

A Dialogue on the Bible and Inerrancy: Introducing Mr. Biblios, Mr. Apologia, and others

Apologia. Greetings my friend. I am surprised to find you up so early in the morning taking a stroll among the trees. I see you are reading your Bible as always, but you seem somewhat distraught today. Has something happened to disturb your usually contented disposition?

Biblios. Yes, *Mr. Apologia*, you are right. I am not in the most agreeable mood this morning. It is because of something I have read.

Apologia: Something you have read? And what, perchance, have you read that has put you in such an unsettled mood?

Biblios. You wouldn't believe me if I told you, my friend. I myself still can hardly believe that the author of the book I was reading last night could have meant what he said.

Apologia. Well, what did he say? It must be crazy or diabolical in the extreme.

Biblios. Well, *Mr. Apologia*, the author of the book I was reading calls himself a Christian and yet says he doesn't believe that the Bible is inerrant! To prove his point he mentioned that Mark's account of Peter's three denials of Christ contradicts what the other Gospel writers say. Mark says the cock crowed twice before Peter denied Christ three times and Matthew, Luke, and John only mention one crowing of the cock. Can you believe that a so-called Christian could say such horrid things about God's infallible Word?

Apologia. Yes, I can believe that someone would say such a thing because I myself have heard people speak like that and I have read that there are many Christians who agree with him.

Biblios. No, you must be kidding.

Apologia. No. I am not kidding. I fear you have been so immersed in reading the Bible and listening to those who believe that it is the perfect Word of God and contains no errors in it at all that you have never had time to discover that there are many Christians who have fallen snare to the wiles of the devil and think that God's Word can have mistakes in it.

Biblios. I have heard of such apostates, but I had never actually read anything they have written. But the book I am now reading is actually written by someone who styles himself a Christian and yet casts doubt upon the reliability of God's Holy Word.

Apologia. I agree with you *Mr. Biblios*, that such opinions are dangerous and diabolical, but I am of the opinion that it is best to listen to those who disagree with you and to try to understand why they say what they say. If, as I know, the Bible is without any mistakes at all, then surely you should be able to apply reason to their folly and demolish their arguments.

Biblios. I am greatly surprised, *Mr. Apologia*, that you could say such a thing. It is my settled opinion that when you know the truth you need to defend it at all costs and not agree to enter into a debate with those who deny God's Word. I know I am right and they are wrong and that's all there is to it. I simply refuse to debate an issue with unbelievers who revile the infallible Word of God that is inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Apologia. I agree with you, my friend, that a Christian should never even for a moment entertain the outrageous idea that there can be any mistakes in the Bible, but I think it is always best to understand why people believe such and such, and then to offer convincing arguments to refute them.

Biblios. I heartily dissent from your view, *Mr. Apologia*. I have no desire to know why people reject God's Word. All they will give you are excuses. The bottom line is that they are sinners who willfully reject the Bible. As the Apostle Paul tell us, they suppress the truth and are without excuse. Once you start debating the issue about whether there

are mistakes or contradictions in the Bible you are starting down a slippery slope to unbelief and perdition. If the Bible has even one mistake in it then how can you know that it doesn't have any other mistakes? And how can you know that what it says about Christ's resurrection isn't also a mistake? And then what becomes of our salvation?

Apologia. But it won't do to simply ignore those who attack the Bible. They need to be answered. If we don't answer them multitudes of people will abandon Christianity. That's why I think we need apologists who can answer these attacks on God's Word.

Biblios. I am strong in the faith and these attacks don't bother me in the least. I know they come from the devil. But such attacks on the Bible do disturb Christians like my friend *Simplicius* who are easy prey for the devil.

Apologia. I am glad to hear, *Mr. Biblios*, that you believe God's Word and reject all such diabolical attacks on the Bible. But I can assure you that all objections to the trustworthiness of God's word have been answered by biblical scholars and apologists. There is no reason why any Christian should lose their faith because of unbelievers and liberal Christians who attack the Bible.

Biblios. I am glad to hear you say so, *Mr. Apologia*. But I still worry about Christians who might be so confused by what unbelievers say about the Bible that even when they have heard the answers given by apologists they are still led astray. Once you start giving reasons for what you believe and listening to the other person give reasons for why your reasons are no good you are entering dangerous territory. It just might happen that skeptics give arguments that you can't answer! And then what? Well, I'll tell you what. I know some people who were once Christians who started arguing with unbelievers about the Bible and they ended up being convinced by them and now are no longer

Christians, or who are now lukewarm Christians who have strayed from correct doctrine.

Apologia. But, *Mr. Biblios*, if, rather *since*, the Bible really has no mistakes in it then how can you ever lose an argument to an unbeliever? After all, the facts are all on your side. Just let the skeptic point out to you what he thinks are mistakes in the Bible and then show him that he is wrong. It should be very easy to do that. I think it would be great fun.

Biblios. But why should I argue with someone who casts doubt on the trustworthiness of God's Word when I already know that they are wrong? That would be a complete waste of my time. It would be like arguing with someone who thinks the earth is flat or that two and two make five. There's no point in arguing with crazy people.

Apologia. Well, *Mr. Biblios*, there really are people who think the earth is flat and you can go on the internet and join their chat rooms!

Biblios. What's the world coming to, *Mr. Apologia*. Don't the schools teach them anything nowadays?

Apologia. But, *Mr. Biblios*, some people might think that you and I are crazy for thinking the Bible doesn't have any mistakes or contradictions in it. That's why you need to give them good answers if they ask you.

Enter *Skepticus*. He is out for a stroll among the beautiful trees and flowers of spring.

Skepticus. Greetings my friends. I see I have interrupted a lively discussion.

Biblios: No, you have not interrupted us at all, *Mr. Skepticus*. We were just talking about the Bible. You are welcome to join us.

Skepticus. I would enjoy that most assuredly, *Mr. Biblios*. You know I never pass up an opportunity to discuss any issue, least of all any issue involving the Bible.

Biblios. Yes, I know that, *Mr. Skepticus*, but I have never actually listened to you discuss the Bible. *Mr. Apologia* and I were just discussing the view of those who claim that the Bible has mistakes in it. We both find that view both dangerous and diabolical.

Skepticus. I am well aware of such a view.

Biblios. You do agree with us, don't you?

Skepticus. I am afraid I do not, *Mr. Biblios*.

Biblios. I regret to hear that.

Apologia. And I too regret to hear that you, *Mr. Skepticus*, think the Bible has mistakes.

Skepticus. Yes, I do think it has mistakes. But do not let me interrupt you. Please continue.

Biblios. I had mentioned to *Mr. Apologia* that some Christians say that what Mark's account of Peter's three betrays of Christ contradict the accounts found in Matthew, Luke, and John. Mark says that Jesus told Peter that before the cock crowed twice he would deny Christ three times, while Matthew, Luke, and John only mention one crow of the cock.

Skepticus. I am quite familiar with that debate, *Mr. Biblios*.

Biblios. I am not surprised to hear that you are, but I had never heard of such a view until I read about it in this book I took up to read yesterday.

Skepticus. And what is your view of the matter, *Mr. Biblios*?

Enter *Atheus*. He is out for a walk, getting some exercise.

Atheus. Hello gentleman, I see you are discussing some important issue.

Skepticus. Yes, indeed, *Mr. Atheus*. We were just discussing the accounts in the Gospels of Peter's denying Christ.

Atheus. Oh, I am well aware of the contradictions involved in these accounts. Is that what you were discussing?

Skepticus. Yes, we were. And what is your opinion, if I may ask, *Mr. Atheus*.

Atheus. I can state my opinion very succinctly. The Bible is full of contradictions and lies and only fools take it seriously.

Skepticus. I thought you would say something so foolish as that, *Mr. Atheus*, but you are welcome to join the conversation if you would like.

Atheus. I have a few spare moments, gentleman, so I will take you up on the offer.

Biblios. Now you see, *Mr. Skepticus*, what I meant when I said that it is dangerous to argue about the Bible. It often leads to people becoming scoffers and atheists like *Mr. Atheus*, who, I heard, had once been a professing Christian.

Atheus. And you heard correctly, *Mr. Biblios*. I was once a Christian but after studying the Bible more thoroughly and reading books about the Bible I realized that the Bible is full of myths and contradictions.

Biblios. I'm sorry to hear that *Mr. Atheus*. You have abandoned the way of truth and gone after a lie.

Scepticus. Let's not get sidetracked talking about *Mr. Atheus*. Let's return to our discussion.

Atheus. Agreed.

Biblios. Agreed.

Skepticus. We were talking about Peter's three denials of Christ and whether the cock crowed once or twice. The cock crows twice in Mark and only once in Matthew, Luke and John. And in Mark Jesus explicitly says the cock will crow twice before Peter denies him three times, while in the other Gospels Jesus only mentions one cock crow.

Biblios. All I know is that whatever the Bible says happened, happened. I don't know how to make these different accounts all fit together, but I know there is a way. God doesn't lie.

Apologia. God bless you, *Mr. Biblios*, for believing the Bible. But you are never going to convince unbelievers like *Mr. Atheus* by saying that if the Bible says something it must be true. We need to offer reasons to unbelievers and sceptics.

Biblios. Well, if that is what you think, *Mr. Apologia*, then fine. But as for myself, I am content with simple faith. If God says it, I believe it.

Apologia. I believe the Bible too, *Mr. Biblios*, but I also can give reasons for why what the Bible says is true. So, here is my answer to those who think the Gospels contradict themselves in the accounts about Peter's three denials of Christ. The answer is very simple.

Biblios. I am all ears, *Mr. Apologia*.

Apologia. I have a knockdown argument to show that since there are no mistakes in the Bible, whatever problems some may have with the Gospel accounts about the cock's crowing they, and not the Bible, are mistaken.

Skepticus. I would love to hear your argument, *Mr. Apologia*.

Apologia. I have a great answer for them and it's one that unbelievers will never be able to answer.

Skepticus. I am all ears.

Biblios. And me too, *Mr. Apologia*.

Apologia. I have an absolutely fool-proof argument that the Bible has no mistakes in it—not even one. And it goes like this:

God never lies.

The Bible is the Word of God.

Therefore, everything the Bible says is true.

Biblios. Wow, that is a great argument, *Mr. Apologia*. I think I will use that argument the next time I come across someone who says he has found a mistake in the Bible.

Skepticus. I think that is a terrible argument, *Mr. Biblios*.

Apologia. And why do you think so?

Skepticus. Because it is a circular argument, that's why

Apologia. A circular argument? What do you mean?

Skepticus. I mean that it is no argument at all because it goes in a circle. The premises do not offer any evidence that the conclusion is true. They simply assume that the conclusion is true and then conclude that the conclusion is true.

Apologia. I know what a circular argument is. I was being facetious. But I don't think there's anything wrong with a circular argument when you already know that the conclusion is true. And I know that the conclusion of my argument is true because I know the Bible is the Word of God and I know God doesn't lie. So therefore I know that there are no mistakes in the Bible.

Biblios. Right on, *Mr. Apologia*. You couldn't be more right.

Skepticus. But, my friends, that is a circular argument and circular arguments are not good arguments.

Apologia. I disagree, *Mr. Skepticus*. First of all, a circle is a perfect figure. So why can't a circular argument be a perfect argument?

Skepticus. Surely, *Mr. Apologia*, you must be kidding.

Apologia. No, I am not kidding. God is a perfect being and never lies. So that's how I know there are no errors in the Bible. That is a perfectly circular argument and there's nothing wrong with it. If you can't believe God, who can you believe?

Skepticus. But how can you so sure that God inspired an inerrant Bible—a Bible that has no mistakes, absolutely none.

Apologia. I already told you. The Bible says so.

Biblios. Yes, that's right, *Mr. Apologia.* The Bible says so and I believe it!

Skepticus. But Muslims think the Quran is the Word of God and is inerrant too. And let me also point out that the Bible never says it is inerrant.

Apologia. First, Mr. Skepticus, Muslims are deceived by the devil when they claim their holy books are inspired by God. And second, though it is true that the Bible never uses the word “inerrant,” it is clear from many verses in the Bible that it implies it is inerrant, that is, without any errors.

Skepticus: But it isn't clear to me, Mr. Apologia, that the Bible claims to be inerrant. And even if it does claim to be inerrant, that doesn't mean it is inerrant. I do agree with you that God never lies but there is a big difference between that statement and the claim the there are no errors in the Bible. After all, the Bible is not God!

Apologia. Of course the Bible is not God. I never said it was. In 1 Timothy, Paul says that all scripture is “given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction in righteousness.” Paul says that the Bible is “God-breathed.” The Holy Spirit gives me the assurance that the Bible is God's Word. If you are a Christian you are indwelt with the Holy Spirit and you will know what is the truth. And Jesus himself said that every jot and tittle of the Bible is true. If Jesus believed that everything in the Bible is true, then every word in the Bible is true.

Skepticus: But what if someone tells you the Holy Spirit tells them that some other book is the Word of God. And what if Jesus was wrong about the Bible or didn't say what the Bible says he said. Catholics

believe that the Apocrapha is the Word of God, but Protestants don't. And, finally, the only way we know that Jesus believed that everything in the Bible is true is because we believe what the Bible says about what Jesus believed. And once again we are arguing in a circle. And, one more thing, when Jesus was talking about the Bible he was only talking about what we call the Old Testament because the New Testament had not yet been written.

Apologia. Your much learning, *Mr. Skepticus*, has made you mad. The simple fact is that the Bible claims to be the Word of God and it is the Word of God. If you don't believe the Bible is the Word of God then you are being deceived by the devil. The Bible says that the devil walketh about seeking whom he may devour.

Skepticus. I don't think you are deceived by the devil, *Mr. Apologia*. I just think your argument is a terrible argument. Circular reasoning is terrible reasoning. If you can't find a good reason for what you believe then arguing in a circle isn't going to help you. If you are going to offer a reason for why you believe the Bible is inerrant then fine. Offer reasons that are different from your conclusion! You assume what you are trying to prove. And by doing so the only people you are going to convince are those who already with you already. But you are not going to convince anyone who can spot circular reasoning when they see it.

Apoloiga. Okay, here is my argument again. Let's look at it closely.

God never lies.

The Bible is the Word of God.

Thus, the Bible never lies.

You say it is circular and therefore a bad argument. But why is it bad? God never lies. You do agree with that, I hope.

Skepticus. Yes, I do agree with that.

Atheus. You are all a lot of fools. God is an illusion.

Skepticus. I would say that you, *Mr. Atheus*, are the one who believes in an illusion, the illusion that there is no God. But that is a topic for another time. I would love to debate you about God, *Mr. Atheus*, but for now our topic is the inerrancy of the Bible, not whether God exists. For now, we will assume that God exists and has inspired the Bible.

Atheus. That is fine, *Mr. Apologia*. We can discuss whether God exists some other day.

Apologia. So, now. Let me return to my argument. We agreed, *Mr. Skepticus*, that God doesn't lie. My next premise is that the Bible is the Word of God. You do agree with that I hope.

Skepticus. I too, *Biblios*, believe that the Bible is the Word of God.

Apologia. Then the conclusion follows! The Bible never lies.

Biblios. That's right, *Mr. Apologia*, Great argument!

Skepticus. Hold on there. I don't think it follows at all. And here's why. Your second premise says that the Bible is the Word of God but that doesn't mean there are absolutely no mistakes or errors in it. It could be that the Bible is without error when it comes to the truth about salvation, but not when it comes to every little factual detail. It doesn't logically follow from the premise that God does not lie to the conclusion that there are no factual errors in the Bible. As I said before, the Bible is not God.

Apologia. I don't understand, *Mr. Skepticus*. If God doesn't lie and the Bible is the Word of God then if there are any errors at all in the Bible that means God is lying. Whatever God says is true, whether He is talking about salvation or how many Israelites fought in a battle or Noah being saved from a universal flood in an ark or Jonah being swallowed by a great fish or Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. Every word of God is true.

Skepticus. Well, if God is responsible for every single word in the Bible then you are right, *Mr. Biblios*. Then when the Bible lies God lies, or

when the Bible contradicts itself, God contradicts himself, or when the Bible makes any kind of mistake God is making a mistake. But I don't think that to say that the Bible is the Word of God means that every single statement in the Bible is comes directly from God. Human beings wrote the books contained in the Bible. When I, and millions of other Christians, say the Bible is the Word of God we mean that the Bible is inspired by God, that what God wants us to know about salvation is to be found in the Bible. Yes, the Bible is the Word of God because in the Bible we learn about God's acting in human history for the salvation of humanity, but the Bible is also written by human beings and human beings can make mistakes.

Apologia. If that's what you mean when you say that the Bible is the Word of God, then you are dead wrong, *Mr. Skepticus*. That is not what I mean and that is not Christians have meant for some two thousand years now. When they say that the Bible is the Word of God they mean that everything in it comes from God and that there are no mistakes in it. None! You are simply spouting the heretical view of neo-orthodox theologians like Karl Barth and Emil Brunner. And if, as you say, millions of Christians say that the Bible can have mistakes in it, they have been deceived by the devil.

Skepticus. I don't think Karl Barth's or Emil Brunner's view of the Bible is heretical at all, *Mr. Apologia*. We obviously have different views about what it means to say that the Bible is the Word of God. But, for the sake of argument, let's assume that you are right when you say that if the Bible is the Word of God then everything it says is true. And that means that there is not even one factual error in it. Not one. Because if there is even one error in the Bible—no matter how small or insignificant the error may be—then the Bible is not inerrant.

Apologia. That is right, *Mr. Skepticus*. That is precisely what Christians mean when they say that the Bible is inerrant. It is without any errors at all. Whatever the Bible says about history or nature or history is true. There really was a Garden of Eden, and there really was an Abraham

who attempted to sacrifice his son Isaac, and there really was a Moses who parted the Red Sea, and there really was a universal flood that destroyed everyone in the world except Noah and his family.

Skepticus. All right, then. Let's agree that the Bible is inerrant. It should then follow logically that if we can find even one error—no matter how seemingly insignificant—in the Bible then it is not inerrant and therefore not the Word of God. In other words, your hypothesis that the Bible is inerrant must be, at least in principle, capable of being falsified.

Apologia. Yes, that is right. But since the Bible is inerrant it will not be able to be falsified.

Skepticus. But, *Mr. Apologia*, supposing that we can find a mistake in the Bible—just supposing—then you would have to admit that the Bible is not inerrant. Correct?

Apologia. Yes, of course. But that will never happen.

Skepticus. Great. Now we are getting somewhere. So, if I can show you that there is even one mistake in the Bible you will admit that your conclusion that the Bible has no mistakes in it is wrong.

Apologia. Yes, of course, but you will never be able to show me that there is a mistake in the Bible because God doesn't make mistakes.

Skepticus. But can I at least try to show you that there is a mistake in the Bible?

Apologia. Okay, sure. But you will only make a fool out of yourself!

Skepticus. That's a chance I'll have to take.

Apologia. So where's a mistake? I'm all ears.

Skepticus. Let's talk again about the contradiction between Mark and the other Gospels as to whether Jesus said the cock will crow twice before Peter denies him three times or whether Jesus only mentioned one

crowing of the cock. You said the contradiction can be explained. So, how would you explain it?

Apologia. I wouldn't worry about it too much, *Mr. Skepticus*. I know there are Bible scholars who have heard about all the so-called contradictions in the Bible and they have answered them all.

Skepticus. Well, *Mr. Biblios*, so tell me how do they answer this contradiction.

Apologia. There's no contradiction at all. The cock crowed twice. The fact that the other gospel writers only mention one crowing doesn't mean that there was only one crowing. Just as if you asked me if I have a car and I say, yes, I have a car, that doesn't mean that I don't have two cars. So there!

Skepticus. That's not a bad answer, *Mr. Biblios*. In fact, some apologists have actually said the same thing. But let's think about it a little bit.

Apologia. Okay, fine. What more is there to say?

Skepticus. First of all, if it is true that Jesus actually did say to Peter that he will deny him before the cock crowed twice, then it seems a little strange that the other writers omitted to mention this part of the story.

Apologia. I don't know why they omitted to mention it but so what. That doesn't mean the Bible made a mistake.

Skepticus. No, you're right *Mr. Apologia*. But it does make you wonder.

Apologia. The Bible says, *Mr. Skepticus*, that the foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of man. Who are you to question God. Who are you, a mere mortal, to cast doubt upon the infallible Word of God. That's the problem with all you liberal Christians. You think you know more than the omniscient God.

Skepticus. I don't think I know more than God *Mr. Apologia*; I'm just trying to figure out what a few verses of the Bible mean. Just like I would do with any other book. If I read some passages in a book and they disagree with each other I try to figure out what is going on. That's all.

Apologia. I don't have any problem with your trying to understand how to make sense of the different versions of the story, but I don't like the way you imply that God should have made things clearer. God said what He said. That's that. The Bible is the inerrant Word of God and if we can't figure out how to reconcile two apparently contradictory passages then so be it. Maybe God didn't want us to figure it out. Did you ever think of that? God's ways are not our ways. I'm sure you remember that verse. The Bible is not like other books. Sure, other books often make mistakes and so it's perfectly fine to try to figure out how to make passages that seem to disagree agree. And then if you can't find an answer you are perfectly right to say that there was a mistake. But the Bible is different. It is not like any other book. It is God's very Word and doesn't have any mistakes in it. So when you claim that there may be mistakes in the Bible that bothers me a lot. In fact, when you do that you are listening to the devil, the master of deceivers, and not to God. Once you let one mistake creep into the Bible where is it going to end. If the Gospels can't get story right about something who knows what else it didn't get right. Maybe it got the story wrong about the Resurrection of Christ! And then may we can't trust the Bible about our salvation.

Skepticus. I think what really motivates your belief in a perfect Bible that contains no mistakes or contradictions or inconsistencies is that if the Bible has one mistake then you can't really trust it about anything else it says and there's no end to this doubt. If the Bible can't get it right about the cock crowing then how can we know it got it right about the Resurrection of Christ. And how can we know that what it says about our salvation can be trusted either.

Apologia. How right you are, *Mr. Skepicus*. That's exactly right. If there is one mistake in the Bible then may be there another mistake and another mistake and who knows where the mistakes will end. If we can't trust the Bible to tell us what really happened about the crowing of the cock or Jonah and the whale or the walls of Jericho come tumbling down or Adam and Eve's eating of the tree then how can we trust the Bible when it tells us about the Resurrection.

Skepticus. The difference between you and me, *Apologia*, is that I can look at the two accounts of the Gospel's—one of which says the cock crowed twice and the other which says the cock crowed once—and not try to explain the contradiction away. I just take them as two different accounts of what happened. But you, since you are certain that there are no inconsistencies in the Bible, have to explain away every apparent inconsistency—no matter how unlikely your explanation is.

Apologia. Yes, you are right, *Mr. Skepticus*. Since I know that there are no inconsistencies in the Bible because it is the inerrant Word of God, I will explain away every apparent contradiction, no matter how glaring the contradiction might seem.

Skepticus. So it doesn't seem that you are going to ever admit any mistake in the Bible no matter what anyone says.

Apologia. That's right. And I won't admit any mistake because there are no mistakes. God doesn't make mistakes and the Bible is the Word of God.

Skepticus. If that's what you believe, *Mr. Biblios*, then no one can ever convince you that there is a mistake in the Bible because you will always explain the mistake away. You can always devise some story that will make sense of what seem to be contradictions or inconsistencies. I heard of one scholar who concluded that Peter actually denied Christ six times to explain Peter's three denials and the crowing of the cock. Can you believe it? Six times. All the accounts say he denied Christ three times,

but he needed a story that would get rid of all the contradictions and inconsistencies and he concluded that Peter denied Christ six times.

Apologia. Well, maybe, Peter did deny Peter six times. If that explains the seeming contradiction, then maybe it is the right explanation.

Skepticus. But why go to all the trouble of inventing ridiculous stories to make everything fit together when there is a simpler explanation right at hand. Why not just say that Mark's story of the cock's crowing twice is different from the story of Matthew, Luke, and John. One crowing or two crowing, who cares? The important point is that Peter denied Christ. Who cares whether all the details fit together?

Apologia. Well, I don't think Peter denied Christ six times. That does seem pretty crazy. The explanation I already told you makes sense to me. But even if my explanation is not the right one, I know there must be some way to make the stories agree and if I can't find the answer I won't worry about it. I know there is an answer and that's all I care about. There are no mistakes or inconsistencies in the Bible. That's what I believe and I know I'm right. That settles it for me!

Skepticus. What I think is crazy is the belief that we need to show that there are no mistakes in the Bible. To show that the Bible has no mistakes you are going to have to come up with some pretty weird stories to make everything fit together. And with enough special pleading you can reconcile any contradictions and believe that everything the Bible says is true.

Apologia. Well, no matter what you say you haven't shown me that there is any contradiction between Mark's account of the three denials of Christ and the other three Gospels' accounts. As I keep saying and will never stop saying, there are no mistakes in the Bible. There can't be because God doesn't lie. I know there will always be unbelievers like you who will try to show that the Bible is not true, but the Bible has withstood attacks for two thousand years and still stands triumphant.

Biblios. I agree with you, *Mr. Apologia*, but I am a little bothered by what *Mr. Skepticus* has said. He does make a lot of sense. I wish we had some better answers for him other than to keep saying that the Bible is God's Word and is inerrant. I am not doubting that God's Word is true, *Mr. Apologia*, but I was hoping that you could give him better answers than just repeating the same thing about the Bible being inerrant.

Apologia. Well, *Mr. Biblios*, I have no doubts at all. I can't answer all the objections that unbelievers hurl against the Bible but I don't need to. I believe what the Bible says. God says it and I believe it. It's that simple. The Bible says the foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of men.

Biblios. I agree with you, *Mr. Apologia*. I must say, though, that what *Mr. Skepticus* has said has disturbed me more than a little bit. And that is precisely why I said that a Christian should never argue with unbelievers about the Bible. If you start arguing with the devil you are going to lose. The Bible says flee temptation. And I can think of no greater temptation than the devil's trying to cast doubt on the truthfulness of God's Word.

Apologia. You are right to think so, *Mr. Biblios*. God blesses those who believe His Word and act in accordance with it. But there is a place in the church for those Christians who are able to defend the Bible against the attacks of unbelievers. The church needs scholars who are able to read the Bible in the original languages in which it was written—Hebrew, Greek, and some Aramaic—so they can defend it against the attacks of unbelievers and so-called believers. Unless Christians grow in their understanding of the Bible and learn to interpret it correctly and learn to answer objections of unbelievers they will become easy prey for the devil. It is very sad that many Christians who loved the Bible as children lose their faith when they go off to colleges and universities where the Bible is under constant attack from atheists and unbelievers.

Biblios. I guess you are right, *Mr. Apologia*, but I have never ever doubted the truth of God's Word. When I hear Christians talk about how evolution contradicts Genesis I pay no attention to them. I believe the Bible. God created the world in six days and he created Adam and Eve. So when I hear talk of evolution I am not bothered at all. I will always trust God over the devil.

Apologia. God bless you, *Mr. Biblios*, but there are thousands of Christians who need answers to their question. Not everyone can believe what is written in the Bible without thinking about it. Many have great doubts about the Bible and if they are not given answers they will lose their faith entirely. Too many Christians lose their faith once they hear about all the objections to the Bible raised by unbelievers. If you don't have any doubts about God's Word you are fortunate indeed.

Biblios. Well, God bless you to, *Mr. Apologia*, for your good work. I'm a very simple person and the Bible is enough for me. But I do know there are Christians who are a lot smarter than I am and read books that I will never be able to understand.

Apologia. There's nothing wrong with that, *Mr. Biblios*. God has made everyone different. Some Christians have no doubts about the Bible and some do. My task is to equip Christians who do have questions about the Bible that need answering with the necessary tools to answer them.

Skepticus. And I commend you, *Mr. Apologia*, for what you are trying to do. But I do think you are going about it the wrong way. I don't think your defense of an inerrant Bible is the proper way of defending the Bible or Christianity.

Atheus. I agree with you on that point, *Mr. Skepticus*. But I would go a step further. I think you yourself are defending a lost cause in trying to have it both ways.

Skepticus. What do you mean, *Mr. Atheus*, that I want to have it both ways?

Atheus. I mean that you want the Bible to be the Word of God but you think you can have it be the Word of God and yet contain errors in it. As far as I am concerned, you can't have it both ways. I agree with *Mr. Apologia*, that if the Bible is the Word of God it has no errors and if it has any errors in it then it is not the Word of God. Where I disagree with *Mr. Apologia* is that I think there are errors in the Bible and he doesn't.

Apologia. On that point, I agree with you *Mr. Atheus*. Either the Bible is inerrant or it is not the Word of God. And, yes, I think the Bible is the Word of God and therefore doesn't have any errors.

Skepticus. On that point you and *Mr. Atheus* agree, whereas I disagree. I think that the Bible can be inspired by God and yet contain errors. But for now I want to keep to the question of how one can give evidence that that Bible is inerrant, other than just saying that it must be inerrant because it is the Word of God.

Apologia. Yes, let us return to our topic. My position is that the Bible is inerrant and I can give good reasons for believing so.

Skepticus. And that is the main point of contention between us. Your belief that the Bible is the inerrant Word of God is a belief you have and nothing I say to you will ever convince you otherwise. No matter how many apparent contradictions critics can point to in the Bible, you can always find a way of explaining away by conjuring up some outlandish explanation. So there is really no point in discussing these contradictions. And no matter how many historical errors in the Bible that scholars can point to you will say they are not errors at all because you are already committed to the belief that there are no errors in the Bible. If what the Bible says happened disagrees with what historians say probably happened then you will always side with the Bible.

Apologia. I agree with you *Mr. Skepticus*. Whatever contradictions you point out in the Bible can be explained away with enough ingenuity. And I think that is right because, in fact, there are no errors in the Bible. That is why the contradictions can be explained away and the so-called historical errors can be explained away. And when the Bible disagrees with what the archaeologists and biblical scholars say I will always take the side of the Bible.

Skepticus. If I ask you what Jesus said on the cross you will say he said everything that the four Gospels say he said and yet none of the Gospels say that he said all seven things. Mark and Matthew say Jesus's final words (and only words) on the cross) were, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me." But Luke and John never mention this saying and instead say Jesus said some other things. For example, Luke claims that Jesus said three things. First, he said "Father forgive them for they know not what they are doing." Then he said to one of the criminals hanging on a cross, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise." And Luke also claims that just before Jesus died he cried out "with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."

Apologia. Yes, and Luke was right. Jesus did say these things. And he also said the three things John mentions: "Woman, behold thy son! Son, behold thy mother!," "I thirst," and "It is finished." He said all the seven sayings that are reported in the four Gospels.

Skepticus. But according to Mark and Matthew he only said one thing, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me." You can harmonize all four Gospels if you want to and engage in special pleading and invent your own fifth Gospel in which Jesus says all the things that the four Gospels record, or you can simply acknowledge what is obvious: Mark and Matthew agree that Jesus said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken" while Luke and John say nothing about Jesus's being

forsaken, but mention other sayings not mentioned by either Mark or Matthew.

Apologia. They don't disagree at all. They just focus on different sayings. Luke and John never say that Jesus *didn't* say "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—they just chose to ignore this cry of being forsaken and mention other things that Jesus said while dying on the cross.

Skepticus. But if Jesus did, in fact, cry out "My God, my God, why has thou forsaken" that would be something that Luke and John would have mentioned if they had known about it, or, perhaps, they did know about it but decided not to mention it. Anyone reading Luke or John's account of the crucifixion will come away with a very distorted view of Jesus's final hours on the cross.

Apologia. They said, *Mr. Skepticus*, exactly what the Holy Spirit inspired them to say. And, let me assure you, Luke and John did not distort anything. It is you who are distorting the inerrant Word of God.

Skepticus. Imagine, *Mr. Apologia*, that the Bible had a verse in it which says that when Brutus stabbed Julius Caesar, Caesar's last words were "To be or not to be."

Apologia. But there is no such verse in the Bible.

Skepticus. I know there is no such verse in the Bible. But I am creating a thought experiment. Just imagine that there was such a verse.

Apologia. Okay, I can imagine such a verse.

Skepticus. We would now have two different accounts of Caesar's last words. According to one version, Caesar says, "Et tu, Brutus," as in Shakespeare and the historical record, and according the Bible Caesar says "To be or not to be." Now, if I were to say to you *Mr. Apologia*, "See , the Bible got it wrong," you would undoubtedly engage in special

pleading as you always do and say that, “No, the Bible didn’t get it wrong because in actuality Caesar said both things, ‘Et tu Brutu’ and ‘To be or not to be.’”

Apologia. Yes, that is what I would say *if* there were such a verse in the Bible because the Bible is the inerrant word of God. But, of course, the Bible says no such thing.

Skepticus. I know that is what you would say and that is why there is no point in trying to point out to you any contradictions or inconsistencies or inaccuracies in the Bible because you will always find some ingenious way, no matter how ridiculous, to deny what is obvious—that it is impossible to harmonize everything in the Bible or to offer convincing evidence that whatever it says corresponds to what actually happened in the world. And there is no way to prove you wrong because any explanation you come up with is *logically* possible—no matter how unlikely it is.

Apologia. But since the Bible is inerrant there can be no contradictions or historical errors in the Bible. Every seeming contradiction must be able to be harmonized with everything else the Bible says. And when it comes to the Gospels they cannot have gotten anything wrong.

Skepticus. Showing that the Bible has no errors, *Mr. Apologia*, can only be done with a lot of special pleading.

Apologia. All I can say, *Mr. Skepticus*, is that when it comes to making everything in the Bible turn out to be true there is nothing wrong with engaging in what you call special pleading. The Bible is a special book in that it is incapable of being in error and so what you call special pleading is perfectly fine. There will always be some explanation, no matter how far-fetched, that will show that the Bible’s account of something is always right. If the Bible doesn’t have any errors in it,

which it doesn't, then it must be the case that Jesus said all eight of the sayings that are recorded in the Gospels.

Skepticus. If you want to believe that every apparent inconsistency in the Bible must be harmonized because God inspired the Bible and so therefore there can be no mistakes, then you are right, you must harmonize every apparent mistake in the Bible. But why not just acknowledge what seems pretty obvious, and that is that not all of the Gospels are based on the same traditions and offer different theological perspectives on the meaning of the crucifixion. From this standpoint, it is irrelevant to ask the question, "What did Jesus really say on the cross?"

Apologia. If that is what you believe, *Mr. Skepticus*, then all I can say is that you have succumbed to the wiles of the devil and have denied the authority of the Holy Bible, which is God's inerrant Word.

Skepticus. If someone wants to believe that there are no errors in Herodotus or Thucydides or any other historian that is their right. If Muslims want to believe that the Quran is inerrant that is their right. And if you want to believe that there are no errors in the Bible then that is your right to do so. But it is another thing to try to defend with reasons the view that the book you think is inerrant is really *inerrant*. When you do so you inevitably have to engage in special pleading, begging the question, and other fallacies.

Apologia. Well, I disagree with you, *Mr. Skepticus*, that I have to engage in any fallacies at all because I know that there are no errors in the Bible and that there has to be a way to harmonize every verse in the Bible with every other verse, and, in addition, to show that every verse in the Bible that refers to a historical event is true.

Skepticus. My point is, *Mr. Apologia*, that you really don't engage in rational debate with your opponent. When historians debate about

historical questions they play by the rules of rational debate. And these rules require you to listen to the evidence your opponent presents and to evaluate it by the normal standards of evidence. You have to suspend your own personal beliefs and examine the evidence impartially. As T.H. Huxley put it, you need to “[s]it down before fact as a little child and be prepared to give up every preconceived opinion.” In short, to engage in honest intellectual debate you must be willing to change your mind if the evidence doesn’t support your view.

Apologia. Well, *Mr. Skepticus*, a true believer in God’s Word can never assent to such a proposition. Because the true believers know the truth before looking at any evidence. I, for example, know that the Bible is without any errors because it is the inspired Word of God so why should I be prepared to give up my belief when faced with what seems to be contradictory evidence?

Skepticus. And that is why, *Mr. Apologia*, even though you claim to enter into rational debate with those who disagree with you, you really are incapable of doing so. If your opponent, for example, points out to you that the scientific view of the world contradicts the account of creation in Genesis, taken literally, then you will simply reject the modern scientific view as mistaken. When the Bible talks about Adam and Eve you will insist that Adam and Eve were real people even though modern science would say that is crazy. If these statements were found in any other book other than the Bible, you too would reject them as myth. But since they are found in the Bible, which you believe to be inerrant, you take them as historical fact.

Apologia. Yes, modern science would say that the view that there was a real Adam and Eve is crazy because modern science refuses to acknowledge the inerrancy of the Bible and rejects God’s inspired words. And, yes, if everything we knew about the six days of creation

and the Garden of Eden were found in books other than the Bible but not in the Bible, I would reject them as myth and not fact.

Skepticus. I know you would, *Mr. Apologia*. And I also know that though all Biblical scholars who are not committed to the doctrine of inerrancy, take it as beyond dispute that the historical accounts in the Pentateuch cannot be taken as accurate historical accounts of what actually happened you simply reject their view out of hand because you already know a priori, that is, before examining the evidence, that there are no errors in the Bible

Apologia. Yes, I do know that there are no errors in the Bible, and so I would reject what these unbelieving scholars say. If the Bible says Jonah was swallowed by a large fish then that is what happened. If the Bible says that there was a universal flood and that only Noah and his family survived then that is what happened. If the Bible says that more than six hundred thousand Israelite men escaped from Egypt under the leadership of Moses then that is what happened, even though modern biblical scholars say there is no archaeological evidence that such an exodus ever occurred. And so on and so on.

Skepticus. And since that is what you believe *Mr. Apologia*, no one will ever be able to convince you otherwise. Whatever the Bible says that God or an angel said to Adam or Noah or Abraham or Moses or Isaac or Jacob or Daniel or Zechariah must have actually happened because the Bible is the inerrant Word of God. But obviously no historian has any way of being able to verify what God is alleged to have said. And there is no way for an historian to verify that everything the Bible says happened to Abraham really happened. And since there is no way to confirm that these things happened or to provide the slightest evidence that they did happen the historian must reject them as being historically unreliable. Historians wouldn't say they are logically impossible but they would say there is no evidence that they are true

and, therefore, that there is no rational basis for thinking that they record historical fact.

Apologia. But I know that everything that the Bible says happened to Abraham really did happen because the Bible is the inerrant word of God. My authority is God; your authority is human authority. And I will trust what God says more than I will trust what unbelieving scholars and scientists say.

Skepticus. We always keep coming back to the Bible being the inerrant word of God as being the justification for your believing what the Bible says. You believe that what the Bible says happened really happened, but you have not the slightest piece of historical evidence to support your belief.

Apologia. Yes, I agree. But I don't need any historical evidence. The Bible is God's Word and God doesn't lie. That is enough for me.

Skepticus. But that means that biblical scholars can never convince you that there are any errors at all in the Bible.

Apologia. You are right, *Mr. Skepticus.*

Skepticus. It seems to me that you have no problems with historians treating historical documents with skepticism but when it comes to the Bible skepticism is off limits.

Apologia. Yes, that is right.

Skepticus. All professional historians examine historical documents and archaeological evidence, when appropriate, in the hope of trying to bring a little clarity into what actually happened in the distant past. But for those who believe the Bible is inerrant there is no such problem. They already know what happened in the historical past because everything the Bible says happened really did happen way the Bible said it happened.

Apologia. That is correct, *Mr. Skepticus*.

Skepticus. So, when the Bible says Methuselah lived 969 years, we can know he really lived that long?

Apologia. Yes, precisely.

Skepticus. But if the Bible did not record people living for hundreds of years and you read in Herodotus that someone lived for 969 years you would reject it as untrue because you know people don't live that long.

Apologia. That is correct, *Mr. Skepticus*. But the reason I believe that Methuselah lived 969 years is that the Bible says so and the Bible is the inerrant Word of God. What I would say to anyone who refuses to believe what the Bible says about Methuselah is that no one can prove that he did not live 969 years. And since no one can prove that he didn't live 969 years there is no reason to reject what the Bible says. Nothing can, as you would say, falsify my belief.

Skepticus. It seems to me, *Mr. Apologia*, that you have committed intellectual suicide, and that is sad. The reason no one can falsify your belief that Methuselah lived 969 years is that there is absolutely no evidence available to even look at that could falsify it or confirm it!

Apologia. I think it is sad, *Skepticus*, that you have committed intellectual suicide by rejecting God's inspired and inerrant Word. Don't you know that the foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of men?

Skepticus. So let me change my approach, *Mr. Apologia*. If you believe that the Bible is inerrant simply as a matter of faith then no one can prove you wrong. Just as no one can prove to the devout Muslim that there are errors in the Qur'an. They believe that the Qur'an is the very word of God and therefore there are no mistakes in the Qur'an.. Their view of the Qur'an is exactly the same as your view of the Bible and

there is no way to prove that either of you is right or wrong. And if I believed that every word in the Histories of Herodotus was true there would be no way to show that I was wrong because no matter what objection you made to Herodotus I could simply reply that you cannot prove that what Herodotus said was inaccurate. All you could do is to appeal to some other books that disagreed with Herodotus and I could always say that Herodotus got it right and they got it wrong. And that is always logically possible. And if you said that what Herodotus said happened is impossible according to science I would simply say that Herodotus is right and science is wrong.

Apologia. But the Muslim who believes that the Qur'an is the Word of God has been deceived by the devil and no one that I know believes that everything in Herodotus is historically accurate.

Skepticus. No, they don't, *Mr. Apologia.* But my point was that *if* they did no one could show that they were mistaken.

Apologia. You are right, *Mr. Skepticus.* But, once again, the difference between the Bible and any other book is that only the Bible is the inerrant Word of God.

Skepticus. That may be, *Mr. Apologia,* but there is no way to rationally prove that the Bible is inerrant unless you actually examine every verse of the Bible and see if there is sufficient evidence to show that it describes what actually happened—if, that is, the verse in question claims to be describing a historical fact. And biblical scholars have been examining the Bible very meticulously for several hundred years now and have found numerous historical errors in the Bible.

Apologia. Well, *Mr. Skepticus,* since no one can go back to the past and actually check to see what the facts are there is no way to prove that God spoke certain words to Abraham or that Moses received the tables of the law on Mount Sinai. But we can know that these things

happened because the Bible is trustworthy and also because no one can show that what the Bible says happened did not happen.

Skepticus. No one can stop you from believing that the Bible is not inerrant, *Mr. Apologia*, just as no one can prove that the Qur'an is not inerrant. The problem begins when you start trying to defend the inerrancy of the Bible on rational grounds. Once you do that then you need to provide evidence and examine counter evidence. If you simply state that you believe in the inerrancy of the Bible and decline to offer any evidence that your belief can be supported by evidence then you don't need to consider objections from critics. But as soon as you claim that your belief in the inerrancy of the Bible can be supported by evidence then you must play by the rules of historical investigation. You must be willing to look at all the evidence and consider objections to your views. You must be willing, that is, to debate the issue with your critics and look at the evidence. But this you refuse to do.

Apologia. I have listened to all the evidence of the critics and none of them has shown to me that there are any mistakes in the Bible.

Skepticus. You obviously don't understand how historians approach historical documents. They never begin with the presupposition that everything in a historical document is true. Plutarch, for example, in speaking about Lycurgus, says, "Nothing can be said of Lycurgus the lawgiver that is not open to dispute." And that is typical of the way historians approach any historical document. Everything is open to dispute. They do not assume that whatever the document says is true. At best they will say that something is more or less likely to be true. A historian who approached Herodotus by assuming that everything Herodotus says must be true would be laughed out of the room by other historians.

Apologia. When it comes to the Bible, though, since it is the Word of God, we can say that whatever it says is true. There is no question of

its being more or less reliable. It is inerrant and therefore absolutely reliable. A biblical scholar who believes in the inerrant Word of God has only one duty—to explain, clarify, and help the reader to understand what the Bible says, not to try to find errors in the Bible or to cast doubt on its historical reliability. And it is a fact that no unbelieving historian has ever proven that there are any errors in the Bible. No one has ever proven that something the Bible says happened did not happen.

Skepticus. When historians approach a historical document they evaluate everything they read by looking for other evidence that confirms it or falsifies it. They do not accept what a document says simply because they have no evidence that it did not happen. The fact that no one can show that something did not happen is not a reason to think it did happen. And since almost everything, for example, in the Bible is incapable of being supported by concrete evidence, biblical scholars do not assume that it is factually accurate, no more than they assume that something is factually accurate simply because Herodotus or Thucydides say it happened.

Apologia. So what? As I keep telling you, the Bible is the inerrant Word of God, so any comparison between the Bible and other historical documents is invalid. The Bible is the Word of God, and since God is perfect the Bible is perfect.

Skepticus. That is precisely why, *Mr. Apologia*, all of your attempts to defend the inerrancy of the Bible against the criticisms of what you would call liberal biblical scholars are hopeless. You and the historians are simply not abiding by the same rules of historical inquiry. You say that everything in the Bible that cannot be proved to be false must be true, while historians say that no historical document, including the Bible, is to be trusted merely because it can't be shown to be false.

Apologia. You need to explain this more clearly.

Skepticus. It is impossible, for example, to prove that something, no matter how unlikely, did not happen because there is always a logical possibility that it did happen. Unless historians can find convincing evidence that something actually did happen they will not accept it as a fact. And when historians speak of historical facts they always admit that these facts may turn out to be not facts at all. Historians never speak in terms of certainty. At best they will say that something probably happened. But when you talk about the Bible you never talk in terms of something probably having happened. If the Bible says something happened you are one hundred percent certain that it did happen. And that is not how real historians approach any historical document.

Apologia. All I can say, once again, *Mr. Skepticus*, is that the Bible is God's perfect Word and there cannot be any mistakes in it. You should be ashamed of judging the Bible according to your own standards. The Bible judges you. You don't judge the Bible. As the Bible says, let God be true though every man a liar.

Skepticus. I know that is what you keep saying and that is why all your apologetic attempts to defend the Bible's inerrancy are hopelessly confused. To show that there are no errors in the Bible would require you to examine every single verse in the Bible and to evaluate it according to the standards of historical inquiry that are applied to any historical document—whether the Bible or Herodotus. But when it comes to almost everything in the Bible there is no way the historian can verify any of it because there is nothing to go on except what the Bible says. There is no extra-biblical evidence available that could verify or falsify it.

Apologia. Once again, *Mr. Skepticus*, you are overlooking one important fact. The Bible is the perfect Word of God and because it is so it can never be mistaken.

Skepticus. The big problem with your attempt, *Mr. Apologia*, to defend the inerrancy of the Bible is that your entire argument relies on the assumption that the Bible is inerrant. And therefore, you place the burden of proof on your opponents to prove that the Bible has one or more mistakes. And if a scholar points out a mistake to you, you will not acknowledge it as a mistake because you already know there are no mistakes in the Bible.

Apologia. Yes, I do know that there are no mistakes in the Bible, and that's why no one can show me a mistake.

Skepticus. Let me give an analogy. Think of a trial in a court room where the jury is considering a murder case. Now, imagine that the jury has already made up its mind before the trial even begins that the defendant is guilty. So no matter what kind of evidence the defense presents the jury will not believe it—not because the evidence is not good evidence but because the jury has already decided that no matter how convincing the evidence might be to prove that the defendant is innocent the defendant must nevertheless be guilty because you know the defendant is guilty. That is exactly how you respond to critics of the Bible. You have already made up your mind that no matter how unlikely some statement in the Bible is (like, for example, that Methuselah lived 969 years) it must be true because no one can prove that it isn't true and you already know that it is true. And you take that as evidence that the Bible has no mistakes. So any argument that historians make to cast doubt on the historical reliability of the Bible is immediately dismissed.

Apologia. Can you give a specific example.

Skepticus. I have already mentioned Methuselah and some other examples, but here is another one. Most biblical scholars, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, are convinced beyond a reasonable

doubt that the first epistle to Timothy was not written by Paul—as the letter claims to be—but by someone else who wrote in Paul’s name.

Apologia. Yes, I am well aware of such diabolical attacks on the trustworthiness of the Bible.

Skepticus. Whether they are right in thinking that 1 Timothy was no written by the apostle Paul is not the issue. The point is that the leading biblical scholars throughout the world—those teaching in mainline seminaries and universities—almost without exception think that the evidence indicates that 1 Timothy was not written by the apostle Paul, as the epistle claims. Now, they may be right or they may be wrong but there is no doubt that they offer evidence that casts doubt on whether Paul wrote 1 Timothy. Whether they are right or wrong, is beside the point. The point is that they are willing to look at the evidence and change their minds. But you are not willing to change your mind when it comes to the Bible because you already know that everything the Bible says is true.

Apologia. There is no possibility that the critics of the Bible who argue that Paul did not write 1 Timothy are right because the Bible is the inerrant Word of God and if Paul did not write 1 Timothy then God is a liar because 1 Timothy claims to be written by Paul. And we can know with certainty that Paul wrote 1 Timothy because if he didn’t then the author of 1 Timothy would be a liar. And we know that God never lies.

Skepticus. Your position is exactly analogous to those jurors who have already made up their minds about the guilt of the defendant before the trial has even begun. You, like them, have already made up your mind that 1 Timothy must have been written by the apostle Paul before you have even examined the evidence presented by your opponents. You will, of course, listen to their evidence but you will not listen to it with an open mind. No matter how strong the evidence they present might be you will engage in special pleading and go out of your way to

show that the evidence doesn't prove anything with one hundred percent certainty. And since there is always a logical possibility that 1 Timothy might have been written by Paul, you will claim victory. You will say that your opponents have not proven that it wasn't written by Paul.

Mr. Apologia. Yes, that is what I would say and do say because I know that the Bible is inerrant and that therefore Paul wrote 1 Timothy.

Skepticus. I know that is why you would say and that proves my point. There is no way anyone can persuade you that there are any mistakes in the Bible because you have already made up your mind that there are no mistakes, and it is always logically possible that you may be right. Even if there is a 1 out of a billion chances that you are right, you will claim victory.

Apologia. Yes, that is right. I will claim victory because the Bible is the Word of God and God doesn't lie. So even if the evidence presented by unbelieving biblical scholars seems compelling to the unenlightened human intellect we can know with absolute certainty that it doesn't prove that the Bible has any mistakes.

Skepticus. Once again, *Mr. Apologia*, that is not how professional historians approach any historical document. They do not assume that what a document says actually happened; they carefully examine whatever evidence they have (whether linguistic evidence or archaeological evidence or whatever kind of evidence is relevant) and then they conclude that the document is more or less likely to be true. Historians do not talk in terms of certainty. They talk in terms of what might probably have happened in the past.

Apologia. And they are right to do so, *Mr. Skepticus*, because all historical documents, with the exception of the Bible, are written by

fallible human beings who make mistakes. The Bible, however is the very Word of God and therefore has no mistakes.

Skepticus. And it is precisely your belief that the Bible is inerrant, before you even look the evidence, that makes your whole apologetic effort to defend the Bible a lost cause.

Apologia. It is not a lost cause at all because God is God and doesn't lie. Scholars who deny the truth of the Word of God are the lost cause!

Skepticus. Here's an example of what I mean. The Bible says God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh.

Apologia. Yes, the Bible does say so and it says so because that is exactly how God created the world;

Skepticus. Unfortunately, *Mr. Apologia*, modern science has shown conclusively that the account of creation in Genesis is not factual. The universe is about fifteen billion years old and the account of the six days of creation is a myth. If you want me to point to one mistake in the Bible, there it is.

Apologia. I must disagree with you, *Mr. Skepticus*. The world was created in six days just as the Bible says, and modern science is wrong. Contrary to what you say, the account of creation in Genesis is not a mistake. You keep talking about what scholars say about the Bible. I don't care what they say about the Bible when they contradict the Bible.

Skepticus. You have shown, *Apologia*, the absurdity of the view that the Bible is inerrant. No matter how much improbable certain stories are in the Bible—the parting of the Red Sea, Noah's flood, Jonah being swallowed by a large fish and surviving in it for three days, Daniel and his two friends in the furnace are four other examples that come to mind—you will say are factual too because the Bible is inerrant. No

matter how miraculous the story you will say it really happened. There is obviously no way to prove that these things didn't happen, but that is beside the point. What is important is that there is no evidence that they did happen, and historians are interested in evidence.

Apologia. Yes, I do say that every story in the Bible happened because the Bible is inerrant. And, again, I don't care about what historians say about the Bible when they reject what the Bible says.

Skepticus. What that means, *Mr. Apologia*, is that there is no amount of evidence that anyone can present you with that will change your mind. You will never even admit that a story in the Bible might not have happened. You know everything happened and you know with absolute certainty because you know with absolute certainty that the Bible never makes a mistake.

Apologia. That is right, *Mr. Skepticus*.

Skepticus. But that means that you are intellectually incapable of engaging in true debate with historians because historians do not speak in terms of certainty—they know all too well that when it comes to understanding what actually happened in the distant past you are dealing with uncertainties. And this is especially true when it comes to the distant past when we don't have any contemporary historical records.

Apologia. The Bible though is an exception to what you say because the Bible is God's inerrant Word and it can always be trusted. Of course, there are no contemporary accounts of the six days of creation but so what? God was there and God has told us what happened.

Skepticus. Everything you say *Mr. Apologia* is special pleading and an appeal to ignorance.

Apologia. What do you mean by an appeal to ignorance.

Skepticus. The appeal to ignorance is a fallacy. It occurs when you argue that something is true because no one can show that it is false. By that logic, you can say that there is a planet somewhere in our universe where horses are astronomers because no one can prove that there isn't such a planet. This is a fallacy because if you want to show that something is the case you need to provide evidence that it is the case; it is not enough to show that no one can prove it isn't the case.

Apologia. But I am not appealing to ignorance. I am appealing to the inerrant Word of God.

Skepticus. But you are appealing to ignorance, *Mr. Apologia.* In saying that the Bible is the inerrant Word of God and using that as the fundamental fact from which you deduce that everything in the Bible is true you are appealing to ignorance. You say that the Bible is the inerrant Word of God and you support your view by saying that no one can prove that it isn't the inerrant Word of God. And then when someone points out to you that there is an error in the Bible you reply that there isn't an error in the Bible because no one can prove that it is logically impossible that there isn't an error in the Bible. If you want to show that the Bible is inerrant you need to go through every verse of the Bible and show that there is sufficient evidence to believe that what the Bible says is true. You would, for example, have to prove that God really spoke to Adam and Eve in the garden and that whatever the Bible says Abraham or Isaac or Jacob or Moses said they actually said. You would have to offer evidence that Methuselah really did live 969 years, and not simply argue that no one can prove he didn't live 969 years. It is not enough to say that no one can prove that what the Bible says didn't happen. No one can prove that Elvis Presley is not alive, but that doesn't mean we should believe he is alive. No one can prove that Jonah wasn't swallowed by a great fish, but that doesn't mean there is any reason to think that he was swallowed by a great fish.

Apologia. But it is enough to say that no one can prove that there are mistakes in the Bible because the Bible is God's inerrant Word.

Skepticus. You keep arguing in circles and there is no way anyone can break into it. The Bible has no errors because it is inerrant and when someone points out an error it isn't an error because the Bible has no errors. And whenever the Bible makes a historical claim the claim must be true even if there is no evidence it is true because everything the Bible says is true.

Apologia. I feel very sorry for you *Mr. Skepticus*. You say you are a Christian but you deny the very Word of God. You need to repent and submit yourself to the authority of God's Word.

Skepticus. Actually, *Mr. Apologia*, I love God's Word and believe it is inspired. I think that your view—the view that the Bible is inerrant—will cause thousands of Christians to lose their faith when they realize that the Bible is not inerrant. None of the great Creeds of the Christian church claim that the Bible is inerrant. And the Bible itself doesn't claim it is inerrant. And even if it did that doesn't mean it is inerrant. You need to look at each and every verse of the Bible to see if there is sufficient evidence to think it is probably true. But, as I have said over and over again, for most of the Bible we don't have any extra-biblical evidence at all that could possibly verify or falsify what the Bible says.

Apologia. But since the Word of God is perfect it must be true.

Skepticus. And around and around we go, *Mr. Apologia*. The Bible is inerrant because it is inerrant. The evidence means nothing! Well, I am one of millions of Christians who find such a view ridiculous. I used to believe it myself but fortunately was able to heed Huxley's advice to "Stand before facts as a little child and be prepared to give up every preconceived belief." My faith is in Christ, not an inerrant Bible. But I

see that we have reached our destination. I would be glad to continue our discussion some other times.

Apologia. I am saddened by your disrespect for God's Word, *Mr. Skepticus*, but I did enjoy our discussion. I will pray that God opens your eyes to the truth.

Skepticus. Thank you, *Mr. Apologia*. And I will pray for you.

Apologia. Farewell, Mr. Bibios.

Atheus. I enjoyed your little debate *Mr. Skepticus* with *Mr. Apologia*. But perhaps some day we can debate the question about whether God exists.

Skepticus. I would love to debate you on that topic, *Mr. Atheus*. But that will have to wait for day. Goodbye one and all!

Bibios. I enjoyed the discussion very much, although I will say that I found it difficult to follow at points. I am simple believer and believe what the Bible says without asking questions. Farewell, my friends.

Skepticus. Goodbye to all of you. We will have to do this again sometime.

And so they departed, each to his own destination.

