

very occasionally by the reappearance of the dead), but which much more frequently have been immediately given (by prophets and by apostles, and, more weightily than by either, by the incarnate Word). This, then, is the distinction I would insist upon, that inerrancy pertains to revelation, but not necessarily to inspiration. By so simple a distinction, the loftiest views of the supremacy of Scripture are safe-guarded, at the same time that no such burden is put upon the shoulders of the thoughtful as the absolute inerrancy of all Scripture.

*What I wish further to say falls under two points. On the one hand, I desire to point out how unimportant absolute inerrancy is, and on the other hand, I would insist that serious errancy is unproven.*

Not for a moment can I sympathize with the cant refusal to believe in an infallible book. A rational being, say some, can no more pin his faith to an infallible book than to an infallible man; and it is added, that if the Reformation shook the tyranny of the infallible man to its base, the New Reformation is causing the tyranny of the infallible book to totter. If it be meant, by such an objection, that faith is not credulity, neither is it blind submission to authority, there is much to be said for the objection, though even then it is unfortunately worded. For where lies that real stress of this objection—that rational men cannot pin their faith to an infallible book? Does it lie upon “book,” or upon “infallible?” Is the refusal to be taught by a book as such, or to receive infallible instruction? Surely no rational man objects to learn from a book which has anything to teach, just as no rational man refuses to be taught by a man who has anything to say worth listening to; while, as for infallibility, inerrant belief is the very thing every rational man is in search of. Moreover, to one infallible thing every rational man cannot but submit—infallible truth. Where truth is in question, there can be no liberty of private judgment. Truth, so to speak, is a great tyrant. Truth does not beg and pray its acceptance. Assure yourself that anything is truth, and there is an end of all freedom to receive or reject. Accept truth you must or be demonstrated irrational. Thus there is no possible objection which can lie against being taught by a true book or a true man. Further, prove a man or a book sometimes fallible, and you do not remove either book or man from the category of teachers. Whatever truth there is in fallible book or man the wise take with thankfulness. Though it grow with the tares of error, the wheat of truth is ever eagerly sought after. So whatever truth even an errant Bible held could not but be welcome to the rational man. Moreover, in times of fierce controversy like these, he who believes most strongly that the errancy of Scripture is relatively unimportant, will retain a quiet and confident mind; and whoever can hold firmly, after close inquiry, and after much intimacy with what has been said against the Bible, to the inerrancy of revelation, though he do not believe in the inerrancy of inspiration, will also possess his soul in calm and peace.