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The Need of Study.

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It is a powerful and significant word which St. Paul addressed to his young assistant Timothy, when he writes to him: "Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine" (*πρόσεχε τῇ ἀναγνώσει, τῇ παρακλήσει, τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ*). 1 Tim. 4, 13.

It seems that modern conditions are causing many of us to forget the full force of this remark. It has been said that the days of the old-fashioned pastor are numbered, and that the multitude of tasks which are being heaped on the minister in his charge are making it impossible to put that attention to work in the study which was formerly deemed essential. With board meetings and committee meetings and society meetings, and teachers' training classes and catechumen classes and a host of other labors crowding in for every minute of the time, there is simply no opportunity for a thorough and calm study of the Scriptures and of theological subject-matter such as we have, in the past, been associating with the office of a pastor. The *πολυπραγμοσύνη* of the modern minister is becoming an axiom, and the situation is assuming alarming proportions. The question is, Have we really reached the stage when a pastor must be satisfied with a mere glance at the Bible text and at the theological literature which is gotten out for his special benefit? Are we really so pressed for time that we cannot devote a certain portion of every day to the systematic study of the Scripture and of all the other material which was formerly considered essential for a pastor's labors?

One of the best among the recent studies taking up this question contains the following thoughts on the art of preaching and on the work of the minister. In the first place: It is absolutely necessary that the work of the pulpit reflect the labor of the study. Any one desiring to be a real leader of his congregation, a guide to souls seeking the right way in faith and life, a personal witness for the redemption of Jesus Christ, and a stimulating teacher of the Word of Truth, must devote enough time to systematic study so that there will be a proper proportion maintained between the

Every Word Is Truth.

A Defense of Verbal Inspiration.

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I.

It is not difficult to ascertain from what one reads and hears these days that there are many people living to-day, both educated and uneducated, who do not believe that the Bible is God's Word, at least not in its entirety. That the Bible *contains* God's Word, by which they merely want to state that it contains other things, too, or that it is God's Word in part only, is admitted by some. But that it *is* the Word of God *in all its parts*, is a confession rarely heard or seen outside of the churches of the Lutheran Synodical Conference. Notwithstanding we Lutheran Christians of the Synodical Conference stick to this our belief. Can we uphold and maintain this our position and profession in this age of research and inventions?

In the first place, be it said that our conviction that the Bible is God's Word does not rest on a conclusion that we have reached by our own reasoning, but on an inward conviction which the Holy Ghost has wrought in our hearts, as Jesus said: "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself." By the witness of the Holy Ghost through the Word, or Bible, and the experience of the power of that Word on our hearts, we gain the conviction that the Bible in its entirety is the Word of God. Like every other doctrine that we hold and believe, so also this conviction, that the Bible is God's Word in all its parts, flows from the Bible and is based on the Bible. *The Bible itself teaches us that it is the Word of God in its entirety.*

By the Bible in all its parts I mean the Bible as it is among us to-day, all its canonical writings as comprised in the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament. All this is God's Word from beginning to end. This let me now prove to you from the Bible.

A certain man has taken the pains to count the number of times that the phrase "Thus saith the Lord" is used in the Old Testament and has found that it was over 2,000 times. So the Old Testament tells us more than 2,000 times that it is the Word of the Lord.

In speaking of the advantages of the Jews, St. Paul says in

the third chapter of Romans: "Unto them [the Jews] were committed the oracles of God." That is to say, *the Jews in their sacred writings, in the Old Testament Scriptures, had the Words of God.*

In a disputation which Jesus once had with the Sadducees concerning the resurrection of the dead which is recorded in the 22d chapter of Matthew, Jesus, referring them to the Old Testament writings, says: "But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have you not read *that which was spoken unto you by God?*" So here Jesus very plainly says that what was spoken unto the Jews in the Old Testament was spoken unto them by God.

With regard to the New Testament St. Peter writes: "But the Word of the Lord endureth forever; and this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you." So the Word which the apostles preached is the Word of the Lord that endureth forever. Then is also that which the apostles *wrote* the Word of the Lord that endureth forever, for they wrote no other gospel than that which they preached.

St. Paul writes in Galatians: "But I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not of man." And in Corinthians he says: "If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord."

On their first missionary journey Paul and Barnabas came to Antioch in Pisidia and preached in the synagog. When many came to hear them, the Jews were moved with envy and spoke against those things that were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then said Paul and Barnabas to them: "It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you, but seeing ye put it from you and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." Here Paul and Barnabas plainly state that the word that was spoken or preached by them was the Word of God.

Writing to the Thessalonians, the apostle reminds them of the fact that the word which they received from him was not the word of men, but the Word of God, when he says: "When ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God."

These are but a few of the testimonies of the Bible that both the Old and the New Testaments are the Word of God and not the word of men.

Since there are a great many people who will admit or even confess that the Bible *contains* God's Word (by which they merely want to say that parts of the Bible are of divine origin, while other parts are of purely human origin), it becomes necessary for us also to prove *that the Bible is the Word of God in its entirety*. This the Bible also teaches us.

In the 15th chapter of Romans the Apostle St. Paul writes: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning that we, through patience of the Scriptures, might have hope." *Whatsoever things* were written, that is, *all* that was written in the Scriptures, was written for our comfort that we might have hope. That implies that all of it must be the Word of God, for only the Word of God can give us true comfort and a sure hope; for who would stake his eternal weal and woe on the words of a man?

On the day of the resurrection of our Lord two of His disciples were making their way from Jerusalem to Emmaus. As they were walking along discussing the late suffering and death of their Master, a stranger joins them and walks with them. This stranger is none other than Jesus, the risen Lord Himself. And what does He tell the disciples after hearing their complaint? He said to them: "O fools and slow of heart to believe *all* that the prophets have spoken!" In his defense before Felix, the governor of Syria, St. Paul said: "So worship I the God of my fathers, believing *all things* which are written in the Law and the prophets." Jesus says that we must believe *all* that the prophets have spoken, and St. Paul *believed all things* that were written in the Law and the prophets. Then *all things* that are written in the Bible, at least in the Old Testament, must be the Word of God, for God does not require us to believe anything but His Word.

Once when the Jews wanted to stone Jesus, He said to them: "Many works have I shown you from My Father; for which of these works do ye stone Me? The Jews answered and said unto Him: For a good work we stone Thee not, but for blasphemy and because Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God. Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your Law: I said, ye are *gods*? If He called them gods by whom the Word of God came, and the Scriptures cannot be broken," etc. Here Jesus adduces one single word of Scripture, the word "gods," and He says that that word

cannot be broken or changed, but it must stand. Could or would Jesus do this if every word of the Bible were not God's Word?

From St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians we may learn that even to such a minor thing as to the *singular or plural form of a word* the Bible is the Word of God. For the apostle there makes the remarkable statement: "Now, to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He [that is, God] saith *not*: And to *seeds*, as of many; but as of one, And to thy *Seed*, which is Christ." Could a stronger argument that every letter of the Bible is inspired be produced?

But let me adduce just one more example. When our Lord and Savior was in a disputation with the Sadducees, who claimed that there was no resurrection from the dead, He appealed to the *present tense* of a word in Scripture to prove the resurrection of the dead, for He says: "*I am* the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Here the Savior states that because the Scriptures say *I am* the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and not *I was* the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, therefore it is certain that the dead arise and live. What a tremendous proof that the Bible in all its parts, even to the minutest details, is the Word of God!

But lest any one should doubt, the apostle says very plainly in the Second Epistle to Timothy: "*All* Scripture is given by inspiration of God," is God-breathed, that is, the breath, or spirit, of God is in *all* scriptures both of the Old and of the New Testament. But the word "*all*" includes the words also and the letters.

This may suffice to show that *the Bible teaches that it is in all its parts the Word of God and in no parts the word of man.*

II.

The question arises: *How* is the Bible God's Word? Did not men write it? How, then, can it be God's Word? Also this question is taken care of in the Scriptures. For this reason the Bible says that "all Scripture is God-inspired" and that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Tim. 3, 16; 2 Pet. 1, 21. That is to say, the men who wrote the Bible were the instruments of the Holy Ghost and of God. The Holy Ghost, that is, God Himself, breathed or gave into the minds of these men the words that they were to write. Thus the men who wrote the Bible were merely the recorders, the secretaries, of God, who

wrote what God wanted them to write and exactly as He wanted them to write. Thus the Bible is just as much God's Word by inspiration as the dictation that I dictate to my secretary and my secretary writes for me is my word and not my secretary's word.

This fact the Bible brings out every time it makes the statement: "As it is written *by* the prophet," "which was spoken *by* Jeremy," "*by* Esaias," "*by* Daniel, the prophet"; or even more clearly, "which was spoken *of the Lord by the prophet*," or "*who by the mouth of Thy servant* David hast said," or "well spake the *Holy Ghost by* Esaias, the prophet." The word "by" in these passages, as well as the phrase "of the Lord by" and equivalent phrases, denotes clearly that the writers of the Bible were merely the mouthpieces of the Holy Ghost and of God.

This the writers themselves confess in many ways. How often do not the prophets exclaim: "Thus saith the Lord"; "the Word of the Lord came unto me"! David, who wrote most of the psalms, confessed: "Now, these be the last words of David; David, the son of Jesse, said and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said: The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His Word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me." 2 Sam. 23, 1—3. The Apostle Peter says: "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Pet. 1, 21. St. Paul writes: "Now, we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given us of God. Which things also we speak, not *in the words* which man's wisdom teacheth, but *which the Holy Ghost teacheth*." 1 Cor. 2, 12, 13.

From these testimonies of the Bible, which are only a few out of many, it is clear that the men who wrote the Bible were only the tools, mouthpieces, of the Holy Ghost, who spoke and wrote through them every word that He wanted spoken or written. Hence we are perfectly justified in teaching and professing that the Bible in its entirety, from one end to the other, every book of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every word and letter of it, is the Word of God.

This, of course, we say of the Bible as it was originally written in the Hebrew and Greek languages.

Here the doubters and modernists raise two objections. The first objection is that the original manuscripts of the prophets and

apostles are no more in existence, at least not to any one's knowledge, and that the copies which we possess of these manuscripts differ somewhat in reading, and for that reason it is impossible that every word and letter of the Bible should be God's Word. To this I would answer, first, that the fact that the manuscripts which we have to-day differ somewhat in spelling and in a word left out or added here and there, is not God's fault, but the fault of those who copied the original manuscripts, and must therefore be ascribed to human weakness. In the second place, I want to say that the true reading and the correct spelling of the original manuscripts is without any doubt present in the world to-day and can be established by a careful comparison of the copies that we have, for God has promised that not a particle of His Word shall be lost. And in the third place, be it said that all scholars are agreed that not a single doctrine or teaching of the Bible is in any way affected by these variations in reading of the manuscripts that we now possess. "Eighteen centuries have passed since the Bible was finished. They have been centuries of great changes. In their course the world has been wrought over into newness at almost every point. But to-day the text of the Scriptures, after copyings almost innumerable, and after having been tossed about through the ages of ignorance and tumult, is found by exhaustive criticism to be unaltered in every important particular—there being not a single doctrine, nor duty, nor fact of any grade that is brought into question by variations of readings—a fact that stands alone in the history of such ancient literature." (Enoch F. Burr.)

The second objection of the modernists and others is that the translations of the Bible are not the work of God, but the work of men, and that therefore the Bible cannot be God's Word, word for word, though the thoughts might be. To this I would answer that though the translators of the Bible were not inspired by God as the original writers were, nevertheless, what they translated was not the thoughts of their own minds, but the message and words of the original Bible, and therefore their translation, if it agrees with, if it renders, the sense of the original, must be just as much God's Word, word for word, as the original, for thoughts cannot be expressed without words. It is a remarkable and noteworthy fact that whereas other books lose more or less in a translation, yes, some human books cannot be translated at all without losing much of their identity, the Bible has manifested

a wonderful adaptability to be translated into almost every known language and tongue. There is no book in the world that has been translated into more languages than the Bible. And the great peculiarity about the Bible is that experience has shown that it speaks with equal force and precision in every people's language; it speaks with equal power and precision in Hebrew to the Hebrews, in Greek to the Greeks, in English to the English, in German to the Germans, in Chinese to the Chinese. This cannot be said of any other book in the world.

There are, of course, poor translations of the Bible, which do not render the sense of the original, but even in them the main message of the Bible cannot be hid. But in these cases the sense of the original can always be established, for there are plenty of people in the world to-day who are perfectly familiar with the languages in which the Bible was originally written, and they can tell you whether or not a certain translation is a good and correct rendition of the original. In this respect the German translation by Luther and the King James Version of the English Bible stand unexcelled. God has in these translations spoken just as powerfully and effectively to the German- and English-speaking peoples as when He spoke in the Hebrew to the Hebrews and in Greek to the Greeks. The Bible has also in its translations proved to be the quick and powerful Word of the living God. "It is a universal rule that a book does not thrive except in the language in which it was written. Men's books will not always bear translation; and the greater the literary value of a book, the more it is likely to suffer loss in being translated from one language into another. Change of locality is, to the great majority of books, absolutely destructive. But to this rule the Bible is a marvelous exception. It seems to run freely in the mold of every language, to adapt itself perfectly thereto, and to speak with equal directness, clearness, and authority to all peoples and tribes and nations, in their mother tongue. It does not occur to us that, in reading our common English Bible, we are reading a translation of an Oriental book; and, indeed, when an example of the purest and best English is desired, men go with one accord to the Bible. Considered merely as a poem, there is nothing more exquisite in the English language than the Twenty-third Psalm; and it has been stated that in other languages besides the English this Shepherd Psalm is a model of poetical excellence. It never occurs to one reading it that he is reading a translation from another and very different language." (Philip Mauro, Attorney-at-Law, New York City.)