

PROBLEMS FOR LIMITED INERRANCY¹

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Richard Coleman's recent article, "Reconsidering 'Limited Inerrancy,'"² presents for our consideration some new positions on the inerrancy of Scripture. I should like to respond with some observations in defense of a more traditional view. My observations are of two kinds. First (I), almost all if not all the proffered formulations of "limitations" on inerrancy contain some disturbing vagueness. Second (II), limited inerrancy has some problems to face of which its defenders as yet show little awareness.

I. Vaguenesses about the "limitations"

Coleman's article is vague about just how far the limitations extend. Most of the time he can be interpreted *either* as defending a traditional view *or* as making enormous concessions. Let us see how this works.

The first position that Coleman presents in an approving light is something like the following:

1. The Bible is inerrant in those things which the biblical authors intend to teach as necessary for salvation.³

A major difficulty here is with the phrase "necessary for salvation." This could mean a number of things. (a) biblical teaching is necessary for salvation if no fallen human being can be saved without believing this teaching. (b) A biblical teaching is necessary for salvation if God saw fit to record the teaching for the sake of salvation. (c) A biblical teaching is necessary for salvation if, in some circumstances, not believing it puts one's salvation in question. Still other interpretations are possible.

Under condition (a), none of the NT is necessary for salvation, since people were saved before it was written. Some of the NT *teaching* may be necessary, insofar as it simply repeats teaching in the OT. Moreover, since some people have been saved by reading the Gospel of Mark alone or the Gospel of John alone, only what is common to both is necessary. Thus, interpretation (a) makes enormous concessions. Under condition (c), everything the Bible teaches is necessary for salvation, since a person who believed that the Bible was unconditionally God's word and knew that it taught x, yet out of sheer stubbornness refused to acknowledge x, would thereby raise questions about whether his relation to God was a saving one.

What Coleman later says is more consistent with interpretation (b). But this would normally be put, "For the sake of our salvation."⁴ Let us formulate it thus:

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2. The Bible is inerrant in what the biblical authors intended to teach for the sake of our salvation.

“For the sake of our salvation” is still unclear. “Salvation” could have in view either (a) those things centrally related to establishing and maintaining our relation to Christ, or (b) everything that obviously and decidedly helps us in our life, both in relation to God and neighbor, or (c) everything that can morally affect any attitudes, dispositions, or actions. Sometimes Coleman apparently has (a) in mind (see p. 209, where he asks what we say to the dying person). In that case, the scope may be quite narrow. Generally, we don’t talk to the dying about Adam and Eve, Josiah’s reign, the virgin birth, or Paul’s instructions concerning elders. Under (c), the whole Bible is included, since, of anything that the Bible says, we may decide to believe or disbelieve it. And our belief has a moral component to it. Moreover, incidentals in the Bible are instructive, because they show us that, for the sake of our salvation, God speaks about all kinds of things, even incidentals.

Let us therefore try a third variation:

3. The bible is inerrant in what the biblical authors intended to teach.⁵ Our first reaction to this may be favorable. “Ah,” we say, “surely now this is saying what advocates of inerrancy have always said.” Indeed, as redoubtable a defender of inerrancy as Clark Pinnock can explain his view in similar terms. Pinnock talks about inerrancy of “the intended teaching of each passage of Scripture.”⁶ Does Coleman agree with Pinnock? Perhaps. But having had a taste of the dangers of vagueness, we take a second look. There is vagueness in “intend.”

(a) There is evidence that the biblical authors did not always fully grasp what they said (1 Pet. 1:10-11). How can we tell in such cases what was their “intention”? (b) Bultmann could claim that, centrally, the NT writers intended to teach the possibility of authentic existence through the *kerygma*. But the bodily resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15 is not *per se* included in the “intention.” (c) Intention could be interpreted broadly to include what the biblical authors do in fact succeed in teaching. (This is what Pinnock means, as he makes clear in a footnote.)

Consider also another formulation:

4. The Bible is inerrant in what it intends to teach.
This has the same difficulty as 3, compounded by the fact that, since the Bible is not a person, saying that “the Bible intends” is slightly metaphorical.

To avoid the problem of “intention,” we can try the following formulation:

5. The Bible is inerrant in what the human authors teach.

Here there is still a problem with “teach.” “Teach” is normally used of a somewhat formal, structured situation where the teacher is pretty self-conscious about what he asserts. But it can be used more loosely as when we say that Paul teaches that Demas has deserted him (2 Tim. 4:10). Thus as extremes we could have: (a) the Bible is inerrant in what the human authors most formally and explicitly set themselves to teach (Gal. 1:11, Prov. 1:8ff, 1 Cor. 15:33ff, and a few other passages⁷); (b) the Bible is inerrant in what it says.

A safer formulation, therefore, is the following:

6. The Bible is inerrant in what it says is the case.

This position is an alternative that Coleman doesn't mention. But I think that it comes closest to what advocates of inerrancy have in mind. There is still a certain vagueness in the expressions "inerrant" and "is the case." But a sympathetic reading of position 6 leads to reasonable treatment of the problems. It means that "There is no God" is false and "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God'" is true. It also allows that biblical writers can paraphrase, summarize, translate, use their own favorite words, use metaphor, hyperbole, and the like. It allows for historical telescoping (Matt. 9:18; cf. Luke 8:41, 49) and for omission of pedantic qualifications (Mark 1:5). It allows, in other words, that biblical writers use ordinary language rather than hyper-precise language. It does *not* allow us to say that Demas in fact had good reasons for leaving Paul (2 Tim. 4:10), or that Zimri did *not* reign in Tirzah (1 Kgs. 16:15), or that Noah sent out birds only twice, not four times (Gen. 8:7-12).

Part of the attractiveness of positions 1-5, I submit, is that they can be construed in a way virtually identical to position 6, *or* in a way that allows enormous concessions to the Bible's trustworthiness. Thus they can give us a comfortable illusion. On the one hand, we appear to maintain what the pre-modern church and indeed the Bible itself has always maintained about its trustworthiness (the tight interpretation of 1-5); on the other hand, we are able to make peace with the literature of modern critical scholarship (the loose interpretation of 1-5).

This form of argument I call "argument by slipperiness." It is remarkable that such slipperiness should occur in an article that concludes by expressly saying:

... each writer must take more care to define the meaning [of inerrancy] that he has in mind. Even more importantly he must state clearly where he stands on the question of development. [p. 214.]

But it is less remarkable when one realizes that argument by slipperiness seems to be standard procedure among evangelicals who advocate "limitations" on biblical authority. The word "infallibility" was greased up and made to slide around some time ago. "Error" is greased up by those who move from the "errors" of approximate figures, paraphrases, quotations of falsehoods, and departures from modern literary and historiographical conventions to the "errors" of historical, geographical, and scientific mistakes and (sometimes) moral blemishes. "Revelation" can slide from matters included under the classic idea of inspiration to matters relating to illumination, and from there even to matters involving learning anything that one didn't know before. Or "revelation" may be confined to only those things that we could not come to know by ordinary means.⁸

After so much encounter with slipperiness, the unconvinced reader begins to wonder. Is slipperiness the sophisticated way of bridging a chasm which straightforward people know cannot be bridged? In other words, can one have his cake and eat it too?

II. Problems for limited inerrancy

The first problem for limited inerrancy, then, is to define itself, to

demonstrate that the chasm between ordinary inerrancy and ordinary fallibility can be bridged.

But to say where the chasm is takes some doing. So let us begin with some easy observations. Generally speaking, when God speaks to someone or something, he speaks in a context formed by other things that he says and does, as well as by the person or thing to which he speaks. His words have, as it were, a contextual coloring. Hence, in the case of men, a thorough understanding of what he says in a biblical passage demands attention to the historical and linguistic context of the passage. One asks, "What language is it in? To whom did God speak? Who is the human author? What situation were the addressees in?" And so forth. The sophisticated interpreter therefore approaches the text with a linguistic-historical framework, to endeavor to bridge the cultural and temporal gap between himself and the original words. Textual criticism as well as many other techniques are included. The framework may, of course, have to be modified on the basis of what the passage is found to say. Everyone grants that from time to time there are difficulties with this approach; and disagreements may arise. But in more respects the difficulties are not *qualitatively* different from the difficulties involved in understanding a contemporary document coming from another cultural setting. Here, then, we have a procedure of grammatical-historical exegesis such as the ordinary view of inerrancy allows. Let us call this procedure "using a framework."

But those who speak of "limitations" on inerrancy appear to want something more. They are saying that, at certain points, the human reader must be prepared to encounter "mistakes" or "errors" or "peccadilloes" in certain nonessential matters that the Bible says are the case. Various attempts have been made to circumscribe what is nonessential—none very successful. Let us call these nonessential matters where the Bible makes errors or at least doesn't say things in quite the right way "muck." I know that "muck" is an emotionally laden term. I doubt whether it is more emotionally laden than "error." At any rate, it will perhaps help to convey to the limited inerrantist how things really look to the opposing party.

According to this view, then, the Bible contains muck, but it is a *very* small amount in proportion to the clear and pure teaching. To avoid swallowing the muck, the reader must use a sieve, which filters out only those biblical statements which lead to intolerable historical, scientific, or (perhaps) moral difficulties. Drawing the line as to just what is "intolerable" is hard; but let us assume that it can be done. Even if a position of limited inerrancy is dressed up in fancy language, I think that it boils down in *practice* to some such sieve procedure.

I will admit that the boundary between using a framework and using a sieve is not always clear. There may be *some* points on which people will disagree about which is being done. For example, take the quote in Heb. 2:7 from Ps. 8:5. Did the original of Ps. 8:5 read "little less than God" as in the MT or "little less than the angels" as in the LXX and Heb. 2:7? Suppose A argues that the MT is original. B claims that this is using a sieve to exclude the implication of Heb. 2:7. A replies that, within

the framework of ordinary-language quotation (as opposed to technical and pedantic quotation), Heb. 2:7 can quote from the LXX without necessarily claiming that the LXX goes back to the original more faithfully than the MT. I side with party A in this case. But I am not greatly disturbed by B, provided he understands that A is at least *trying* not to use a sieve.

As a second example, take the mention of Jannes and Jambres in 2 Tim. 3:8. A argues that within the framework of ordinary communication Paul simply makes use of traditional names for convenience, without a claim for their phonetic authenticity. B claims that A is using a sieve. Again I side with A.

A third example will show how the idea of a framework can be abused. A argues that Matthew and Luke do not claim that the virgin birth really happened as described. They use the stories only to illustrate the greatness of Jesus. Within the framework of first century culture, this was acceptable. B replies that biblical writers can distinguish fact from fiction as easily as we can (Luke 1:1-4, John 21:23, Gal. 1:20, 2 Pet. 1:16). When a fictional narrative parable is presented, the context tells us *that* it is fictional. In this case, B is the one who has really understood what "using a framework" means.

The important question is this: have advocates of "limitation" thought that they could move easily from the use of a framework to the use of a sieve? Have they been deceived by a fuzzy boundary into believing that there is no boundary? Has argument by slipperiness been exploited to make this transition? The temptation is great because the whole liberal scholarly world slides easily from framework to sieve with no detectible jar. Both are called "grammatical-historical exegesis" and "critical method."

Of course, advocates of "limitation" may claim that they have never intended to do anything more than use a framework. In charity, I will grant that this *may* be true in some cases. *Some* "limiters" may be simply confused or vague. But we must ask the question: is the claim to use a framework another case of slipperiness, where now the idea of "framework" has itself been made slippery? Many people can't help but feel that there is some slipperiness here. Why are "limiters" so addicted to using language ambiguous or vague enough to allow for a sieve, when all they really want is a framework? Why do they even bring up the issue at all, since representative evangelicals have always seen the need for a framework?

Now let us assume (for the sake of argument) that there is muck in the Bible, and see some of the difficulties this causes. In the first place, it comes into immediate conflict with the teaching of Scripture:

The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver purified in a furnace of earth, purified seven times (Ps. 12:6).

I have seen an end of all perfection: but thy commandment is exceedingly broad (Ps 119:96).

Every word of God is pure (Prov 30:5).

More passages could be cited, but the arguments of this kind are already well known. One possible reply is that these passages are themselves

contaminated with muck. This objection represents a serious alternative that might actually be taken by many liberals. But it is not my purpose to deal with it. As far as I know, advocates of limited inerrancy do *not* want to escape in this way.

But *direct* conflict with Scripture is not the only difficulty that limited inerrancy faces. It faces other difficulties due to the over-arching role of God's words. One significant point made in the Bible is that other things *besides* the Bible are God's words. God's word includes (a) words of Jesus not recorded in the Bible (John 21:24-25), (b) the direct speech of God to Abraham, Moses, and others when he appeared to them ("personal address"),⁹ (c) God's word of power by which he rules the universe (Heb. 1:3; cf. Ps. 33:6), and (d) the Son, the Second Person of the Trinity (John 1:1, Rev. 19:13). If the Bible, the word of God, contains muck, perhaps some of these other words contain muck too. How can we be sure that they don't? Several positions are possible.

A. Muck (or the possibility of muck) is in fact introduced *only* when there is a human intermediary such as Moses or Paul. God's words of personal address and God's ruling word of power are always and infallibly free of muck.

B. Muck may occur even in God's words of personal address to Abraham, Moses, etc.

C. Muck may occur even in God's words in the intra-Trinitarian communication, and in God the Son.¹⁰

All these positions have difficulties of a severe kind. The most serious is C. To be sure, we must remember that the muck consists only in *complete* nonessentials, in details of the minutest kind. But nevertheless, the conclusion is inescapable: God himself is mucked up. The Persons of the Trinity do not communicate exhaustively. Consequently, a separation is introduced in the Trinity, and one obtains incipient tri-theism. If the Son alone has muck, one descends to a form of Arianism.

Let us see where position B leads. Can muck occur also in God's words to other creatures besides men? Only men are fallen, it is true, but creation is under a curse. And one must remember the possibility that muck is introduced by man's ignorance as well as by his sin. Other creatures are still *more* ignorant than man, so may we suppose that there is *more* muck? Perhaps, then, there is muck scattered through the word of power by which God upholds the universe. If the clear passages speaking of the purity of the Bible do not exclude muck, much *less* can we exclude muck from these *other* words, which are much *less* essential to salvation.

But see how disastrous this is. Nothing at all happens apart from God's will (Eph. 1:11), or apart from God's command (Lam. 3:37-38; cf. Ps. 147:15, Heb. 1:3). Hence *everything* gets contaminated with muck.

Now suppose that L (a limited inerrantist) claims that Luke has introduced muck in Acts 5:37 by confusing the order in which Gamaliel placed Theudas and Judas the Galilean. L bases himself on Josephus. Josephus may have erred in the ordinary way, as humans do. But he may *also* have erred in an extraordinary way; viz. the word of God ordering

the universe may have introduced muck into Josephus's researches. In fact, muck in *this* word of God is far more likely than muck in the more "essential" word of God in Acts 7. Similarly, Gamaliel may have been mucked up.

But there are worse possibilities as well. Muck may have been introduced into L's perception of the page of Acts that he is reading. Muck may have been introduced into his memory of Josephus. Muck may have been introduced so that he doesn't know what a contradiction is. Muck may have been introduced so that a demon has deluded him at this one point. Surely these are matters of nonessential character. Surely here, if anywhere, God could be expected not to be so careful about whether every last jot and tittle of his word that orders the universe is correct. The name of this view is skepticism.

Let us, then, consider position A. Most of the problems here are well known. (a) Position A seems to do injustice to Exod. 20:18-20 and Deut. 5:22-33. These passages explain the transition from God's word of personal address at Mt. Sinai (reported in Exod. 20:1-17) to God's word through Moses, both oral and written. On the surface of things, they imply that God's words did not lose any purity, veracity, power, authority, or inerrancy by being mediated through Moses rather than being "direct." But position A would have us believe otherwise. Position A would have us believe that the Israelites, in asking for Moses's mediation, made a choice that committed¹ them to the introduction of muck. Many a servant of God would rather die than have this happen to God's word. Yet Israel is approved for her choice.

Let us pass on to some other difficulties.

(b) Position A seems to involve a view of limited inspiration or rather noninspiration. It denies that the words of Moses to Israel are really, without qualification, the words of God. The "real" word of God is the word of personal address *to* Moses. But this contradicts the testimony of Scripture.

(c) The exegetical arguments of Benjamin B. Warfield, Edward J. Young, and others remain to be answered.¹¹

(d) It does not seem to do justice to Psalm 119. Can we ourselves conscientiously adopt the psalmist's attitude now that we know that there is muck, and don't know just how far it extends?

But beyond this, there is an additional difficulty. It appears that sometimes angels may be employed in executing some words of God by which he rules the universe (Ps. 103:20-21; cf. Dan. 10:13, 11:1, 12:1). The introduction of finite, nonomniscient intermediaries raises questions. Does their execution of God's word introduce muck? If so, where? Is there muck in Josephus's researches? in my memory? and so on. If so, we are back in a position as bad as B.

There are also ethical difficulties. God's speech is in certain ways the standard to which human speech ought to conform. One can easily argue that if God's *own* speech makes a "mistake" about Theudas and Judas, then we are permitted to make the same "mistake" in *our* speech. Perhaps we even *ought* to make it. So let us go ahead and say that Judas followed Theudas. In fact, let us say so boldly and without fear. No one

can blame us or reproach us for doing what *God* does.¹²

There are two lessons to be learned from this exercise. First, it is easy for the guns of criticism employed by limited inerrantists to be selectively aimed at the Bible, far more than at their modern environment, their own techniques, their own ethical standards, their own persons, or their own language. It is easy to imitate the bulk of critical scholarship that practices selective aim. But one wonders whether it is conducive to a healthy spiritual attitude.

Second, muck can be conclusively found in the Bible only by those who have some source that is in some respect more free of muck than the Bible itself. In other words, they must have a superior source of revelation. Of course, it will be claimed that the source is superior only in certain specific, minute areas of historical or scientific detail. Now, we agree that a person can know more about certain areas of history and science than what the Bible says. But can one be sure that it is muck-free? Sure enough to detect muck in the Bible? It appears, moreover, that a person must have purer ethics than the Bible in order to ethically justify speaking about the Bible's muck. The reader must judge whether this can succeed.

All this leads us to the topic of "development" in revelation and/or inspiration, discussed in Coleman's third section. As one might expect, Coleman's argument for "development" is another case of slipperiness. He offers us three positions (p. 212). The first position is that "no further development is possible [beyond Scripture]." This could mean:

(a) From the time of the completion of the canon onward, God gives to men no new words, in addition to the Bible, which have the same inspired status, purity, authority, etc.

(b) From the time of the completion of the canon until the parousia or its immediate precursors, God gives to men no new words, in addition to the Bible, which have the same inspired status.

(c) In the period mentioned in (b), no one comes to have an ethics higher than the ethics that the Bible holds forth.

(d) In the period (b), no literary work is produced which says what God wanted to say in (for example) Esther better¹³ than Esther said it.

(e) In the period (b), no individual or church comes to understand what God says in the Bible better than the Apostle Paul understood it.

(f) In the period (b), no individual or church comes to understand what God says in the Bible, even at a single point, better than the Apostle Paul.

(g) In the period (b), no individual or church comes to understand what God says in the Bible better than his or their predecessors.

(h) In the period (b), no translations appear communicating the Bible to a given cultural group in a fashion better than the original language alone would have.

(i) In the period (b), no men learn things not recorded in the Bible. And so on and on.

Several types of distinctions need to be made. There is a distinction between development *within* the canon (God teaches new things when Paul writes Romans) and development outside the canon (supposed new

teachings *beyond* the canon). There is a distinction between development in our subjective understanding of the text and development in the objective text. Between effectiveness for modern communications and effectiveness as a final standard. Between change in language and improvement in language. Between the amount of teaching that God might, in the abstract, have given us and what he in fact gives us.

Most, if not all, of these distinctions Coleman slides over. The reader who returns to pp. 212-213 of his article will easily see that Coleman (rightly) dismisses in a few lines positions like (f), (g), and (h). But he imagines himself to have shown the difficulties of (b), (c), and (d).

Anyone who has abandoned (b) and (c) is in serious trouble. He has, I think, virtually denied the *sola Scriptura* of the Reformation. I would like to believe that Coleman does not go this far. But he says,

Since inspiration is understood as a continuing process, whether within the Universal Church or the individual interpreter, the problem is not how to account for that development, but how to maintain Scriptural authority within that development. [P. 213.]

What shall we say to this? I was surprised at first to see that Coleman introduced the idea of continuing inspiration. I supposed that it loaded the position of limited inerrancy with an unnecessary and odious burden. But now it seems to me that Coleman has real insight. In order to detect muck in the Bible one must be in a superior position of "development." Like the critic of Luke 6:40-42, one must be without muck in order to see the muck.

Here arises an even more serious problem: how can the Lordship of Christ still remain effective? With the abandonment of (c), the advancing moral consciousness of the Christian can, at crucial points, be opposed to what the Bible only "seems" to say (but not "teach"?). With the abandonment of (b), the advancing knowledge of our scholars or our "prophets" can, at crucial points, be opposed to what the Bible only "appears" to hold. If we have no words that are beyond challenge, there is no rule that we *must* obey, and the Lordship of Christ becomes a sounding gong and a clanging cymbal.¹⁴ We still cite the Bible as the voice of the greatest religious and moral experts; but it is *we* who ultimately decide where and how they are experts. We will acknowledge that Christ is lord; provided that this takes place in a way that does not cause *too* great embarrassment to the modern world and to our modern notions.

A final lesson, then, is this. Attempting to modify significantly the doctrine of inspiration is playing with fire. The clumsiness of those who have so far attempted it does not inspire confidence. Nor does their clumsiness tend to increase our confidence in the superior purity of their modern sources of revelation.

Some may wonder why I do not say more about all the particular cases of supposed muck in the Bible. I have nothing special to contribute. Most of the major problems have received possible explanations during the last 100 years.

I *will* say this. I do not think that the problems will all go away, or the chasm between fallibility and ordinary inerrancy be bridged. Does that

mean that ordinary inerrancy is condemned to defensiveness and unsatisfying argument? No. It is helpful sometimes to remember that questions of inerrancy can be seen as a spiritual battle as well as a scholarly nicety. Those who hold for ordinary inerrancy do not have a more difficult trial than Abraham had when he was commanded to sacrifice Isaac. Abraham was faced with a seeming conflict in God's word. According to Heb. 11:19, he arrived at a tentative explanation for it, in God's power to raise the dead. One wonders what the limited inerrantist of Abraham's day would have said. Would he have been *tempted* to say that Abraham's resurrection explanation was incredibly improbable and farfetched, and that in view of the possibility of muck Abraham had best call the whole project off? Perhaps, when we meet with difficulties in the Bible, we ought to rejoice that in some small way we can demonstrate that we are followers of Abraham rather than his detractors.

NOTES

¹In composing this article I have profited from suggestions and criticisms from Don A. Carson, Wayne A. Grudem, John J. Hughes, and other colleagues at Tyndale House, Cambridge, England.

²'Reconsidering 'Limited Inerrancy,' " *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, XVII (1974), 207-214. Henceforth, Coleman's article will be cited by page number only.

³The actual words of Coleman are as follows:

But when the question is shifted from isolating spiritual and ethical matters to determining what the Biblical authors *intended* to teach as necessary for salvation, then a different set of arguments come into play [and the limited inerrantists can make a better case]. [p. 208.]

Later he adds:

The perennial difficulty with limited inerrancy is that it requires a hermeneutical principle to distinguish between what is necessary for salvation and what is incidental. [p. 209.]

⁴The phrase "for the sake of our salvation" appears in an approving quote from Vatican II (p. 209).

⁵Coleman says, "Thus to the usual statement, 'Whatever the Bible teaches is true and without error,' I would only wish to add that the Scriptures are true and without error in what they *intend* to teach" (p. 210). This is more like position 4 than position 3.

⁶Clark H. Pinnock, "Limited Inerrancy: A Critical Appraisal and Constructive Alternative," *God's Inerrant Word: An International Symposium On The Trustworthiness Of Scripture*, ed. John Warwick Montgomery (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1974), p. 148.

⁷This can easily lead to absurdities if it is pushed. Does John teach only John 20:31, using the rest "merely" as fallible supportive illustration? Does Luke in Luke 1:1-4 claim to teach all of Luke-Acts? Will we in that case prefer Luke to Matthew and Mark when we confront synoptic problems?

⁸I do not object to vagueness as such. Absolutely perfect precision is not only unnecessary but impossible. I object to the use of vagueness to slide over the crucial differences.

⁹I owe to John M. Frame an appreciation for the significance of personal address, as well as some of the other ideas in this article.

¹⁰Still other positions are possible; these three are chosen simply as illustrations of the problems.

¹¹I am thinking especially of Benjamin B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, ed. Samuel G. Craig (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1948) and Edward J. Young, *Thy Word is Truth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957). For a fuller bibliography of works in defense of inerrancy, see John W. Montgomery, *God's Inerrant Word*.

¹²This argument must not be used unfairly. God, speaking through Paul, does not always quote the OT verbatim. But *we* are not free to paraphrase *in a framework of literary convention* that leads people to expect verbatim quotation. So too, if God deliberately makes a mistake, in one situation, it doesn't necessarily mean that *we* have the liberty to make a deliberate mistake in another situation where mistakes are not tolerated. It doesn't necessarily mean that. But still it *may* mean that. And it may mean that we should tell people to tolerate our deliberate errors. It may mean, in fact, a complete breakdown of communication. That is unsettling.

¹³There is a difficulty here with "better." Better in what sense? A translation might be better for the purpose of communicating to a group that didn't know Hebrew. What we want is something like, "Better as a standard to which one may return as final court of appeal" (see the Westminster Confession of Faith I.10).

¹⁴See the remarks on Lordship in John Frame, "Scripture Speaks for Itself," *God's Inerrant Word*, pp. 182-185.