The Fear of the Lord

is the beginning of Wisdom

A Defense of the Doctrine of Inerrancy

of the

Word of God

Isaiah 59:19

“So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.”
Hebrews 13:8

“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever”

The Fear of the Lord

Reestablishing the Authority of the Word of God

Inerrancy’s ‘Chain of Authority’: Inspiration, Preservation & Identification

The Nature and Integrity of Scripture

Louis M. Kole

A Call for Revival

2 Chronicles 7:14

“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then I will hear from heaven, and forgive their sin, and heal their land.”
The Standard Bearers

Isaiah 59:19

“So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.”

John Wycliffe
1320 - 1384
‘Morning Star of the Reformation’

“The authority of the Scriptures is independent of any other authority, and is preferable to every other writing… I am certain indeed from the Scriptures, that neither Antichrist nor all his disciples, nay, nor all fiends, may really impugn any part of that volume as it regards the excellence of it doctrine.”

In 1384 he translated the first Bible into English from the Latin Vulgate. His disciples, the Lollards, made copies for the public. He was expelled from his teaching post at Oxford.

In 1428, 44 years after his death, his bones were disinhumed & burned to ashes & casted into the Swift River at the hands of the Pope.

Desiderius Erasmus
1466 - 1536
‘Crowning glory of the Christian humanists’

“I did my best with the New Testament, ….. Every dinner table rang with the blunders of Erasmus. I required particulars and could not have them.”

In 1516 he published the first Greek text of the New Testament.

It became known as the ‘Textus Receptus’, meaning the text received from the saints.

It is the Greek text of the English translation of the King James Bible of 1611.

William Tyndale
1494 - 1536
‘Architect of the English language’

“If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plough shall know more of the Scripture than thou does.” (Tyndale’s response to a Catholic clergyman accusing him of error in translating and interpreting scripture)

In 1526 he published the first English New Testament using the Greek text of Erasmus’, ‘Textus Receptus’, as had Martin Luther in his German translation in 1522. Tyndale was fluent in 8 languages as if they were his native tongue.

In 1536 he was strangled & burned at the stake in Belgium at the hands of the Pope.

“Wycliffe”
by
Williams Wordsworth

Wycliffe is disinhumed,
Yea, his dry bones to ashes are consumed
And flung into the brook that travels near;
Forthwith that ancient Voice which streams can hear
Thus speaks (that Voice which walks upon the wind,
Though seldom heard by busy human kind):
As thou these ashes, little Brook! wilt bear
Into the Avon—Avon to the tide
Of Severn—Severn to the narrow seas—
Into main ocean they,—this deed accurst,
An emblem yields to friends and enemies,
How the bold Teacher’s Doctrine sanctified
By truth, shall spread throughout the world dispersed.
Purpose of Primer

The purpose of this primer is a call to restore the Fear of the Lord. This is by reestablishing the Authority of the Word of God, in returning to the Biblical doctrine of Inerrancy. To this end it offers a starting point for us to evaluate the way we approach Scripture, its nature and integrity, the goal to arrive at a consensus in guiding our future dialogues.

The aim is to write down a set of tenets which affirms the integrity of Scripture. In a clear statement which defines what we believe to be the nature of Scripture, wherewith we may invite others in the body of Christ to the same. In the hope it will be incorporated into our Society Statements, Denominational Confessions, Educational curriculums and Church teachings.

The ideal outcome would be to eventually agree on the identity of the text of Scripture. A reaffirmation of the text of the canon of the Bible, in the original language as it was received by Divine Inspiration. This is an issue whose time has come, many expressing an interest in discussing it in greater depth.

Nature of Scripture

The argument on the nature of scripture and its integrity centers on two aspects of its text, Identification and Interpretation, called Textual Criticism. Identification is the criteria used to determine the identity of the text of scripture; being the manuscripts age, location, authorship, style and witnesses. Interpretation is the rules which we employ in approaching the understanding of the text of scripture; whether literally (grammatico-historical), allegorically and /or culturally. The history of Textual Criticism has had varying degrees of success in addressing the issues of the Identification and Interpretation. It gained in influence about the same time as the theory of Evolution.

The history of the debate on Inerrancy and Evolution are similar. Each began around 1850, the former on the nature of Scripture, championed by Westcott and Hort, the fathers of Textual Criticism (1881). The later on the nature of origin, advocated by Charles Darwin in his Origin of Species (1859), the father of the theory of Evolution. Both pose a challenge to the previously held Confessions of Faith of the saints regarding the nature and integrity of Scripture. Evolution confronts the doctrine of Divine Inspiration, whereas overreaching Textual Criticism questions the doctrine of Divine Preservation. The confusion they have generated over these last 125 years has produced a ‘domino effect’ in destabilizing faith and family in our generation. Let me explain how.

First, Evolution and misguided Textual Criticism have weakened our confidence in the Biblical doctrine of Inerrancy, meaning “Is the Bible true?” Secondly, this has undermined our faith in the Authority of the Word of God, meaning, “Can the Bible be trusted?” Thirdly, this has gradually diminished our Fear of the Lord, meaning it has caused us to minimize or even deny the consequences of our actions in not heeding God’s Word. Last, the absence of the Fear of Lord governing our lives has lead, to even God’s people, doing what is right ‘in his own eyes’. The result is a sea change during this period, which lies at the heart of why we now live in a ‘post Christian’ culture. In short, God calls this a ‘falling away’ from the truth, derived from the Greek word translated, apostasy.

Fear of the Lord

The thesis of this primer is that we are ‘losing’ the Fear of the Lord. To the same degree we are losing faith and family, nearing the point of critical mass. The Fear of the Lord is serious in that there are momentous, generational consequences associated with it; hence the doctrine is so called. There are attending blessings and cursing, depending on our obedience as recorded in Deuteronomy chapters 28 and 30. The first blessing being, the ‘Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom’. It is His wisdom in our lives and nation which we need to reestablish desperately.
Foundations of Faith

Let’s review for a moment. The Fear of the Lord rests upon the Authority of the Word of God. The Authority of the Word of God rests upon the foundation of the Biblical definition of Inerrancy. The Biblical definition of Inerrancy includes: Divine Inspiration, Divine Preservation and Divine Identification.

If you diminish the doctrine of Inerrancy, you undermine the Authority of the Word of God and thereby the Fear of the Lord. Inerrancy is destroyed when substituted with mans’ definition, which does not include Divine Preservation and Divine Identification. Mans’ is one of human Restoration, not Divine Preservation, effectively saying we had the Inerrant Word of God in the originals when received by Divine Inspiration. However, we no longer have the originals and therefore the Inerrant Word of God, but we will eventually via Textual Criticism.

God gave the whole of Deuteronomy 28 & 30 to reveal to us His truths. However, they are only revealed in the Word of God. Therefore, if you diminish the Inerrancy of the Word of God, you will diminish the Authority of the Word of God. Diminish the Authority of the Word and you will diminish the Fear of the Lord. Diminish the Fear of the Lord and you will diminish the faith of the people!

The Fear of the Lord comprises three truths. One, God through His Word is Our Judge, meaning He has equitable rewards. Two, God through His Word is our Lawgiver, meaning He has righteous rules. Three, God through His Word is our King, meaning He has consistent enforcement. These truths will change our lives if we believe their claims, just as the blessed hope of heaven purifies us.

“For the LORD [is] our judge, the LORD [is] our lawgiver, the LORD [is] our king; he will save us”  Isa 33:22