

Now one place where the Bible subject to attack and to ridicule is where people talk about this idea of dictation, this idea of verbal inspiration as if that were the worst thing you could believe in -- dictation. Some Christians answer it by saying, 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 that God dictated every word. You read Isa. and his flowing style, his many ~~XXXXXX~~ similies and his tremendously large vocabulary. Then you read the book of Jonah, or Amos with a more choppy style and a smaller vocabulary. You read Paul with his very involved syntax and you read John with his much simpler sentences, or James. And it's hardly natural to think that God dictated in an entirely different style than He dictated to these different people. I don't believe the Bible teaches God dictated the whole contents of the Bible. But I believe the Bible is every sentence of it just as true as if He had dictated it. I think that is an important distinction. It is just as true as if He dictated every word of it, and we can stand upon it with that idea, but when we use our language in such a way that people get the idea we think God dictated it, they can use it for a slam against us and show how much evidence there is against the idea of dictation. It is just as true as if he had dictated it but he used a different method to give it to us. That's what we believe by verbal inspiration, or plenary inspiration. We believe that God used a human writer. That God spoke to these writers, God gave them ideas and caused them to write down what they knew but He left them human beings and they wrote what they knew, what they had heard, what they had observed but God was directing them and in particular preventing them from using a word that would give a false idea and leading them to give the word that would give the correct idea in each matter with which he dealt.

Of course the Bible isn't like a great map by a camera ten miles up, by a tremendously effective camera that would take a picture of the world say this big but you could enlarge it to as big as the surface of the earth and it would show every little grain of sand. The Bible is not like that. The Bible is in words. The result is there are a great many things the Bible just does not say anything about. So I think when you try to squeeze a word and try to get ideas out of it that were not necessarily there, that's when we run the danger of putting something in that's not there and later when that thing is proven false we say, What a foolish idea that the Bible is true.

I think that's a very great danger for us ^{to avoid,} What does it say? And let's stop there. Let's not go to a verse and say, Does it teach this or this? Frequently does it teach this, does it teach this, or does it not answer the question whether this or that is true? If I were to make the statement to you that last month I came to Phila. from Portland Oregon, You believe that I am a truthful person and you would gather from that statement that I left Portland, that I arrived in Phila. and that this was the direction I moved in, that I made the