

How Did the Bible Come to Us?

Week 1: The Inspiration, Authority, and Perfection of God's Word

Statement of Faith:

Baptist Faith and Message 2000, Article I:

"The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation."

Second London Baptist Confession, 1689, Chapter I:

"The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience, although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and his will which is necessary unto salvation. Therefore it pleased the Lord at sundry times and in divers manners to reveal himself, and to declare that his will unto his church; and afterward for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan, and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing; which maketh the Holy Scriptures to be most necessary, those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased."

I. The Goal of Scripture

A. The Primary Goal: Salvation of our Souls through Faith in Christ

2 Timothy 3:15 from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Romans 10:17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

John 20:31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

B. The Secondary Goal: Holiness and Fruitfulness of our Lives

Psaln 19:7-11 The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. ⁸ The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes. ⁹ The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. ¹⁰ They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. ¹¹ By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is ... ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

II. The Origin of Scripture: The Doctrine of Inspiration

A. The True Origin of All Scripture

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

God-breathed = *theopneustos*...

B.B. Warfield: “For the Greek word in this passage [2 Tim. 3:16]

— θεόπνευστος, *theopneustos* — very distinctly does not mean ‘inspired of God’... What it says of Scripture is, not that it is ‘breathed into by God’ or is the product of the Divine ‘inbreathing’ into its human authors, but that it is breathed out by God, ‘God-breathed,’ the product of the creative breath of God.”

“What it affirms is that the Scriptures owe their origin to an activity of God the Holy Ghost and are in the highest and truest sense His creation. It is on this foundation of Divine origin that all the high attributes of Scripture are built.”

Other key text:

2 Peter 1:20-21 Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. ²¹ For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Key insights:

1) The human authors of scripture did not take it upon themselves to write scripture; it was God's work in them that resulted in scripture.

- 2) "Men spoke": Scripture is 100% human... every word is written by human authors
- 3) "From God": Scripture is 100% divine... every word originated in the mind of God and came ultimately from him
- 4) "as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit": The Spirit's direct activity on the prophets is the link between the previous two assertions... 100% human + 100% divine; the Holy Spirit moved effectively and powerfully on the minds and bodies of the prophets, using their circumstances and personalities and verbal skills and immediate circumstances to write timeless and perfect scripture

Also this:

Hebrews 1:1-2 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son

B. The Perfection of the Word of God

Psaln 19:7 The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul.

Psaln 12:6 And the words of the LORD are flawless, like silver refined in a furnace of clay, purified seven times.

This is the foundational issue of inerrancy... if all Scripture is God-breathed, it is impossible that any of it contains any errors. The is also the foundational issue of the authority of God's Word... if all Scripture is God-breathed, it comes to us with the authority of God himself.

Nothing added or removed:

Deuteronomy 4:2 Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you.

Deuteronomy 12:32 See that you do all I command you; do not add to it or take away from it.

Proverbs 30:5-6 "Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. ⁶ Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.

Revelation 22:18-19 I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. ¹⁹ And if anyone takes words away from this book of

prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

C. The Word of God Before the Foundation of the World

John 1:1-2 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning.

D. The Word of God Essential to All Creation

1. Original creation

John 1:3 Through him [the Word] all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

Genesis 1:3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

Psaln 33:6 By the word of the LORD were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth.

2. Continual sustaining of creation

Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.

E. The Word of God Prior to Scripture

God spoke to man many times before there was any written word

Genesis 2:16-17 And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; ¹⁷ but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

Genesis 12:1-3 The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. ² "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

Genesis 15:4-6 Then the word of the LORD came to him [Abraham]: "This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir." ⁵ He took him outside and said, "Look up at the heavens and count the stars-- if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." ⁶ Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

Genesis 22:1-2 Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. ² Then God said, "Take your son, your only son,

Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about."

F. The Beginning of Scripture in the Bible

1. Right before the first written scripture

Exodus 19:17-19 Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. ¹⁸ Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the LORD descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, the whole mountain trembled violently, ¹⁹ and the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder. Then Moses spoke and the voice of God answered him.

Exodus 20:1-3 And God spoke all these words: ² "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. ³ "You shall have no other gods before me.

2. The origin of the office of prophet

Exodus 20:18-19 When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance ¹⁹ and said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die."

Deuteronomy 5:23-31 When you heard the voice out of the darkness, while the mountain was ablaze with fire, all the leading men of your tribes and your elders came to me. ²⁴ And you said, "The LORD our God has shown us his glory and his majesty, and we have heard his voice from the fire. Today we have seen that a man can live even if God speaks with him. ²⁵ But now, why should we die? This great fire will consume us, and we will die if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any longer. ²⁶ For what mortal man has ever heard the voice of the living God speaking out of fire, as we have, and survived? ²⁷ Go near and listen to all that the LORD our God says. Then tell us whatever the LORD our God tells you. We will listen and obey."

²⁸ The LORD heard you when you spoke to me and the LORD said to me, "I have heard what this people said to you. Everything they said was good. ²⁹ Oh, that their hearts would be inclined to fear me and keep all my commands always, so that it might go well with them and their children forever! ³⁰ "Go, tell them to return to their tents. ³¹ But you stay here with me so that I may give you all the commands, decrees and laws you are to teach them to follow in the land I am giving them to possess."

3. The first written scripture

Exodus 24:12 The LORD said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain and stay here, and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and commands I have written for their instruction."

Exodus 31:18 When the LORD finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the Testimony, the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God.

*Exodus 32:15-16 Moses turned and went down the mountain with the two tablets of the Testimony in his hands. They were inscribed on both sides, front and back.
¹⁶ The tablets were the work of God; the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets.*

4. The destruction of the original; the making of a copy

Exodus 32:19 When Moses approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, his anger burned and he threw the tablets out of his hands, breaking them to pieces at the foot of the mountain.

Exodus 34:1 The LORD said to Moses, "Chisel out two stone tablets like the first ones, and I will write on them the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke.

*Exodus 34:27-28 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write down these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel."
²⁸ Moses was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights without eating bread or drinking water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant - the Ten Commandments.*

Deuteronomy 10:4 The LORD wrote on these tablets what he had written before, the Ten Commandments he had proclaimed to you on the mountain, out of the fire, on the day of the assembly. And the LORD gave them to me.

5. Moses wrote the rest of God's words

*Exodus 24:3-4 When Moses went and told the people all the LORD's words and laws, they responded with one voice, "Everything the LORD has said we will do."
⁴ Moses then wrote down everything the LORD had said.*

Deuteronomy 31:9 So Moses wrote down this law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel.

Deuteronomy 31:22 So Moses wrote down this song that day and taught it to the Israelites.

6. Other copies of God's Word

The King's Copy:

Deuteronomy 17:18-19 When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the priests, who are Levites. ¹⁹ It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees

The Copy on Stones in the Promised Land:

Deuteronomy 27:2-8 When you have crossed the Jordan into the land the LORD your God is giving you, set up some large stones and coat them with plaster. ³ Write on them all the words of this law when you have crossed over to enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, promised you. ⁴ And when you have crossed the Jordan, set up these stones on Mount Ebal, as I command you today, and coat them with plaster.... ⁸ And you shall write very clearly all the words of this law on these stones you have set up."

G. The Unfolding Development of Scripture

1. The ongoing office of prophet

Deuteronomy 18:15-19 The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him. ¹⁶ For this is what you asked of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, "Let us not hear the voice of the LORD our God nor see this great fire anymore, or we will die." ¹⁷ The LORD said to me: "What they say is good. ¹⁸ I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him. ¹⁹ If anyone does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will call him to account.

2. "The word of the Lord came..."

1 Samuel 3:10 The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

1 Samuel 3:20-21 And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognized that Samuel was attested as a prophet of the LORD. ²¹ The LORD continued to appear at Shiloh, and there he revealed himself to Samuel through his word.

1 Kings 17:2 Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah...

Jeremiah 1:4-5 The word of the LORD came to me, saying, ⁵ "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

3. God's word put in the mouth of the prophet

Jeremiah 1:6-10 "Ah, Sovereign LORD," I said, "I do not know how to speak; I am only a child." ⁷ But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a child.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you." ⁸ Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the LORD. ⁹ Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "Now, I have put my words in your mouth." ¹⁰ See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant."

4. The prophet's words written on a scroll

Jeremiah 36:1-2 In the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ² "Take a scroll and write on it all the words I have spoken to you concerning Israel, Judah and all the other nations from the time I began speaking to you in the reign of Josiah till now.

Baruch, the secretary for the prophet:

Jeremiah 36:4 So Jeremiah called Baruch son of Neriah, and while Jeremiah dictated all the words the LORD had spoken to him, Baruch wrote them on the scroll.

5. The original destroyed; a copy made

Jeremiah 36:21-24 The king [Jehoiakim, son of Josiah] sent Jehudi to get the scroll, and Jehudi brought it from the room of Elishama the secretary and read it to the king and all the officials standing beside him. ²² It was the ninth month and the king was sitting in the winter apartment, with a fire burning in the firepot in front of him. ²³ Whenever Jehudi had read three or four columns of the scroll, the king cut them off with a scribe's knife and threw them into the firepot, until the entire scroll was burned in the fire. ²⁴ The king and all his attendants who heard all these words showed no fear, nor did they tear their clothes.

Jeremiah 36:27-28 After the king burned the scroll containing the words that Baruch had written at Jeremiah's dictation, the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah:

²⁸ "Take another scroll and write on it all the words that were on the first scroll, which Jehoiakim king of Judah burned up.

Jeremiah 36:32 So Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to the scribe Baruch son of Neriah, and as Jeremiah dictated, Baruch wrote on it all the words of the scroll that Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire. And many similar words were added to them.

6. Other insights on the development of Old Testament scripture

Habakkuk 2:2-3 Then the LORD replied: "Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it. ³ For the revelation awaits an

appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay.

Ecclesiastes 12:9-12 Not only was the Teacher wise, but also he imparted knowledge to the people. He pondered and searched out and set in order many proverbs.¹⁰ The Teacher searched to find just the right words, and what he wrote was upright and true.¹¹ The words of the wise are like goads, their collected sayings like firmly embedded nails-- given by one Shepherd.¹² Be warned, my son, of anything in addition to them. Of making many books there is no end, and much study wears the body.

III. Christ's View of Scripture

A. All Christians Should Imitate Christ's View of Scripture

Matthew 5:18 I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.

Matthew 24:35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

Matthew 22:41-45 While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,⁴² "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" "The son of David," they replied.⁴³ He said to them, "How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him 'Lord'? For he says,⁴⁴ "'The Lord said to my Lord: 'Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.'"⁴⁵ If then David calls him 'Lord,' how can he be his son?"

John 10:35 the Scripture cannot be broken

B. No One Can Possibly Have a Higher View of Scripture Than This

CHRIST WOULD RATHER DIE THAN DISOBEY SCRIPTURE!!

Matthew 26:51-54 one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.⁵² "Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword."⁵³ Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?⁵⁴ But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?"

Jesus would rather die than break Scripture! In this, He stands alone atop the human race. There is not a human being in history who had a higher view of Scripture than Jesus Christ did. We prove that every time we sin, thus disobeying one of God's commands as recorded in Scripture. Even the holy martyrs, who died rather than denying Christ, still sinned at other points in their lives:

Hebrews 12:4 In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.

Jesus resisted sin to the point of shedding His own blood. Jesus' view of Scripture was that His life was forfeit to fulfill Scripture's prophecies. Our life ambition should be to rise ever upward to His standard in our estimation of the word of God.

IV. A Brief History of Unbelief in God's Word

A. Satan in the Garden

Genesis 3:1-5 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" ² *The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³ but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"* ⁴ *"You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman.* ⁵ *"For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."*

Three timeless Satanic attacks on the Word of God

1. Questioning if it really IS the Word of God: "Did God really say...???"
2. Contradicting the Word of God: "You will not die!" [total LIE!]
3. Speaking partial truth in the service of a lie: "God knows your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." [that us TRUE... but used falsely]

B. The Danger of False Teachers

Acts 20:30 Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.

C. Heresy in Every Generation of Church History

D. Modern Liberalism

1. European Liberalism:

- a. Enlightenment philosophy: "Age of Reason"... Rene Descartes (rationalism... methodical doubt; challenge all presuppositions... We can *think* our way to truth); Spinoza (God and nature are identical); David Hume: (skepticism, can knowledge even be obtained at all, whether from senses or reason?); Immanuel Kant (we can't really know something as it actually is, only as it appears to us... combination of rationalism (reason)

and empiricism (experience); God is basically unknowable; all things metaphysical are basically unknowable)

b. Enlightenment science: Isaac Newton: mechanistic view of the world, nature is quantifiable and predictable; growth of the modern scientific movement

c. Theological reactions: anti-supernaturalism... miracles are a violation of the laws of nature; old dogmas should be challenged and rejected if they don't make sense to us; deism and atheism starts to rise; the demise of the state-run church gave freedom to freethinkers to rebel openly and mock religion (like Voltaire)

d. Key religious thinkers: sought to harmonize the Bible and Christianity with these popular trends in culture

Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) sought to make Christianity appealing to its "cultured despisers," but ended up arguing that God can only be experienced through feeling, not reason.

Albrecht Ritschl (1822-1889) rejected this approach and said Christianity was based on history, but not the miraculous history of the Bible. Rather by modern methods of historical enquiry, the true story of Christ can be extracted. Ritschl denied the virgin birth and the Trinity, and pressed a Christian life of vigorous actions based on sound moral judgment.

German Higher Criticism: applying the scientific methodologies of historians and archaeology to the Bible text itself to determine the origin of the text, the philosophies of the writers, the worldview of the communities that originated the books of the Bible, free from any religious dogma of truth attached to the words of the Bible. The basic assumption is that the Bible is a purely human book, like any other book of antiquity. The effort to "demythologize" the Bible, and the "quest for the historical Jesus" rose out of these approaches

Darwinism: the rise of evolution in the 19th century obviously had massive impacts on these currents of theological schools that were seeking to harmonize Christianity with popular culture and science.

2. American liberalism

a. Unitarianism... universalism... deism all made significant inroads in American Christianity in the late 18th and early 19th centuries... but these movements generally "lost" and were evicted at that early stage from mainstream denominations

- b. HOWEVER... after 1870 or so, they started to win; milder liberal forces within churches started to make steady gains; by the late 19th century, Protestant liberalism was more and more dominant
- c. The rise of Fundamentalism in this era proves this to be so
- d. The hallmark of “modernism” was the insistence that Christian theology must adopt a sympathetic attitude toward secular culture and the rise of science and must strive to come to terms with it
- e. Pure liberalism sought a “kinder, friendlier” version of God than the perceived austere and terrifying God of Calvinists; they sought immanence at the expense of transcendence
- f. They tended to minimize the problem of sin and the need for salvation, and sought instead to solve social problems and human suffering
- g. Late 19th century liberals were optimistic about “progress” in light of evolution, and espoused very sentimental views of God and man
- h. After World War I, however, strong skepticism about human nature arose; Karl Barth’s “neo-orthodoxy” filled much of the gap, but was strongly skeptical about scripture, asserting it was fatally tainted by human sin and merely a record of human religious experience

E. The Battle for the Bible

1. The battle for biblical faithfulness has been going on throughout all of church history... God has always raised up people who will “contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints” (Jude 3). The battle against theological liberalism is no different
2. Charles Spurgeon, the “downgrade controversy” battled the slide toward liberalism in England (1887-1888)

“A new religion has been initiated, which is no more Christianity than chalk is cheese; and this religion, being destitute of moral honesty, palms itself off as the old faith with slight improvements, and on this plea usurps pulpits which were erected for gospel preaching. The Atonement is scouted, the inspiration of Scripture is derided, the Holy Spirit is degraded into an influence, the punishment of sin is turned into fiction, and the resurrection into a myth, and yet these enemies of our faith expect us to call them brethren and maintain a confederacy with them! ... Germany was made unbelieving by her preachers, and England is following in her tracks.”

3. Fundamentalism: the “fundamentals” of the faith published in a tract, 1910: biblical inerrancy, the deity of Jesus Christ, Christ’s virgin birth, Christ’s bodily resurrection from the dead, his personal return to earth

4. Fundamentalism vs. Modernism

5. J. Gresham Machen: *Christianity and Liberalism*

“...what the liberal theologian has retained after abandoning to the enemy one Christian doctrine after another is not Christianity at all, but a religion which is so entirely different from Christianity as to belong in a distinct category.”

i.e. “Liberalism” is not Christianity. They are two different things.

6. But liberalism, higher criticism, and modernism made consistent inroads in mainstream Christianity, and eventually even in evangelicalism... so evangelical leaders became increasingly alarmed

7. In 1976, Harold Lindsell, the editor of “Christianity Today” wrote *The Battle for the Bible*, sounding the alarm bell for evangelicals on the battle for inerrancy

8. In 1978, the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy was released after a three-day conference with key evangelical leaders

9. In 1979, the Southern Baptist Convention elected Adrian Rogers, an inerrantist, as President to begin the process of cleaning out liberalism from its seminaries

V. The Chicago Statement on Inerrancy (1978)

A. A Short Statement

1. God, who is Himself Truth and speaks truth only, has inspired Holy Scripture in order thereby to reveal Himself to lost mankind through Jesus Christ as Creator and Lord, Redeemer and Judge. Holy Scripture is God’s witness to Himself.

2. Holy Scripture, being God’s own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: it is to be believed, as God’s instruction, in all that it affirms, obeyed, as God’s command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God’s pledge, in all that it promises.

3. The Holy Spirit, Scripture’s divine Author, both authenticates it to us by His inward witness and opens our minds to understand its meaning.

4. Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives.

5. The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible's own; and such lapses bring serious loss to both the individual and the Church.

B. Affirmations and Denials

Article I

We affirm that the Holy Scriptures are to be received as the authoritative Word of God.

We deny that the Scriptures receive their authority from the Church, tradition, or any other human source.

Article II

We affirm that the Scriptures are the supreme written norm by which God binds the conscience, and that the authority of the Church is subordinate to that of Scripture.

We deny that Church creeds, councils, or declarations have authority greater than or equal to the authority of the Bible.

Article III

We affirm that the written Word in its entirety is revelation given by God.

We deny that the Bible is merely a witness to revelation, or only becomes revelation in encounter, or depends on the responses of men for its validity.

Article IV

We affirm that God who made mankind in His image has used language as a means of revelation.

We deny that human language is so limited by our creatureliness that it is rendered inadequate as a vehicle for divine revelation. We further deny that the corruption of human culture and language through sin has thwarted God's work of inspiration.

Article V

We affirm that God's revelation in the Holy Scriptures was progressive.

We deny that later revelation, which may fulfill earlier revelation, ever corrects or contradicts it. We further deny that any normative revelation has been given since the completion of the New Testament writings.

Article VI

We affirm that the whole of Scripture and all its parts, down to the very words of the original, were given by divine inspiration.

We deny that the inspiration of Scripture can rightly be affirmed of the whole without the parts, or of some parts but not the whole.

Article VII

We affirm that inspiration was the work in which God by His Spirit, through human writers, gave us His Word. The origin of Scripture is divine. The mode of divine inspiration remains largely a mystery to us.

We deny that inspiration can be reduced to human insight, or to heightened states of consciousness of any kind.

Article VIII

We affirm that God in His Work of inspiration utilized the distinctive personalities and literary styles of the writers whom He had chosen and prepared.

We deny that God, in causing these writers to use the very words that He chose, overrode their personalities.

Article IX

We affirm that inspiration, though not conferring omniscience, guaranteed true and trustworthy utterance on all matters of which the Biblical authors were moved to speak and write.

We deny that the finitude or fallenness of these writers, by necessity or otherwise, introduced distortion or falsehood into God's Word.

Article X

We affirm that inspiration, strictly speaking, applies only to the autographic text of Scripture, which in the providence of God can be ascertained from available manuscripts with great accuracy. We further affirm that copies and translations of Scripture are the Word of God to the extent that they faithfully represent the original.

We deny that any essential element of the Christian faith is affected by the absence of the autographs. We further deny that this absence renders the assertion of Biblical inerrancy invalid or irrelevant.

Article XI

We affirm that Scripture, having been given by divine inspiration, is infallible, so that, far from misleading us, it is true and reliable in all the matters it addresses.

We deny that it is possible for the Bible to be at the same time infallible and errant in its assertions. Infallibility and inerrancy may be distinguished, but not separated.

Article XII

We affirm that Scripture in its entirety is inerrant, being free from all falsehood, fraud, or deceit.

We deny that Biblical infallibility and inerrancy are limited to spiritual, religious, or redemptive themes, exclusive of assertions in the fields of history and science. We further deny that scientific hypotheses about earth history may properly be used to overturn the teaching of Scripture on creation and the flood.

Article XIII

We affirm the propriety of using inerrancy as a theological term with reference to the complete truthfulness of Scripture.

We deny that it is proper to evaluate Scripture according to standards of truth and error that are alien to its usage or purpose. We further deny that inerrancy is negated by Biblical phenomena such as a lack of modern technical precision, irregularities of grammar or spelling, observational descriptions of nature, the reporting of falsehoods, the use of hyperbole and round numbers, the topical arrangement of material, variant selections of material in parallel accounts, or the use of free citations.

Article XIV

We affirm the unity and internal consistency of Scripture.

We deny that alleged errors and discrepancies that have not yet been resolved vitiate the truth claims of the Bible.

Article XV

We affirm that the doctrine of inerrancy is grounded in the teaching of the Bible about inspiration.

We deny that Jesus' teaching about Scripture may be dismissed by appeals to accommodation or to any natural limitation of His humanity.

Article XVI

We affirm that the doctrine of inerrancy has been integral to the Church's faith throughout its history.

We deny that inerrancy is a doctrine invented by Scholastic Protestantism, or is a reactionary position postulated in response to negative higher criticism.

Article XVII We affirm that the Holy Spirit bears witness to the Scriptures, assuring believers of the truthfulness of God's written Word. We deny that this witness of the Holy Spirit operates in isolation from or against Scripture.

Article XVIII

We affirm that the text of Scripture is to be interpreted by grammatico-historical exegesis, taking account of its literary forms and devices, and that Scripture is to interpret Scripture.

We deny the legitimacy of any treatment of the text or quest for sources lying behind it that leads to relativizing, dehistoricizing, or discounting its teaching, or rejecting its claims to authorship.

Article XIX

We affirm that a confession of the full authority, infallibility, and inerrancy of Scripture is vital to a sound understanding of the whole of the Christian faith. We further affirm that such confession should lead to increasing conformity to the image of Christ.

We deny that such confession is necessary for salvation. However, we further deny that inerrancy can be rejected without grave consequences both to the individual and to the Church.