

THE MODERN USE OF THE BIBLE, by Harry Emerson Fosdick
New York: Macmillan, 1942.

If someone protests that it spoils the idea of inspiration, I ask why. We used to think that God created the world by fiat on the instant, and then, learning that the world evolves, many were tempted to cry out that God did not create it at all. We now know that changing one's idea of a process does not in itself alter one's philosophy of origins. So we used to think of inspiration as a procedure which produced a book guaranteed in all its parts against error, and containing from beginning to end a unanimous system of truth. No well-instructed mind, I think, can hold that now. Our idea of the nature of the process has changed. What has actually happened is the production of a Book which from lowly beginnings to great conclusions records the development of truth about God and his will, beyond all comparison the richest in spiritual issue that the world has ever known. Personally, I think that the Spirit of God was behind that process and in it. I do not believe that man ever found God when God was not seeking to be found. The under side of the process is man's discovery; the upper side is God's revelation. Our ideas of the method of inspiration have changed; verbal dictation, inerrant manuscripts, uniformity of doctrine between 1000 B.C. and 70 A.D. --- all such ideas have become incredible in the face of the facts. But one who earnestly believes in the ~~divine~~ Spirit will be led by the new approach to the Bible to repeat with freshened meaning and deepened content the opening words of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son."

PAGES 30, 31.