

# **A Baptist and His Bible**

**Pastor Jerry Vines**

First Baptist Church  
Jacksonville, Florida

## **Foreword**

This message by Jerry Vines, "A Baptist and His Bible," is a wonderful example of scholarship, conviction and truth presented from a heart on fire, and a heart in love with Jesus and His Word.

I had the joy of presiding over the meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in June 1987 in St. Louis, Missouri, when this dynamic sermon was first preached. Sitting where I was on the platform, I could sense the impact it was having on the hearers. The sermon was punctuated with amens, applauses, and even standing ovations. It was very obvious that Dr. Vines was causing sympathetic vibrations in the hearts and lives of people to whom the Word of God is precious.

My own heart was deeply stirred to have affirmed one more time that the rank and file of Southern Baptists are people of The Book. We may be diversified in many ways, but real Baptists are united in the Word of the Lord and the Lord of that Word.

You, dear reader, will be informed, encouraged, and fortified by this timely message on God's timeless Word. May God bless it to your heart.

**Dr. Adrian Rogers**  
Southern Baptist Convention  
President 1987-88

## A BAPTIST AND HIS BIBLE

II Timothy 3:14-4:13

### Preface

One of the greatest honors the Lord has ever given me was the assignment to preach the annual sermon at the Southern Baptist Convention in 1987. To my way of thinking, some of God's greatest preachers on earth are in Southern Baptist pulpits. To be asked by them to preach the annual sermon is truly a humbling experience.

Through the weeks and months of preparation for my message I came to the conviction that I should speak about one Baptist preacher's view of the Bible. Out of my study came the message, "A Baptist and His Bible." Actually, the sermon is my personal testimony and heart's tribute to God's precious Word. As Baptists we believe every individual believer has the right to come to the Bible for himself and be led by the Holy Spirit concerning its message and meaning.

In the time which was allotted to me at the '87 Convention I was unable to deliver the entire message. Many have suggested it would be helpful to put the full text of my message in booklet form. This I have done. I hope the complete text will be a blessing to you.

My desire is that this sermon be used of the Lord to create confidence in God's supernaturally, verbally, totally inspired Word. I also earnestly hope that it will be used to resolve some of the controversy among us concerning the Bible's inspiration.

Jerry Vines

In beautiful human language resplendent with divine revelation Paul sets before us the Bible's doctrine concerning itself. He quickly takes us to the Counseling Room and shows us the intention of the Bible; the Classroom and shows us the inspiration of the Bible; then the Crisis Room and shows us the implications of the Bible.

I am interested that Paul refers to the Bible as "the Holy Scriptures." The word combination is unusual, found only here in the New Testament: ta hiera grammata. Paul normally uses the word graphe (Scriptures) as in verse 16 or ho logos, the word as in 4:2. But here he uses grammata which sometimes refers to the letters of the words themselves or to the document. The word for holy is also unusual. Not the normal hagios but hiera. This word is found only one other time. In I Corinthians 9:13 reference is made to the "sacred things of the temple." The sacred things were the utensils set apart for God in temple services. The word means sacred or pertaining to God. Only of the Bible can it be said that it is the Sacred Scriptures. The Bible is the only book set apart for God's special uses. This term attaches great reverence to the Bible.

"The Holy Scripture." Paul sounds like a Baptist! A Presbyterian, a Pentecostal and a Baptist preacher were discussing what denomination Paul would join should he return to earth. The Presbyterian said, "I am sure he would join the Presbyterians. He would love our scholarship." The Pentecostal said, "Oh, no, he would be a Pentecostal, praise God! Read his doxologies." The Baptist preacher was silent. The others asked, "What do you think?" The Baptist preacher replied, "Oh, I don't think he would change!"

"The Holy Scriptures." That is Baptist talk. Wherever you find a Baptist, somewhere nearby you will find a Bible. That Baptist will speak of the Bible in his hands with respectful tones. Baptists are early taught to love and respect the Bible. On a hot summer day, at Vacation Bible School, little Baptist feet carry little Baptist bodies into the awesome church auditorium. Billy Baptist stands before his little classmates and with trembling hands holds a Bible. Little Baptist voices sing, "Holy Bible, Book divine, precious treasure, thou art mine." Baptists are known as a people of The Book. We are a Bible-reading, Bible-believing, Bible-loving and Bible-sharing people.

With Paul's words to young Timothy to guide us, think with me for a while about a Baptist and his Bible. First, he takes us into the Counseling Room and shows us:

## I. The INTENTION of the Bible. vs 14-15

*But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned...*

That's continuation. The Bible is intended to help us live consistent Christian lives, moving to maturity. *...the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of....* That's conviction. The Bible is intended to place our lives on a firm, assured foundation. *And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation....* That's conversion. The Bible is primarily intended to bring people to salvation.

That's what the Bible did for young Timothy. When I was a boy most Baptist churches had a TEL Class named for Timothy, Eunice and Lois. His was a heritage of faith. Each day his godly mother, Eunice, and his godly grandmother, Lois, would take the sacred Scriptures and prepare the day's Bible lesson for Timothy. "What Bible lesson shall we teach tiny Tim today?" They were preparing his little heart. Then on a day Paul preached at First Baptist Church, Lystra. At the invitation time down the aisle came Timothy. He gave his hand to Paul and his heart to Jesus. What a testimony was his—from his mother's knee to his Master's knee! I can imagine a deacon went home that day and someone asked, "Did anything happen at church today?" "Not much. We had a long-winded preacher. Oh, yes, Eunice's boy, Timothy, joined the church. Not much." Not much? Paul's traveling companion was converted. Not much? The recipient of two Bible letters was born again. Not much? The angels in heaven were rejoicing because another sinner was converted.

That's what the Bible is intended to do—to make wise unto salvation. To know the Bible is not synonymous with salvation, but it does point us to the One who can save us. This is why Psalm 19:7 says, *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.* And John 20:31 says, *But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.* The vehicle of the Written Word brings us to the Living Word and thus to salvation.

Wise unto salvation. How smart do I have to be to be saved? First, I have to know I am a great sinner. The Bible confirms what experience screams in my soul. *All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.* (Romans 3:23) Mary Baker Eddy claimed that her book, Science, Health

and the Scriptures, could cure appendicitis. I don't know about that, but this book can cure "devilitis!"

Second, I have to know that God has provided a great Savior. The Bible points to Jesus. He is the central theme of the Bible. Acts 10:43 says, *To Him give all the prophets witness....* The Old Testament predicts Him; the New Testament presents Him. The Old Testament anticipates Him; the New Testament announces Him. If you want to know about the stars, read a book on astronomy. If you want to know about the Bright and Morning Star, read the Bible. If you want to know about the ages of the rocks, read geology; if you want to know about the Rock of Ages, read the Bible. If you want to know about the roses and the lilies of the fields, read botany; if you want to know about the Rose of Sharon and The Lily of the Valley, read the Bible.

I find my Lord in the Bible,  
Wherever I choose to look.  
He is the theme of the Bible,  
The center and heart of The Book.  
He is the Rose of Sharon,  
He is the Lily fair.  
Wherever I open my Bible,  
The Lord of The Book is there.

This is why Acts 4:12 says, *Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

What other book can change lives? Did you ever hear a man say, "I was a thief. One day I read a math book and it really straightened me out." Or, "I was impure, I read in a geometry book, and it surely cleaned me up." Or, "I was a liar. I read a book on anatomy and I have been telling the truth ever since." Or, "I was a drunk. I read a chemistry book and it sobered me up." But I can take you places where I have preached this Book and show you drunkards made sober, liars made truthful and adulterers made pure. James 1:21 says, *Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.* There is no debate here. We all understand what the Bible is intended to do.

Because we understand the Bible's intention, Baptists get concerned when there is any hint of attack upon it. We get upset when there is any undermining of its authority, questioning of its reliability or denying of its accuracy. This Book has to do with man's eternal destiny. To attack the

Bible is like tampering with medicine for a sick man; like poisoning the bread of a hungry man.

The noted preacher, Henry Ward Beecher, was invited to be the guest of an Atheist Club presided over by Robert Ingersoll, the noted infidel. He went and listened to a brilliant speech by Ingersoll, who attacked Christianity unmercifully. Ingersoll sat down amidst thunderous applause. He turned to Beecher and invited him to say a few words in defense of the Bible. Beecher rose slowly to his feet: "Gentlemen, forgive me if I seem a bit shaken. I saw something shocking on the way to the meeting. I saw a poor, blind man with a cane, groping at the curbside. A young lad came along, offering to help him across the street. As he took the blind man's arm a hulk of a man came along, bullied the boy, broke the blind man's cane, pushed the blind man in the mud and went on his way laughing." A silence fell over the meeting. Then Ingersoll leaped to his feet, eyes blazing: "The bully," he roared, "Do you know who he is, Beecher?" "Yes, I know who he is. It is you! Mankind is poor, blind, and wretched. He has little enough to lean on as it is and few to help him on his way. What do you do, Ingersoll? You come along, break his faith in the Bible, push him in the mud and go on your way laughing. I tell you, Ingersoll, you are the man!"

How can anyone say we must trust our soul to Christ for eternity, then turn around and try to obliterate the very document which tells us about him? We honor the book and earnestly contend for it because we know what it is intended to do.

Next, Paul takes us to the Classroom and shows us:

## II. The INSPIRATION of the Bible. vs. 16-17

For a while we are going to step into the Classroom. I am so thankful to God for the men who taught me during my seminary days. I am grateful for Dr. Gray Allison who instilled in my heart a burning desire to win the lost to Christ. I will never forget the day Dr. George Harrison showed me the beauty of Christ in the tabernacle. I left his classroom with glory in my soul. I shall never forget the week Dr. J. Wash spent meticulously dismantling the documentary hypothesis. At the conclusion of the week, this godly professor, with tears in his eyes, raised his Bible above his head and said, "Young men, the documentary hypothesis makes your Bible nothing more than a scrapbook!" I wish every young man called to preach could sit in classrooms with teachers such as these.

I return to the classroom again. Not as a scholar, but as a student. Not as a teacher, but as a learner. I am trying to understand the inspiration

of my Bible. What I am after is what someone has called a "simple biblicism."

With breathtaking brevity of language, Paul says, *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God*. Actually he uses only three words in the original text: pasa, graphe, theopneustos. The last of these words, theopneustos, is translated by five words in the King James, *given by inspiration of God*. This is actually one compound Greek word, coming from theos, God, and pneo, to breath. The word seems to have been coined by the Holy Spirit to give us a glimpse into the mystery of inspiration. The word is a verbal adjective used in a passive sense. The emphasis is that God alone is the agent in the Bible's inspiration. The Bible is the product of the creative breath of God. "God-breathed." That's the best way to translate it. Not man-breathed; God-breathed.

A. God-breathed. This means SUPERNATURAL inspiration.

"All Scripture is God-breathed." The Bible owes its origin and contents to the divine breath of God. In creation God picked up the lifeless clay that was Adam, *breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul*. (Genesis 2:7) In inspiration, God picked up the lifeless pages of man's composition and the Bible became a living book. Hebrews 4:12 (RSV) says, *For the Word of God is living....* This book pulsates with life. It breathes, bleeds, sings and weeps. Charles H. Spurgeon said, "If you cut this book into a thousand pieces, every part would grow and live." Just as a little child puts a seashell to its ear and can hear the blowing of the waves in the sea, so we with childlike faith hear the breath of God blowing through the pages of the Bible.

Supernatural inspiration doesn't eliminate the human element in the Bible. The personalities of the human authors are everywhere apparent. We see the burning sarcasm of Isaiah. We witness the moving pathos of Jeremiah, the deep philosophy of John and the crisp logic of Paul. Amos writes like a farmer, Simon Peter like a fisherman. Luke writes like a doctor, James like a preacher. Each writer was sovereignly prepared by the Holy Spirit to be the ideal penman for that portion of Scripture. Does God want a selection of Psalms like David's? He prepares a David to write them! Does He want a series of letters like Paul's? He prepares a Paul to write them!

Human authorship must never be separated from the divine inspiration of the Bible. The human aspect is only one aspect under the category of its divine character. Actually there is a dual authorship in the Bible. II Peter 1:21 says, *...Holy men of God spake....* Yes, but, *as they were moved (borne along) by the Holy Spirit*. Like a vessel gently carried along by the wind,



so the Holy Spirit was the guiding, moving force in the Bible's composition. Acts 1:16 makes this dual authorship very plain: *This Scripture must needs have been fulfilled which the Holy Spirit by the mouth of David spake.* The Holy Spirit is speaking in Scripture. He speaks by the mouth of David.

The tendency today in much scholarship is to so emphasize the human authorship of the Bible that the divine is minimized. We are told that since the Bible is touched by fallible, error-prone men, it must be fallible and prone to err. The logic doesn't follow. If God can overcome man's tendency to err at one point, why not at every point. The divine human nature of the Bible is analogous to the divine human nature of Christ. Christ was fully God and fully man, yet, without sin. He was touched by our humanity, but not tainted by our depravity. The Bible was given by men superintended by the Holy Spirit so that what they wrote was without error. "God-breathed." A God of truth does not breath error.

Others tell us that the Bible is accurate on salvation matters but not on matters of science or history. Obviously, the Bible is not a science book. But, when it touches on science, it does so truthfully. Neither is the Bible a history book. But, its historical statements are reliable. If you can't believe what the Bible says about the creation, how can you believe what it says about salvation? If you can't trust it concerning history, how can you trust it concerning eternity? We would do well to ponder the words of Jesus: *If I have told you earthly things, and you believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?* (John 3:12) Take, for example, a physics book. A physics book is not a math book. However, there are mathematical statements in it. If I constantly find mathematical errors in the physics text, how can I trust its statements concerning physics?

Further, how do we separate salvation matters from other matters? Take the virgin birth. If the virgin birth is not historical and biological fact, then it is theological fiction. Or consider the resurrection of Christ. If there was not a time when and a place where the resurrection occurred, what kind of resurrection was it? Salvation matters are so embedded in historical matters that you cannot consistently attribute inspiration to the one and deny it to the other. Every line, every sentence, every word and every letter was placed in our Bible by the supernatural inspiration of God.

B. God-breathed. This means VERBAL inspiration.

"All Scripture is God-breathed." The word is graphe, meaning from grapho, to write. The obvious reference is to the words. The words of the Bible are God-breathed. Some tell us that the words are not necessarily inspired,

but only the thoughts. I am no scholar, but no one has ever explained to me how it is possible to have thoughts without words. Try it sometime. Think a thought without words. What kind of thought did you think? Were no words involved?

Words are vehicles of thought. I heard about two Indians talking. The first one said, "Ugh." The second replied, "Ugh." The first one said, "Ugh." The second replied, "Ugh, ugh." The first one said, "Don't change the subject!"

Remove the words from the page and the thoughts disappear. There can be no music without notes; no math without numbers; no geology without rocks; no thoughts without words. I Corinthians 2:13 sets forth the verbal inspiration of the Bible: *Which things we also speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which (words) the Holy Spirit teaches.* Where do you find words the Holy Spirit teaches? In the Bible.

Did Jesus teach verbal inspiration? You decide. *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.* (Matthew 4:4) Not some of the words, nor part of the words, but every word. *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.* (Matthew 24:35)

Jesus goes further than that. Matthew 5:18 is the strongest statement about inspiration ever made. He begins by saying, "verily." This is a strong word of affirmation. Then he says that not "one jot" will pass from the law. A jot is the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet. It is merely a breath mark, the stroke of a pen. Nor "one tittle" shall pass away. A tittle is a little horn on a Hebrew letter. It is only about 1/32nd of an inch. Don't forget your tittle! You can change a Hebrew letter by its omission. When I was taking Hebrew I tried to keep flies off my test paper. I might mistake a fly's leg for a tittle and flunk the test! Jesus also said, *In no wise shall pass from the law.* Actually a double negative is used here for emphasis. You could read the statement this way: "under no circumstances never." Now, let's put it all together. Jesus said, *Until heaven and earth pass away the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet and the smallest part of a letter shall under no circumstance never pass from the law till all be fulfilled.* Such is our Lord's view of inspiration.

We love the words of the Bible: salvation, justification, sanctification; faith, love, hope. "Sing them over again to me, wonderful words of life. Let me more of their beauty see, wonderful words of life."

### C. God-breathed. This means TOTAL inspiration.

"All Scripture is God-breathed." pasa. Dr. Herschel Hobbs has given the best explanation of the meaning of the word pasa I have read. He says, "It means that every single part of the whole is God-breathed." That's where I stand. That's where Southern Baptists have always stood. Jed and his wife were riding the pick-up to town on a Saturday morning. His wife turned to him and said, "Jed, when we first married, we didn't sit this far apart." Jed looked up and said, "I ain't moved." I'm standing where Southern Baptists have always stood. When Southern Baptists stand where they should be standing they'll be standing where I'm standing! We affirm total inspiration.

At the turn of the century an old thief quietly entered the country. He had already robbed Germany of spiritual authority and moral conscience. He first appeared in the Garden of Eden, calling into question the authorship, accuracy, and acceptability of God's Word. This old thief began entering and robbing in the north, leaving a trail of stripped denominations, faith-depleted schools and powerless churches.

He moved steadily down the eastern coast. A very crafty thief, he appealed to man's intellectual pride. His goal? To snatch the Bible from the man in the pew. He travels under many aliases. I want to unmask him. The name of the old thief is Destructive Criticism. Not reverent, believing scholarship, but destructive, faith-wrecking criticism. That criticism which clips faith's wings with reason's scissors. That kind of destructive scholarship which submits the warm wonder of the Word to the cold, merciless analysis of unbelief.

This old thief is a demolition expert. He has many tools in his tool chest. None are constructive; all are destructive. He has a heretical hammer, driving into the Bible the nails of anti-supernaturalism and the anti-miraculous. He explains away every account of miracle as natural phenomena or primitive folklore. He has a critical saw, dividing Scripture and the Word of God. He puts asunder what God has joined together. According to the old thief some of the Bible is, some isn't, the Word of God. The Bible is only inspired in spots. Only those who use his tools can tell you which spots are the inspired spots! He also has a cynical crowbar, ripping the Bible from the hands and hearts of simple believers.

But, old thief, your tools are fatally flawed. Your heretical hammer won't do. To reject the miraculous and supernatural in the Bible is to deny the Bible its own nature. You can't kick God out of His Book anymore than you can kick Him out of His universe. I believe in the miracles of the

Bible. I really believe Jonah was swallowed by a great fish. How the fish stood him, I don't know, but I believe it. I do believe Daniel survived a night in the lion's den. He had a lion's mane for a pillow and used its tail to swish away mosquitoes. Early the next morning the frantic king called, "Daniel, are you there?" "Yes, what's for breakfast?"

I don't have all the answers to all the difficulties in the Bible. I can't place my peanut brain alongside God's infinite mind and not expect to have some problems. But, my list of difficulties has been progressively getting smaller. When I run across a difficulty in the Bible, I do not suppose the error is in the text, but rather in my understanding. "Where did Cain get his wife?" I don't know and I don't care. If she suited Cain, she suits me. I don't understand all the Bible, but I believe it all. I believe it all from Genesis to Maps!

Old thief, your cynical saw is dull. You can't separate the Word of God from Scripture. Note that Paul uses Scriptures (3:15), Scripture (3:16), and the Word (4:22) interchangeably in this passage. When Scripture speaks—God speaks. Jesus said, *Thy word is truth*. (John 17:17) Not, contains truth, but is truth. When you try to separate the Word of God from Scripture, there is no stopping place. The Bible cannot be put on trial every few days while theologians hold symposiums to pool their ignorance.

When you force the Bible to pay tribute at every little "toll gate" of rational opinion, eventually you give away every part of the Bible. You begin by giving up the Genesis account of creation; next you dissect the historical parts of the Bible; then the miracles have to go; before it is over you are picking and choosing from the very words of Jesus. Perhaps you have heard about the Jesus seminar. This group of scholars is planning to put out a color-coded New Testament. The intention is to show us which of the words in the New Testament were actually the words of Jesus and which were put in His mouth by the church. Have you heard about the garbage barge in the Atlantic? I would suggest this color-coded New Testament be put on the garbage barge so all who purchase it will recognize it for the garbage it is. When you start trying to separate the Word from Scripture you wind up with a fictitious creation, three Isaiahs, exaggerated miracles and a speechless Jesus. Before it is over you have a Bible full of holes instead of a whole Bible!

Old thief, your critical crowbar won't do. This is the most serious flaw of all. Only the so-called critical scholars are supposed to be qualified to explain what the Bible means. At the Inerrancy Conference in Ridgcrest in May, 1987, Clark Pinnock was quoted as saying to reporters, "Adrian Rogers does not really know the Bible and Roy Honeycutt does. How do

you deal with people who don't know the Bible?" (Florida Baptist Witness, June, 1987) Let me say, first of all, I do not believe Roy Honeycutt would ever say that. He is too much a gentleman. Further, I don't think Dr. Honeycutt would believe that. Poor Adrian Rogers. He doesn't have to be a Bible ignoramus all his life. Why doesn't he subscribe to my "tape of the month" plan! Look carefully at what is suggested in Pinnock's statement: The preacher doesn't know the Bible; the professor does. The two are pitted against each other. Do you know what that sounds like to me? The priesthood of the scholar. Baptists affirm the priesthood of the believer. We do not believe our preachers and professors should be pitted against each other, but be in partnership with one another, helping us find out what God has said in the Bible. That's the Baptist way and I like it!

We believe the Bible was given for common men. The Holy Spirit can take an unlettered man and give him amazing insight into the Bible. One of the greatest Bible students I ever knew was a man named Ed Shellhorse. Ed never owned a car until he retired. He worked all his life in a fabric mill. He read the Bible many hours each night after work. His insight into the Scriptures was amazing. The same Holy Spirit who inspired common men to write the Bible can illuminate common men to understand it.

I must make a choice. On one side is the old thief, destructive criticism. On the other side is the infallible Son of the Living God. What about the stated authors of Bible books? For instance, Moses and the Pentateuch? The old thief says, Moses could not possibly have written it, because writing was unknown in that day. The Lord Jesus says, *For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings how shall ye believe my words?* (John 5:46-47)

Were Adam and Eve really persons? The old thief says they were merely representative and never existed in fact. The Lord Jesus says, *Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female.* (Matthew 19:4)

Did the miracles of the Bible actually occur? For instance, the ark and the flood? The old thief says this was merely a local legend which found its way into the Bible. The Lord Jesus says, *They were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.* (Luke 17:27)

Is the Bible totally inspired? The old thief says only the salvation parts. The Lord Jesus says, *O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:* (I didn't say it, Jesus did. If you don't believe all the prophets said, you have a head and a heart problem) *and beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scripture*

*the things concerning Himself.* Jesus affirms every major section of the Old Testament. He quotes from the first chapter of Genesis and the last chapter of Malachi. Virtually everything the old thief denies Jesus affirms. When you read the words of Jesus, it's as if He anticipated every modern attack against the Bible. At no time did he ever raise the slightest suspicion concerning the Scriptures.

The matter of the total inspiration of the Bible must be decided on the basis of lordship, not scholarship. I do not mean by this that it is unscholarly to believe in total inspiration.

Robert Dick Wilson was professor of semitic languages at Princeton Theological Seminary. He was considered the greatest biblical linguist of modern times. To answer the destructive critics he learned all the cognate languages of the Bible, and all the languages in which the critics had written. He learned Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic, French, German, Latin, Egyptian, Coptic, Syrian. He made himself at home in 45 languages and dialects. To answer a single sentence of a noted critic, he read all the extant ancient literature of the period under discussion in numerous languages. He collated no less than 100,000 citations. From the material he got at the basic facts, which when known, proved the critic was wrong! Critics then and now can't handle him. This is what he said: "After forty-five years of scholarly research and biblical textual studies and language study, I have come to the conclusion that no man knows enough to assail the truthfulness of the Old Testament." (Knights Illustrations for Today, page 22) Yet, I repeat, ultimately the question of total inspiration must be decided on the basis of lordship, not scholarship. The decision must be one of the heart, not of the head.

I don't know about you, but I have heard enough from the old thief. I feel like the dear old grandmother who couldn't hear well. Her grandchildren insisted she go to the doctor. The doctor said, "I can solve your problem. All you need is a minor operation and you'll hear fine." Grandmother said: "There'll be no operation. I'm seventy-nine years old and I've heard enough!" I will study my Bible with more reverent, faith-building methods. I will study it textually, historically, grammatically, contextually, theologically and practically. I will study it on the basis of a "simple biblicism" which never calls into question the supernatural, verbal, or total inspiration of the Bible. Let the critics pick over the bones of the Bible. Bible-believing Baptists will continue to feast on the meat of the Word.

Finally, Paul takes us to the Crisis Room and shows us:



### III. The IMPLICATIONS of the Bible. vs 4:1-13

What one believes about the Bible's intention and inspiration has certain implications. From these verses in chapter four let me mention just a few of these implications. The Bible has:

#### A. EXPOSITIONAL Implications.

"Preach the Word," says Paul. Preach it faithfully, as a herald declares the message of his king; preach it incessantly, in season and out of season; preach it effectively, reprove, rebuke, exhort; preach it persistently, even though men might not endure sound doctrine.

Preaching is central in the worship of Baptist churches. Go into the average Baptist church on Sunday and you will find a pulpit in the middle. Chances are you will find a Baptist preacher standing with a Bible in his hand, preaching from the top of his head, the bottom of his heart and probably to the top of his lungs! I really believe there is no preaching like Southern Baptist preaching. The best preachers in America are in the pulpits of our Southern Baptist churches. Did you hear about the Southern Baptist preacher having coffee with his wife on a Monday morning? He was feeling good about his sermons the previous day. He leaned back and with a sigh said, "You know, there are only a few great preachers left." "Yes," his wife replied, "And there is one less than you think there is."

What the preacher believes about the Bible is crucial to the task of exposition. A low view of inspiration erodes the very foundation of preaching. Decide the Bible is not totally the Word of God and there will be no responsibility to study its text minutely and to preach its message authoritatively. Our most famous Southern Baptist evangelist, Billy Graham, punctuates his sermons with the now well-known phrase, "the Bible says." Obviously, the source of his authority and power is "thus saith the Lord."

I was interested to read again the account of the building of Solomon's temple. The whole thing went up without a fuss. Wouldn't you like to see Baptist churches build something without a fuss? The stones, hewed under ground, fit exactly. When the temple was dedicated hundreds of animals were sacrificed. A great white-robed choir and a magnificent orchestra performed. When it was all done they took the old Ark of the Covenant and put it in the Holy of Holies of the new temple. They stayed with the old ark. We don't need a new Bible. My preacher brother, preach the old Book, it will do the job. I think of so many dear people who go to church hungry and are given only bones to gnaw. People want to hear

again the old, old truths from the old, old Book.

Though its cover is worn,  
And its pages are torn,  
And though places bear traces of tears.  
Yet, more precious than gold,  
Is this Book worn and old  
That can shatter and scatter our fears.

Preacher man, I'm going to hit you with a hard lick. A sweet Quaker brother found a burglar in his home. There the burglar stood, arms full of stuff, ready to run. The Quaker cocked both triggers of his double barreled gun and said, "I would not hurt thee for any thing, but I'm about to shoot where thou standest!" I'm getting ready to shoot where you stand. If you don't believe the Bible, don't take a salary for preaching it. If you don't believe the Bible, do the world a favor and get a milk route. You will do more good. Our people come in on Sunday from a world of cynicism and doubt and unbelief. They have enough question marks in their lives; what they need are some exclamation points!

My days in college were great days. However, I had to make a decision about some of the things I was hearing concerning the Bible. I knew I would never be as scholarly or smart as those professors who were questioning the authority of the Bible. Thirty-one years ago now, as an eighteen year old boy, I decided to accept the Bible by faith and try to preach it. For me, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. I know the Bible is the Word of God.

I know the Bible was sent from God,  
The old as well as the new.  
Divinely inspired the whole way through,  
I know the Bible is true.

The Bible has:

#### B. EVANGELICAL Implications. vs. 4:5

Paul says, "Do the work of an evangelist." Not all have the gift of the evangelist, but all should do the work of evangelism. Evangelism and missions are at the heart of all Southern Baptists do. Southern Baptists became great because of preachers and missionaries and evangelists and

denominational leaders and lay people who carried New Testaments into the homes of lost people and led them to Christ. Our problems started the day we got away from personal witnessing. Every preacher and layman, denomination servant and scholar, missionary and institutional representative should do the work of an evangelist.

You can't have doubts about the Bible and be a soul-winner at the same time. The evangelist can't evangelize if he has misgivings about his evangel. As you go into the homes of the lost, what you believe about the Bible is absolutely crucial.

Step with me into a modest home. The carpet is smelly; beer cans are scattered around; the family is holding together by a thread. We are looking into the face of a man whose eternal destiny is on the line. He is an alcoholic; his son is on drugs; his girl is pregnant. "Sir, let me share with you some verses from Romans. But we are not sure Paul wrote it. Maybe the disciples forged his name to lend credibility to their work. This book of Romans says, *all have sinned*. We are sinners because of the fall of Adam and Eve in Eden. But we aren't sure there was a garden of Eden or that Adam and Eve ever existed. It also says, *Christ died for our sins*. But don't make more of that than you should. He died to set an example for you to follow. He is reported to have said, *Come unto me and I will give you rest*. Could I interest you in having an existential encounter with the spirit of Jesus which is alive in the universe somewhere?" The man replies, "No thanks; but if you have the phone numbers of AA, Drug Rehab or Planned Parenthood, I would like them."

If you don't have a trustworthy Bible, you are out of business in the homes of lost people. Let's get on with our evangelical imperative. Let's fill the highways and byways with Baptists and their Bibles, sharing the good news with a lost world.

The Bible has:

### C. ESCHATOLOGICAL Implications. vs. 4:6-13

Paul's thoughts now turn eschatological, to last things. Not prophetically, but personally. He is facing his own death. *I am ready to be offered* (poured out like a drink offering)...*the time for my departure* (loosing of tent cords) *is at hand*. What did Paul want in the last days? Verse 13 tells us. He wanted his "cloak," something warm for his body; his "books," something stimulating for his mind; but "especially the parchments." He wanted the Word of God for his soul.

I wonder what Old Testament portions he wanted as soft pillows on his

death bed? Was it Job 19:25-26, *For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God*. Or was it Psalm 23:4, *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me*.

I don't especially like funerals, but, like all preachers, I don't refuse to conduct them. When I stand before a broken-hearted family I need something to bring them comfort. I have a Book! I have never seen it fail. I have seen the Word of God brush tears from eyes and pour the balm of Gilead on hurting hearts. Romans 15:4 says, *Whatsoever things were written beforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope*.

If you have no trustworthy Bible, you have nothing to give hope to those who are facing death. A pastor sowed seeds of doubt about the Bible in the minds of his congregation. A critically ill member sent for him. "Shall I read from the Bible and pray with you?" "Yes," said the dying man. His wife brought his Bible. As the pastor opened it he found certain books missing. Some chapters were gone, verses were cut out. It was a shamefully mutilated Bible. The startled pastor exclaimed: "Have you not a better Bible than this one?" Accusingly the dying man said, "When you came to our church, I had a whole Bible. You told us certain books were fictional and I cut them out. You told us some chapters were not true, and I removed them. You said certain verses were not accurate, so I cut them out, too. There is little of my Bible left except the two covers." When you come to die what kind of Bible do you want? Look to your left—see the death beds of those who die denying any part of the Bible. Show me the triumph death of one who rejected the Scriptures. There are no smiles of hope, no shouts of joy, only darkness and despair and doubt. Now, look to the right—see the death beds of those with the whole Bible in their hands. See the radiance on their faces. Listen to the shouts of victory!

There is just one Book for the dying,  
One Book for the starting tears,  
And one for the soul that is going home,  
For the numberless years.  
There is just one Book.

Years ago, in the days of the old Camp Meetings, a preacher set out after the evening service to find his way along the edge of a dangerous cliff to the cottage where he was to spend the night. He had no lantern; flashlights

were then unknown. An old farmer, sensing the preacher's predicament, lighted a bundle of pine branches, handed them to the preacher saying, "Take this, it will light your way home." The preacher said, "But what if the wind blows it out?" "It will see you home." "But, what if the rain extinguishes it?" "It will see you home." "But what if it burns out before I get there?" "It will see you home."

Do you see this Book? It is a lamp unto your feet and a light to your path. There will be times when winds of unbelief may seem to almost put out its glow. Storms of skepticism may threaten to engulf it. There may even be times when you are tempted to lay it aside and make your way unaided. At times it may look old fashioned alongside the psychedelic flashlights of this age. But, my Baptist brothers and sisters, hold on to your Bible. It will see you home!