

And not reading into it our own ideas. Now one place in the Bible that is attacked and ridiculed is this idea of dictation, this idea of verbal inspiration. As if that was the worst thing you could think of, that people believed dictation. Some answer, Of course we believe in dictation -- God dictated every word of this Book. I think we avoid a certain amount of misunderstanding if we avoid such a statement. Because it is pretty hard to look at the Bible and believe God dictated every word. You read Isaiah with his flowing style and many similies and tremendously large vocabulary. Then you read Jonah or Amos, with a more choppy style and smaller vocabulary. You read Paul with his very involved syntax, and you read John with his simpler sentences or James. It's hard to think God dictated in an entirely different style to these different people. I don't believe God dictated the whole contents of the Bible. But I believe the Bible, every sentence of it, is just as true as if He had dictated it. I think that's an important distinction. It's just as true as if he'd dictated every word of it. We can stand upon it with that idea. But when we use the English lang. so as to give the impression we think God dictated it, they can use it for a slam against us and then show how much evidence there is against dictation. It's just as true as if he had dictated it, but he used a different method to give it to us. That's what we mean by verbal inspiration or plenary inspiration. We believe God used a human writer, that God spoke through these writers, that God gave them ideas and caused them to write down what they knew but he left them human beings. They wrote what they heard, what they knew, what they'd observed, but God was directing and preventing them from using words that would give a false idea, and leading them to use a word that would give a correct idea in each matter with which He dealt.

The Bible isn't like a great map that might have been made by a camera 10 miles up, with an tremendously effective camera that would make a picture of the world but you could enlarge it to be as big as the surface of the earth and it would show every little grain of sand. The Bible is not like that; it is in words. The result is there are many things the Bible just doesn't say anything about. So when we try to squeeze and word and get ideas out of it that were not necessarily there, that's where we run the danger of putting something in that isn't there and then later when this idea is proven false people say, Look at this foolish idea that the Bible is true.

What does it say? Let's stop there. Let's not go to a verse and ask, Does this teach this or this? Let's ask three questions: Does it teach this, this, or does it not answer the question whether this or that is true? If I were to make the statement that last month I came to Phila. from Portland Oregon, and you believed I was a truthful person, you'd gather from that statement I left Portland, that I arrived in Phila., that this was the direction I moved in, that I made the trip last month, but you could not go beyond that. Somebody says, How do you think he came? Someone says Of course he came by train, he loves to sleep upper berth. So of course he came by train. Somebody else says, No, he had too much work to do that, he came by plane. Someone else says, He loves sea trips. I think he made a boat trip around Cape Horn. Someone else says, He loves to walk. I think he walked. You could argue to toomsday as to what way I came but my statement would not have said