

This problem of how much error the quality of "inspiredness" can accommodate could be dealt with summarily, simply by negating the applicability of the term "Word of God" to the copies of Scripture in our possession. This would amount to a frank (if a bit precipitous) admission that one of two possibilities is true: either that any degree of error makes the term "Word of God" inapplicable to our copies, or that so much error has piled up over centuries of repetitious copying that the Word of God has become hopelessly irretrievable in the tangled mesh of truth and error. The first possibility (that any degree of error makes the term inapplicable) is plainly negated by the fact that Christ, Paul, and Peter all speak of errant copies in terms of "Word of God." The second possibility (that so much accumulated error makes the term inapplicable to present-day copies) must be examined to see just how much error has entered the process of transmission of the Word of God from its original state as given to its present state as received by us. To that task we now turn our attention.

The first step in the transmission of God's Word is that of revelation itself. Here we must ask the question, "Can God reveal himself truly?" By revelation in the special sense (as distinguished from general revelation) we mean "divine self-disclosure in immediate mode." But what do we mean by "truly"? A long time ago Aristotle said, "To say what is, is, and what is not, is not, is true. And to say what is, is not, and what is not, is, is false." More recently the semantic theory of truth proposed by a Polish logician named Tarski has been widely adopted in linguistic and philosophical circles today. Tarski said that the statement "Snow is white" is true if and only if snow is white. That is, the words in the sentence are a linguistic entity, and the analogous words refer to reality. The characteristics of Tarski's definition are: (1) truth is defined in terms of *language*; (2) truth is defined in terms of *sentences* (that is, truth is a property of sentences, not individual words); and (3) truth is defined in terms of *correspondence*. In the light of these definitions, we must ask, "Can God reveal truth concerning himself? Can he reveal something of what he actually is to us?" Can he bridge the great chasm between an infinite, holy God and finite, sinful men? Gordon Clark, writing in his article in *Revelation and the Bible*, says,

... the evangelcal Christian... by reason of the doctrine of creation, must maintain that language is adequate for all religious and theological expression ... The possibility of rational communication between God and man is easily explained on theistic presuppositions. If God created man in his own rational image and endowed him with the power of speech, then a purpose of language, in fact, the chief purpose of language, would naturally be the revelation of truth to man ...^1

Paul K. Jewett, in the same volume, speaks of

the uniqueness of the Biblical idea of revelation, which is that history is the medium through which the eternal God has revealed himself once for all. The foundation is laid in the Old Testament concept of the history of Israel .... But the Old Testament idea of history, as the scene of God's acts as Redeemer of his people, is not an end in itself. Its meaning is Jesus Christ, whose name is Emmanuel, God-with-us, who came to 'fulfill the law and the prophets.' The prophets had the Word of God, but Jesus is the Word. 'And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth' (John 1:14). The incarnation is that event in history which gathers up all other revelation into itself.^2