ANALYTICAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION
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This study has undertaken for a practical purpose, namely, to find a basis for mutual Christian fellowship by means of a method of Biblical interpretation which would show the relevancy of the Bible for today, as well as to attempt to solve personal questions regarding a doctrine of Scripture. It was necessary to show the relationship through Christian history that existed between methods of interpretation and theories of inspiration, including those of the present. The method was analytical in its historical investigation and semantically critical throughout, i.e., the question informing every aspect of the study, was; what did the Church mean by the terms it used? By way of summary we shall review the cumulative conclusions of the study and by an analysis of these come to some conclusions.

The Scriptures have almost always been considered as given by a unique inspiration of God. There have been a number of theories of inspiration, each of which have been held without challenge. There have been two basic approaches to the interpretation of Scripture, the grammatical and the historical. Interpretive methods have proceeded from either one or the other of these, or from some combination of the two. The goal of all interpretation has apparently always been to relate God's word to man's world. In this it has sought to systematize a spiritual category of interpretation.
It would be possible to show by an uncritical assembly of the terms used throughout history that the Church has always held to a theory of verbal inspiration. It has always spoken of a Supernatural Book, of its writers as "Pens of the Holy Ghost," and its contents as the "Pure Word of God." There are three observations, however, from the study of history, which compel us to modify the definition of that term from time to time through history.

The New Testament writers, on many occasions, quoted from the Septuagint version, as though it and the Hebrew were on a par so far as value was concerned. The Patristic Fathers and nearly all the later writers, including Origen and Augustine, considered the Septuagint as the divinely inspired Old Testament. From Jerome to the Reformation it was the Latin Vulgate which was spoken of as inspired, and it continued to be so in the Catholic Church. From the Reformation on, translations were considered to be as much inspired as the original texts provided they were translated from the Hebrew and Greek. Under the earliest light of textual criticism, both Protestant and Catholic theologians began to claim verbal inspiration for the autographs only. The Helveticus Concensus II, authorised only in parts of Switzerland, claimed inspiration even for the Hebrew pointing. The Westminster Confession affirmed inspiration for the original languages but did not specify the autographs, while a Catholic scholar, Richard Simon, distinguished sharply between
"inerrant autographs" and "errant copies," as early as the seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{1} It is not unimportant to note, also, that certain English translations were considered as inerrantly inspired for a while.

The second observation is that in spite of the very striking expressions which the Church Fathers have made regarding the inspired Scriptures, they have handled them with a freedom which is amazing to us. They felt free to criticize, reword, misquote, adversely judge and eliminate passages and even books from the canon on subjective judgment alone. Every Christian teacher of note did this, including Augustine, Luther and Calvin, all of whom left doctrines to the Church which are considered, today, as normative for it.

The third observation relates to the interpretation which the Fathers found satisfactory to themselves as scholarly men and devoted Christians. Allegorical interpretation in its several phases was demanded by them, in part, to preserve the high regard they held for Scripture as the Word of God, from the "unworthy" results which they felt a literal interpretation would yield. Augustine could not become a Christian, we are told, until he had found the allegorical interpretation for the Old Testament.

The "multiple meanings" developed in the medieval period and utilized throughout the scholastic era was an attempt to systematize

the "fecundity" of Scripture, i.e., its amazing depth and spiritual richness. The Catholic Church, by its official decrees in the Council of Trent, assumed the responsibility for keeping Biblical interpretation flexible and useful to the Church rather than let it remain static and lifeless, by a sacerdotal office of authoritative interpretation inserted between the Word and the common man. Luther particularly, and Calvin, in a somewhat lesser way, made the revelation of Christ the interpretive norm. Both demanded a literal and literary interpretation of Scripture, but added a further category of exegesis which would relate the reader to Christ spiritually.

The Creeds, emphasizing doctrinal distinctions tended to require an authorized interpretation of the Bible. This was true of both the Catholic and Protestant churches. Differences based on Biblical interpretation can only be kept clear by authoritative interpretation. It was not until the Fundamentalist controversy that literal verbal inspiration in the sense that God was held responsible for each and every word and tense formation in the entire Bible, was made the basis for a proper interpretation. Literal, in this sense, was an exaggerated reverence for the minutest grammatical and verbal occurrence. It is significant that Barth, the Father of Neo-Orthodoxy, should be willing to admit A. Schlatter's
charge against him that he held to the theory of verbal inspiration.¹

The relationship of interpretation methods to theories of inspiration form a more or less definite pattern. A very "high" theory of inspiration finds the grammatical approach to interpretation apart from the historical, the most suitable. The pre-Christian Palestinian Jews who regarded the very "radicals" of the Law manuscripts as sacred, formulated rules for allegorical interpretation from the words and tenses of the text. The Talmud, constructed from these rules stood between the Law and the people. This was true of the Alexandrian allegorical method also. The Antiochian school, which first proposed the historical method of exegesis as a system, held a "lower" view of inspiration, i.e., it had more regard for the human element in the Bible. The teachings of this school were discredited as being less "spiritual." The Tridentine decree fixed the individual words of the Vulgate as the sacred text, and rejected historical interpretation, in the sense of any environmental conditioning of the composition of the Bible. Any kind of Biblical criticism was forbidden. It was necessary to substitute a perpetually fluid Tradition in the place of a genuine historical sense to keep the Bible related to human life.

The Reformation came close to maintaining a balance between

¹Barth, Epistle to the Romans, preface to the second edition, 1921, p. 18.
the grammatical and historical by holding to a Book as both divine and human which had to be interpreted in harmony with that fact. Liberalism turned "historical" to "historicism" and denied the divine origin of the words entirely. Fundamentalism, by way of reaction, overemphasized the divine at the expense of the historical conditioning of the words, though it always held a serious view of history. It is here that Barth's willingness to be called a verbal inspirationist becomes significant, though his view is carried to a greater extreme than any phase of traditional orthodoxy. Inspiration does not mean to him, that the Bible is revelation. He seems to mean that the words of the text are to be studied as human literature for the purpose of catching a meaning that no past or present cultural conditioning could modify. We read the Bible for what it means to us, now, without any concern for what was meant by the human authors in a past day. (The Bible, then, is an occasion, only, not a source of the Word of God.) There is no room here for historical interpretation. Actually, there is no room for any true interpretation beyond the personal response of the reader, relative to his own condition.

A survey of the positions that the Church has held regarding a doctrine of Scripture all subsumed under similar verbal descriptions, suggest the need for care in our use of the terms. Historians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have described the views
of those as far back as Origen in the terms that we use today. Care
must be exercised that all the modern connotations are not read back
into the words of those Christian thinkers whom we have quoted and
analyzed. Statements like that of Farrar, regarding Origen and Clement
that "both regarded the Bible as the verbally inspired Word of God," are
personal and modern interpretations and must be understood as
such in the effort to reconstruct the early opinions. To use the
same terms as the ancients to describe our views of Scripture does
not mean that our connotations should be imposed backward upon the
early expressions, and by that device permit us to say that our views
coincide with theirs. To do so is to distort the facts of history.

The lack of uniformity in regard to the meanings that various
theories of inspiration have had for other ages as evidenced by
their methods of interpretations, suggested a study of the problems
of interpretation, qua interpretation. Beyond the well known tasks
of the interpreter, lie the less recognized but equally important
ones relating to the nature of words, qua words. Since words are
symbols, the writer or speaker must be certain that his reader or
hearer thinks of the same object or idea which he had in mind as
the thing for which the symbol stood. Further, words are not only
symbols, but they are also abstractions, able only to point to a
limited number of the features of an object. In this way, they
localize the mind's attention to a desired point, but they also run
the danger of suggesting to the recipient (hearer or reader), that
the object is entirely described by the abstracted characteristic.
The whole is falsely equated with a part. Words also carry a
richness of meaning beyond their definitions by way of implication,
and deep understanding is measured by the ability of a human mind to
capture these overtones of signification. Interpretation, then, is
an intellectual process. A mind stands between symbols and meaning.
The Bible, as literature, must yield its message to the reader in
the same way that any literature gives up its treasures.

But the Bible is not only literature, it is a religious book,
a revelation from God to man. Its relevance is in its role as
"special revelation." The problem of interpretation is to transcend
the human aspect of the book and to grasp the religious, or spiritual,
message which is its unique possession. The Bible is both divine
and human as Christ is God-man. Each one in its own way partakes of
the divine, yet is available to the empirical world. It is necessary
to understand and to appreciate the Bible in its divine and in its
human aspects and to inform interpretation by this attitude and com-
prehension. Jesus gives us the most authoritative clue to spiritual
interpretation. He interpreted the Old Testament spiritually, in
obvious distinction from the rabbi's method, not as though it were
an optional choice but as the only valid one. The whole Old Testa-
ment was his text; it all spoke of him and his ministry. He dared
to draw all the strands together out of it and draw them to himself, and make himself the spiritual fulfillment — the real fulfillment. Jesus made the difference between spiritual and unspiritual interpretation very plain and pointed when he said, "You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness of me; yet you refuse to come to me that you might have life" (John 5:39-40, R.S.V). In this we see that all inspiration finally centers in Christ. He is the goal of inspiration and revelation. It is worth noting, also, that the use of the Septuagint in the mouth of our Lord, confirms us in our conclusion that inspiration is not to be confined to the autographs only, nor does it end in words, but it is assured to all of us in the form of the Bible that we possess.

Now, if the lines of demarcation, historically and semantically, have been drawn correctly, the answer to the initial question of the study as to the divine and human elements in Scripture and how these relate to interpretation may be indicated. Perhaps the most obvious conclusion is that as the two natures of Christ are difficult to distinguish in his person, so also is the distinction difficult to make in relation to the Bible. It is necessary to know the meanings of the terms we use but when the purpose of clarity has been served, we are still confronted by the mystery of God's ways, and are, in fact, more humbly aware of the mystery. The Bible is the result of an inspiration from God. We are speechless before this awareness.
Scarcely anything more can be said. In this respect the Bible is of a supernatural origin. It is not of the human. God acted, not to explain to men secrets of the universe which they could discover for themselves, not simply to gratify a curiosity about Himself, not even to provide a system of laws to be obeyed, but primarily to make a Saviour available to sinful men. Everything meaningful to that end is included in revelation.

We conclude that merely knowing about Christ would not have been enough, else the Old Testament would have been enough, or at least the Old Testament and the Gospels. But the historical Christ, living, teaching, dying and rising from the dead, as essential as all this is to the total revelation of the Saviour, was not enough. All of this without the interpretive ministry of the Holy Spirit, by which the living Person and Lordship of Christ is revealed, is not the finished revelation. If the living Person of Christ is the fullness and goal of revelation, the initial inspiration is not completed until individual men make this acquaintance. The Holy Spirit acted in history. He interpreted the spiritual significance of history to "holy" men, who later wrote what they knew. Christ, the fullness of revelation entered history and the same acting Holy Spirit led the disciples into truth about Christ, and continues to interpret the spiritual significance of sacred history and the person of Christ. At no point in all that we know about revelation can any aspect of
it be separate from or independent of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. If the fullness of God's revelation be Christ, there can be no further revelation, for he includes all revelation. We must look back, in chronological time to his physical existence, but this is not an enervating reactionary view, for in the spiritual dimension He is always living and always Lord, and, to borrow the modern expression, He is our contemporary. In all of these respects the Bible is from God. It is divine. It is, of the supernatural.

But it is not possible, nor desirable to isolate these divine aspects from the human and natural realms, except in definition, any more than the God-man could be metaphysically dissected. God could only make knowledge available to man as the content of his disclosure came under the terms of human existence. It is curiously interesting to note the utter reliance of God upon man's capacities and consciousness. On the two occasions when deity wrote on physical objects the result was speedily destroyed. The tables of stone were dropped and broken on Mt. Sinai and Jesus' words, written in the dust, were trampled under feet. God used men because he was giving "special" revelation and not anymore simply general revelation, for which nature was adequate. The Scriptures were not dropped from heaven written on golden plates (which would then have been natural, by the way), nor were they produced "in a vacuum" but came out of the stuff of human living. The Bible is the history of real people in
in the life and death struggle which was the Sitz im Leben of a past day. It is historical in the richest sense. The Bible is not written in a supernatural language, or even in a stilted, formal, precise language, but in the most human, usually rather rough, sometimes grammatically imperfect language, rich in idiom and seldom, if ever philosophically abstract or rigidly logical.

The Scriptures partake of the human and natural limitations also in the sense that they represent a progressive revelation which was accommodated to the capacity of men to receive it. If a mechanically perfect record had been the goal, better ways than through imperfect men would most surely have been used. No theory of mechanical dictation, by whatever name it may be called, can stand the test of either practical or philosophical examination. There is no evidence whatever that the Greek mystical theory of a depression of human consciousness is the Christian or Hebrew one. It is rather an unworthy notion. God has always used the highest capacity of men in the event of revelation. God used men because He had made them capable of grasping spiritual truth. Inspiration — the impulse, and revelation — the content of God's disclosure, was a spiritual experience. It had to be reduced to human speech and then reduced again to a written language.

It is of special interest to note that Scripture came by way of "holy" men. Contact with God is an ennobling experience, taxing
human consciousness to its extremest limits and lifting man to his highest moral stature.

God acting sovereignly in history through a race, electing, excluding until the One Man — Christ, had come and lived and died in the ineradicable, empirical fact. A record of that must be kept for the benefit of all men. But the record, of itself meant very little. Holy men, under the tutelage of the Holy Spirit, caught the significance of these events and taught and preached what they know. The combination of these two aspects of revelation were still not enough, for in spite of them, all but Anna and Simeon were completely unprepared for the kind of Messiah that came and their awareness was Spirit given. No one expected a Saviour from sin instead of a saviour from Roman bondage. In spite of Jesus' life and teaching when he died, his disciples, utterly disillusioned, said, "We had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel" (Luke 21:21). They were still materialists. If a perfect record could have been effective as revelation, surely the Old Testament and Jesus' own teaching would have produced a radiant church. But it took something more, and the "something more" is the thing that saves the human record from being merely human. It is our opinion that the humanness of the record with any of the limitations typical of humanness with which it may be endowed, is for the express purpose of preventing men from giving undue reverence to the medium of revelation and
aborting the ultimate purpose which is to bring men in touch with Christ himself. No iota of authority is lost through its humanness.

All of this must be reflected in interpretation. If inspiration occurred in the spiritual realm, where meaning and significance are grasped, interpretation that does not take this spiritual dimension into account fails dismally to even approximate the message of the Bible. Allegorical interpretation was essentially spiritual. The Sentences were attempts at finding the spiritual content of Scripture. Luther and Calvin were spiritual interpreters. The Confessional period divorced spiritual exegesis from theology and lost the life from Scripture and religion. It talked about Christ but lost him from experience. More currently, myth is the device used, beyond the strictly proper use of that term, to make the Bible live today. It is a modern world grooping for the Life that was lost in the period of Protestant rationalism.

Spiritual reality must be recovered in our interpretive methods. This does not mean that there is any excuse for returning to the abuses of any system of hermeneutics. The laws of rational thought and language require that we respect every demand of rational usage as well as every understanding of the not-so-rational, such as the idiom and the figure of speech and the grasping of implications and the indescribable inflections of speech and thought, but when this has been accomplished the task is still not done. There is the
spiritual significance yet to be found and this is the ultimate significance for it brings us into living contact with Christ who is the goal of revelation. This is not venturing into the unreal world, unless Christ be merely an idea, but is the most real, yet does not deny full value to the physical world in which we live. It is here that men find unity in Christ, and fellowship beyond the personal differences that will always divide us while we are in the flesh, and which are only to be deplored as they break fellowship in Christ. If rules for this spiritual interpretation should be required, none could be given. It is precisely in the place where rules are constructed that distortion occurs. The law of the spiritual is the law of life. It cannot be reduced to mechanics. It is a life lived with an awareness toward Christ, demanding but one thing — a personal submission to the leading of the Spirit and the Lordship of Christ.

If it be said that this is too personal, too subjective, one must answer that it is the same Christ that has always been found by everyone and in all times, everywhere. It cannot be another, because the objective record witnesses to Him alone. The individual is not free to find a new path to Him. The remarkable unanimity of understanding regarding this contact with Christ throughout two thousand years of history is testimony to the dependability of the spiritual objectivity of the Spirit of God and the Living Lord. Augustine's Lord is the Lord we know and his adoration is as modern as that of
the twentieth century Christian. If it be thought that this quality of interpretation is too intangible, let it be said that for the lack of it, the Bible as a book of religion, which it must surely be first of all, is taken from men most decisively. Authoritative interpretation, whether it be Catholic or Protestant, fixes a great gulf between the Word and the men to whom it would speak, and whether it is recognized or not, those who administer the authority become priests standing between God and men. Only by means of this quality of understanding, ministered by the Holy Spirit, can the Bible ever speak to men and to this age.