

ISSUES IN BIBLICAL INSPIRATION: SANDAY AND WARFIELD

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This study attempts to clarify the issues involved in formulating a doctrine of biblical inspiration. It does so through a careful analysis and comparative evaluation of two contrasting concepts or models of inspiration. William Sanday and Benjamin Warfield were selected as prominent representatives of a liberal and a conservative approach to the problem.

A brief introductory chapter, delineating the aims, method, and limitations of the study, is followed by a survey of the history of the doctrine of biblical inspiration from the sixteenth century onwards. This survey focuses chiefly on the English-speaking world and especially the Anglican and Presbyterian traditions to which Sanday and Warfield belonged. It is seen that the institutions where they taught, Oxford University and Princeton Theological Seminary, respectively, were centers of two opposing trends at the culmination of the debate about biblical inspiration in the late nineteenth century.

The analysis of the two models, given in the third and fourth chapters, deals in each case with the starting-point adopted, the methodology used, and the criteria applied in formulating the respective concepts, as well as the conclusions reached concerning the mode, the extent, and the effects of biblical inspiration.

Sanday, concentrating on the biblical phenomena, concludes that there are distinct divine and human elements in the Bible and that inspiration is a matter of degrees. Warfield, focusing on biblical affirmations and especially on the teachings of Christ, infers that Scripture is the product of a *concursus* of the divine and the human and that biblical inspiration is best qualified as plenary and verbal. To him the evidence suggests that Scripture is infallible in every aspect, whereas for Sanday infallibility can only be attributed to its spiritual purpose.

The comparative evaluation, set forth in the final chapter, shows that despite apparent similarities—both scholars intend to let Scripture speak for itself and both claim to use the inductive method—the two approaches diverge from the outset. In the conclusion, a number of suggestions are presented that stress the need for a biblical conceptual framework and a clearly defined methodology in order to formulate an adequate doctrine of biblical inspiration.