to be implied, for instance, in Warfield's earliest definition of inspiration as an influence of the Holy Ghost on the Biblical writers which "makes the words written under its guidance, the words of God; by which is meant to be affirmed an absolute infallibility (as alone fitted to divine words)." Bible, p. 420 (o.d. 1880). The implied argument is: God is infallible; divine words are infallible; words written under inspiration are words of God; therefore such words must be infallible. Similar examples can be found in other writings of Warfield. See above, p. 300, n. 2.

the presumption against this possibility to be exceedingly strong.¹

It is evident that an evaluation of the two positions on the effects of inspiration outlined above once more leads back to the question of methodology. The main weakness in Sanday's position is that he starts out by saying that he wants to let Scripture speak for itself, admits that Christ and the apostles apparently attribute to the Old Testament Scriptures infallibility and an inviolable perfection,² but then rejects this view because it conflicts in his estimation with the results of criticism. The conclusion seems inescapable that Sanday in this respect refuses to let Scripture speak for itself. Warfield's criticism that Sanday's recognition of the divine element in Scripture "does not satisfy all the claims which the Scriptures make for themselves" is certainly justified by the evidence, and this leaves us, as Warfield pertinently observes, with the disconcerting problem "whether we can believe the self-testimony of the Bible."³

¹Bible, pp. 214-23 (o.d. 1893).

²Inspiration, pp. 392-93, 88-89; "Inspiration," p. 617. Not all scholars critical of the doctrine of the infallibility of the Bible have been as frank as Sanday in recognizing that Christ and the apostles held such a doctrine, but the fact that quite a number of them have made such admissions is significant. The denial that Christ and the apostles accepted the Old Testament Scriptures as the infallible word of God is generally sustained by tenuous exegesis.

³Review of Inspiration, 3rd ed., pp. 562-63. This witness of prophets and apostles to the inspiration, authority, and trustworthiness of their own and each other's writings and the supreme witness of Christ to the Old Testament Scriptures is exceedingly strong and certainly cannot be brushed aside with a disdainful denial à la James Barr, that there is such a thing as the self-testimony of the Bible. For the denial, see Barr, pp. 77-79. For an incisive critique of the denial, see Wells, pp. 171-83. The positive evidence for this self-testimony of Scripture has frequently been set forth in books and articles. Some valuable presentations of

Warfield's own position does not escape the critical scalpel either. Especially his teaching in regard to the inerrancy of the autographs has been subjected to cutting criticism on several grounds. Prominent, as intimated earlier, is the objection that this doctrine is based on a scholastic deductive argument.¹ It is certainly true that Warfield infers the inerrancy or truthfulness of Scripture from its divine character. There does not seem to be any logical flaw in such a deductive procedure, but taken by itself it could lead and sometimes has led to exaggerated claims for the Bible, as Sanday and others have cogently pointed out.² Warfield, however, bases the inerrancy of Scripture not only on a deductive argument from God's character and the divine quality of Scripture but also on direct claims set forth in Scripture, especially concerning its divine authority and truthfulness. For Warfield, truthfulness and inerrancy are practically synonyms.³

In the present debate about inerrancy there is a growing recognition of the fact that it is essential to grasp and define the

this evidence are given in John M. Frame, "Scripture Speaks for Itself," in God's Inerrant Word, ed. John Warwick Montgomery, pp. 178-200; Wayne A. Grudem, "Scripture's Self-Attestation and the Problem of Formulating a Doctrine of Scripture," in Scripture and Truth, ed. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983), pp. 19-59. For Christ's witness to Scripture, Wenham's book Christ and the Bible remains the principal source.

¹John C. Vander Stelt, Philosophy and Scripture: A Study in Old Princeton and Westminster Theology (Marlton, N.J.: Mack Publishing Co., 1978), pp. 182-84; Rogers and McKim, pp. 344-48.

²Oracles, pp. 20-24. Cf. Vawter, p. 81; Beegle, The Inspiration of Scripture, pp. 116-17.

³See, e.g., Bible, p. 173 (o.d. 1893). The same could probably be said for Sanday.

Biblical concept of truth.¹ Yet, despite the fact that both Sanday and Warfield attach great importance to this concept, they do not present painstaking exegetical studies to ascertain the meaning of this term in its Biblical context. Sanday perceived truth as "a single, interrelated system, embracing all departments of human knowledge,"² but apparently saw the truth claims of Scripture as pertaining to spiritual and ethical truth, rather than to historical or scientific truth.³

Warfield would certainly agree that truth is a single united system and that the primary purpose of Scripture is to convey spiritual, salvific truth.⁴ Indeed, he sees a very close correlation between Christ as the incarnate Truth and Scripture as the written

¹Paul Feinberg, pp. 287-95; John S. Feinberg, "Truth, Meaning and Inerrancy in Contemporary Evangelical Thought," JETS 26 (1983):25-30; Norman L. Geisler, "The Concept of Truth in the Inerrancy Debate," Bibliotheca Sacra 137 (1980):327-39; Roger Nicole, "The Biblical Concept of Truth," in Scripture and Truth, ed. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983), pp. 287-98 (with a brief but very useful annotated bibliography); cf. the "Preface" by the editors, in Scripture and Truth, pp. 10-11.

²Position of Liberal Theology, p. 11.

³This is evident from the whole tenor of his writings, but finds forceful expression in his description of the difference between early and modern Christian believers: "In drawing up the Creeds, the ancients went upon a number of assumptions that we can make no longer. They assumed the strict inerrancy of all the Scriptures; they assumed the literal and equal accuracy of all the narratives of the Old and New Testaments alike. They had behind them a different Weltanschauung from ours They believed that irregularities occurred in the order of nature without any of the limitations that we should set to them now. It is really out of the question that the young men of the present day should be expected to subscribe to every item in formulae constructed under conditions such as these." Form and Content in the Christian Tradition, p. 13.

⁴Bible, p. 161 (o.d. 1915).

truth. We are not speaking here of the analogy between the divine-human nature of Christ and the divine-human origin of Scripture,¹ but rather of the reciprocal witness of Christ to the Scriptures and the witness of the Scriptures to Christ. Christ's whole attitude towards the Old Testament Scriptures assumes and affirms their veracity in every respect. Warfield deems it impossible that he who is the Truth incarnate could have erred in his estimate of the Old Testament Scriptures. In view of Christ's promise that the Holy Spirit would lead his disciples into all truth and in view of the claims of the New Testament writers concerning their own and each other's writings, Warfield is convinced that Christ's attitude toward and estimate of the Old Testament also pertain to the New Testament. The testimony of him who calls himself the Truth is the guarantee of the truthfulness of Scripture in its entirety. Warfield rejects, therefore, any restriction or limitation of the truth claims of Scripture.² The charge that Warfield's doctrine of inerrancy is based on a purely rationalistic argument is discounted by the evidence. Rather, it is grounded on Christ's testimony to the truthfulness of the Scriptures and the truth claims of the Biblical writers for their writings, as well as on the logical derivation that

¹Warfield, as shown in the preceding chapter, considers the analogy as remote. He rarely refers to the analogy and certainly does not present it as a major argument for Biblical inerrancy. Bible, pp. 162-63 (o.d. 1915). Cf. Wells, pp. 342-43; Roger Nicole, "The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture: J. D. G. Dunn versus B. B. Warfield," Churchman 97 (1983):210.

²Belief in the infallibility of the Bible means, according to Warfield, "that every part of Holy Writ is thus held alike infallibly true in all its statements, of whatever kind." Bible, p. 420 (o.d. 1880). This definitely includes the historical writings. Ibid., p. 424.

divine Scriptures partake of divine infallibility. A similar line of argument applies to Warfield's concept of the other divine attributes of Scripture.

The second major objection to Warfield's inerrancy concept is that it is nullified by the phenomena of Scripture which in the eyes of his critics prove that there are errors in the Bible. Warfield admitted that there are many difficulties in Scripture but insisted that no errors have been proven. However, the criteria laid down by him for proving that there are errors are very stringent, so that they have been designated as "unfalsifiable."¹ Whether this is so or not can only be determined by a thorough study into the question which criteria should be admitted as valid criteria and what kind of qualifications of the concept of inerrancy should be allowed without robbing it of its meaning.² The most significant recent attempt in this direction is "The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy,"³ which strikes one as a particularly balanced and articulate pronouncement on the subject.

It would go beyond the scope of this evaluation to deal with the many issues raised in the debate about the doctrine of the inerrancy of the autographs. It may be questioned and has been

¹Johnston, p. 38.

²Everett F. Harrison gives a helpful discussion of excessive and proper criteria in a brief article "Criteria of Biblical Inerrancy," Christianity Today, January 20, 1958, pp. 16-18.

³This statement has been published in JETS 21 (1978):289-96. Also in Geisler, ed, Inerrancy, pp. 493-502; Henry, God, Revelation and Authority, 4:211-19; James I. Packer, God Has Spoken (Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press, 1979), pp. 138-53. It deserves serious study by all Christian scholars.

questioned whether the word inerrancy is a satisfactory term.¹ The fact that Warfield seems to avoid its use in his later writings suggests that he too may have questioned its adequacy. But whether he avoided its use or not, Warfield certainly maintained that the complete truthfulness and trustworthiness of Scripture is clearly taught by Christ and the apostles and that it is implied in the fact that the Bible in its entirety is the word of God. These convictions seem to be founded on a firm foundation of Biblical data.

Conclusion and Final Suggestions

The completion of this comparative evaluation brings to a close the quest of this study for a clearer understanding of the Biblical doctrine of inspiration. The descriptive analysis of Sanday's and Warfield's views on inspiration has allowed us to delineate more clearly two distinct concepts or models of Biblical inspiration representative of two major approaches to the subject, which Sanday labels as the "traditional" and the "scientific inductive." In the light of this study it seems evident that such a description does not do justice to the real difference between these two models, for Warfield considers his approach certainly scientific and his methodology inductive. It may prove difficult to describe

¹Ramsey Michaels, for instance, regrets that the phrase "verbal inspiration" to a large extent has lapsed into disuse. In his opinion verbal inspiration is a term intrinsically better suited to expressing a viable doctrine of Scripture than is the term "inerrancy" (emphasis his). J. Ramsey Michaels, "Inerrancy or Verbal Inspiration? An Evangelical Dilemma," in Inerrancy and Common Sense, ed. Roger R. Nicole and J. Ramsey Michaels (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1980), pp. 53-54.

the two opposite models in terms that are fully adequate and generally acceptable.

Our comparative evaluation has made it clear that the two scholars profess to start from the same fundamental principle, namely, to go to the Bible alone and to let it speak for itself. In any future endeavour to formulate a doctrine of Biblical inspiration, acceptance of the Bible as the source and starting-point must be considered essential. Without question much can be learned from the endeavors of the past, and it is highly desirable that a rather exhaustive study should be made of the history of the doctrine of inspiration from sub-apostolic times till the present. Valuable insights, too, can be gained from careful analyses of the concepts of inspiration of individual scholars throughout the history of the Christian Church, such as we have attempted to provide for Sanday and Warfield. But we will always have to return to the Scriptures as the ultimate and decisive source of reference in our efforts to construct a sound model of Biblical inspiration.

The acceptance of the Bible as the only legitimate starting-point and normative source of reference in our quest for such a model or doctrine of inspiration is analogous to the acceptance of the Scriptures as source and starting-point in our efforts to formulate other Christian doctrines. Warfield repeatedly, and we are convinced correctly, stressed the fact that the doctrine of inspiration should be established in the same way and by the same method that other Christian doctrines are established. His refusal to attribute to the doctrine of inspiration an exclusive, foundational status was rooted in the evident fact that faith in Scripture as a unique and

authoritative word from God is not based on the acceptance of a detailed doctrine of inspiration. Rather, such a doctrine is the result of systematic reflection subsequent to a preceding faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ and an unstudied acceptance of Scripture as the God-given revelation of that gospel.

The adoption of a sound methodology in harmony with the fundamental principle to let the Bible speak for itself is of crucial importance. Sanday and Warfield both claimed to use the inductive method, but in reality neither method was purely inductive. In view of our discussion earlier in this chapter we suggest that it might be better to avoid terms such as inductive or deductive method. Rather than using these designations we should recognize that an adequate methodology includes both induction and deduction and other thought processes as well. It is not our purpose to disparage the use of appropriate technical terminology in reference to theological method, but primary emphasis should be placed on the need to describe as fully as possible the method we intend to use and to explain the reasons for its adoption. Such a delineation and explanation are essential and should precede any serious attempt to formulate a doctrine of Biblical inspiration.

Once Scripture is accepted as the only legitimate starting-point and source of reference in our quest, we must face up to the question whether the effort to establish the doctrine of inspiration by letting the Bible speak for itself should proceed primarily from the multifarious phenomena of the content and structure of Scripture or whether it should start from the explicit assertions of the Biblical writers or whether both should receive equal standing. It

is evident that the decision we take at this juncture is crucial. We suggest in view of considerations presented earlier that the inherent logic of the principle to let Scripture speak for itself requires that the teachings (or assertions, claims, or whatever other terms may be used) should be given priority over the phenomena. We use advisedly the word priority, for the phenomena cannot and should not be ignored. Whatever conclusions may be reached from a thorough study of the assertions must be examined and evaluated in the light of the phenomena, but just as surely, the phenomena must be examined and evaluated in the light of the conclusions derived from the assertions.

The preceding study shows that Sanday adopted a method giving priority to the phenomena, while Warfield followed the opposite method. There can be little question about the fact that Warfield made a greater effort than Sanday to describe his method and to explain the reasons for its adoption. The evidence suggests that there is a correlation in their models between the methodology adopted and applied on the one hand, and the views reached on the extent and effects of inspiration on the other. The results of our research support the truth of Warfield's observation that the conclusions arrived at seem to depend on the logical method adopted. At the same time, we recognize that Sanday made a more extensive attempt than Warfield to come to grips with the phenomena of the Bible. Still, Sanday's presuppositions in regard to the natural and the supernatural, limiting the supernatural to the spiritual realm and absolutizing the fixity of natural law in the material realm, vitiated his basic principle to let the Bible speak for itself and

consequently affected his approach to the phenomena. If we accept this basic principle, we must allow the Bible to determine the presuppositions on which the quest for the doctrine of Biblical inspiration should proceed. We suggest that elucidation of such presuppositions is essential at the outset of any such quest. We should remain open, however, to the possibility that the results of our study may require a restatement of the presuppositions. The question of the role of Biblical criticism in relation to the formulation of a Biblical doctrine of inspiration is closely connected with the issue of presuppositions. If Biblical criticism proceeds on the basis of presuppositions which do not arise from the Scriptures, our critical methods are likely to force a mold upon the Scriptures which will prevent them from truly speaking for themselves.

Although Sanday and Warfield did not say much about the question of presuppositions, it seems evident that it was in this area of presuppositions that we must look for the basic difference in their approach to the function and limits of Biblical criticism. What Sanday considers to be a coherent body of critical conclusions cannot be suppressed even if it conflicts with explicit assertions of Christ. To suppress such results would in Sanday's opinion be an act of violence to the intellectual conscience. In other words, for Sanday, critical reason constitutes an autonomous authority to which assertions of Scripture can and must be submitted. Warfield does not reject the necessity of critical reasoning but, in contrast with Sanday, believes that the results of such reasoning must be submitted to the assertions of Scripture, and preeminently

to the teachings of Christ Himself.

If we admit that the assertions and teachings of the Bible should have priority in our search for a model of Biblical inspiration, we need to determine next which Biblical data are the clearest and have the most direct bearing on the issue. Sanday focused strongly on the prophetic claims, especially the formulae expressive of the divine authority by which the prophets spoke and wrote. Warfield gave the greatest weight to the claims of Christ and the New Testament writers in regard to the Old Testament. We propose that both sets of data should be considered as crucial for our quest and must be accepted as basic elements in the formulation of a Biblical doctrine of inspiration. Sanday's tendency to weaken the weight of Christ's witness and attitude in regard to the Old Testament appears to be one of the most serious inconsistencies in his attempt to formulate a doctrine of Biblical inspiration. This tendency was not in harmony with his principle to let the Bible speak for itself. Warfield on the other hand would have done well if he had paid more attention to the light which the Old Testament had to contribute to the question of Biblical inspiration.

The critical selection and thorough exegesis of relevant Biblical data is a sine qua non in formulating any Biblical doctrine, and not least in formulating a doctrine of inspiration. In this respect, Warfield's exegetical work must be judged as more adequate than Sanday's. Sanday's rather furtive treatment of crucial passages such as 1 Cor 2:13; 2 Tim 3:15-17; and 2 Pet 1:19-21 is disappointing. By contrast the exegetical studies of Warfield's later years retain their value until the present. Yet even Warfield did

not analyze "every text that could be exegeted," as Walter Kaiser has rightly pointed out.¹ Not only is it desirable that the areas to which Warfield devoted his exegetical skills be subjected to renewed investigation, but there are other concepts and passages in Scripture, having a special bearing on the doctrine of Scripture, which are still awaiting the careful exegetical treatment so characteristic for Warfield's later articles. The need for a comprehensive study of the Biblical data having a special bearing on the question of Biblical inspiration remains an urgent need despite all that has been written on the subject.

From our historical survey as well as from the analysis of the models of inspiration set forth in the writings of Sanday and Warfield, it is evident that over the last three to four hundred years a variety of terms has been used to describe the doctrine of inspiration. Inspiration has been qualified by words such as immediate, partial, graded, plenary, verbal, limited, social, conceptual, and other terms. Related concepts such as infallibility, inerrancy, canonicity, authority, revelation, illumination, con-
curus, and others have often loomed large in the debate. These terms have sometimes been more of a hindrance than a help, especially when they were used as catchwords in an emotionally charged atmosphere. As stated before, we are far from disparaging the use of theological terminology, but we suggest that certain conditions must be closely adhered to if such use is to be conducive to a clearer understanding and formulation of the doctrine of Biblical inspiration.

¹Kaiser, p. 301.

A primary and obvious condition is that whatever terms are used, they should be carefully defined and redefined if necessary. As far as possible misunderstanding and misrepresentation must be avoided. Terms like degrees of inspiration or verbal inspiration have been understood or defined in different ways by adherents and opponents of such terms, or proper definition has been neglected altogether. Thus, Sanday who was strongly opposed to verbal inspiration and seems to have paid little attention to the way the concept was defined by its proponents, presented no detailed definition of his own. In the light of past experience, it seems evident that clear definitions are of primary importance for reciprocal understanding and fruitful discussion in the debate about inspiration.

Biblical substantiation constitutes another vital condition for the choice of our terminology and for the formulation of our definitions. The more one studies the subject of Biblical inspiration, the more the conviction grows that the Bible must provide the substance and the basic terminology from which any definition or descriptive model of Biblical inspiration should be structured. Whatever terms we use, we should show that they are conceptually rooted in Scripture. Our definitions and descriptions should not merely be supported by a few selective data, but should be tested in the light of the widest possible range of Biblical data, first the explicit teachings and then the so-called phenomena. The way terms such as Scripture, the Scriptures, word of God, oracles of God, truth, revelation, prophecy, and others are used by the Biblical writers should always be considered of primary importance in our

search for the Biblical doctrine of inspiration.

Both to Sanday and Warfield one of the most crucial issues was the dual aspect of Scripture: in what sense was Scripture divine and in what sense was it human and how were these two elements related to one another. It seems to us that this issue still is and will remain at the center of the debate about inspiration. Warfield's conclusion that Scripture in its entirety is the product of a dual authorship appears to be firmly established by a wide range of Biblical data. If this conclusion is correct--and we believe that thorough exegetical study of the data will confirm it--then this concept of the concursum of the divine and the human in Scripture should be considered as a basic component in any model of Biblical inspiration. It is a dynamic concept which exercises a controlling influence on our understanding of the mode, the locus, the extent, and the effects of inspiration.

In regard to the effects of inspiration probably no concept has been more at the center of current controversy than the concept of Biblical inerrancy. This is not surprising, for the issue of inerrancy is closely related to the issues of the reliability and authority of Scripture. It is evident that the divergence between the views of Sanday and Warfield on this point was very wide indeed. Sanday approaching this issue on the basis of his study of the phenomena concluded that concepts such as infallibility or inerrancy should be rejected because they were not in harmony with the Biblical facts. Warfield approaching the same issue on the basis of claims made by the Biblical writers as well as certain deductions drawn from the divine authorship of Scripture considered these concepts as

Biblical and essential for our understanding of Scripture. The evidence seems to indicate, however, that Warfield in his later writings prefers such terms as truth, trustworthiness, and reliability in speaking of the divine attributes of Scripture. We suggest that recognition of this fact could be beneficial for the current debate about inerrancy. A careful study of the Biblical concept of truth and related concepts may well prove more fruitful than the present emphasis on the concept of inerrancy. Such a change of emphasis would seem to be in harmony with the development of Warfield's thoughts on the subject.

Finally we suggest that in any effort to formulate a doctrine of Biblical inspiration we need to remind ourselves of the fact that we are dealing with a reality which, ultimately, can only be grasped by faith. Just as our reason cannot fully grasp how the man Jesus is in reality the eternal Word made flesh, even so it cannot claim to understand completely how the word of prophets and apostles is in truth the word of God. Paul thanked God for the fact that when the early Christians "received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers." 1 Thess 2:13 RSV. May such a faith inform our quest to comprehend and express the reality of Biblical inspiration.

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Benjamin B. Warfield

The volume of books, pamphlets, articles, and book reviews by Benjamin B. Warfield published during his lifetime runs into thousands of items. Many of the articles and some of the pamphlets and book reviews have been reprinted in compilations published after Warfield's death. There are three sets of such compilations, and because they are more easily accessible than the original publications, footnotes refer to these wherever possible. However, to facilitate the readers interested in acquainting themselves with the titles, dates, and sources of the original publications, this section of the bibliography follows a chronological sequence. Footnote references to compilations are followed by a date preceded by the letters o.d., which stand for "original date." With the help of this information the original article or book review can be easily located among the items published in a certain year. Bibliographical entries of reprinted articles and reviews are followed by the titles of the compilation and the page numbers where such articles and reviews can be found. The chronological bibliography is preceded by the publication data and the volume titles of the three sets of compilations.

Compilations

(1) A set of ten volumes known as the Oxford series of Warfield's works was published by the Oxford University Press, New York, between 1927 and 1932. This set has recently been reprinted under the title The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1981). The titles and dates of publication for the original ten volumes are:

Revelation and Inspiration (1927) (designated in footnotes and bibliography as Revelation).

Biblical Doctrines (1929).

Christology and Criticism (1929).

Studies in Tertullian and Augustine (1930).

Calvin and Calvinism (1931).

The Westminster Assembly and Its Work (1931) (designated in footnotes and bibliography as Westminster Assembly).

Perfectionism, vols. 1 and 2 (1931).

Studies in Theology (1932).

Critical Reviews (1932).

(2) A set of five volumes known by the name of its editor, Samuel G. Craig, as the Craig series was published by the Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, between 1948 and 1958. This series has been reprinted many times and was in recent years reprinted and distributed by Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan. The titles and original dates of publication of these five volumes are:

The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible. Introduction by Cornelius van Til (1948) (designated in footnotes and bibliography as Bible).

The Person and Work of Christ (1950).

Biblical and Theological Studies. With a biographical article about Benjamin B. Warfield by Samuel G. Craig (1952) (designated in footnotes and bibliography as Studies).

Calvin and Augustine (1956) (designated in footnotes and bibliography as Calvin).

Perfectionism (1958).

Where an article has been reprinted in the Oxford series as well as in the Craig series, only the reprint data for the latter series have been mentioned.

(3) A set of two volumes edited by John E. Meeter was published by the Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Nutley, New Jersey, in 1970 and 1973, under the title:

Selected Shorter Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield, vols. 1 and 2 (designated in footnotes and bibliography as Writings, 1 and Writings, 2).

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