

AN OUTLINE OF BIBLICAL THEOLOGY, by Millar Burrows.  
Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1946.

Since the only sound criterion for determining whether anything is an authentic revelation is its intrinsic value, and since the contents of the Bible vary greatly in value even in matters of religious importance, we cannot take the Bible as a whole and in every part as stating with divine authority what we must believe and do. This conclusion involves no difficulty for faith when we have abandoned the idea of mechanical inspiration and verbal infallibility, and have accepted the principle that what is ultimately authoritative for us is that which commands the assent of our own best judgment, accepted as the witness of the Spirit within us. The only ultimate basis of assurance is the witness of the Spirit with the believer's own spirit. (FOOTNOTE: Rom. 8:16; Jn. 14:26, 15:26, 16:13f.; I Jn 5:6-10.) And only the individual can decide whether or not the assurance he feels is the witness of the divine Spirit of truth. The Bible itself gives no warrant for any delegation of responsibility to an external, intermediate authority, whether an institution or a book. It condemns one who allows an alleged revelation to another person to supersede the word that he has himself received. (FOOTNOTE: I Kings 13:11-22.) Any insight into truth and right that has the inner attestation of the Spirit is an authoritative revelation for us, regardless of how it comes to us. It is so in spite of the fact that we know how subject to error our own judgment is, for we have nothing that can take its place. If God does not speak to us in our own minds and consciences, he does not speak to us at all.

This does not mean, be it noted, that the individual may interpret the Bible as he pleases and claim divine authority for his interpretation. (FOOTNOTE: 2 Peter 1:20.) The meaning of the Bible is what its writers meant by it, and that is a question for objective exegesis. The correct interpretation is not always ascertainable, but whether or not we have the means to determine what it is, only one interpretation can be correct (s. 20). The only admissible authority ~~EXERCISE~~ at this point is the same as that of science and scholarship in all fields,