

Thy Word is Truth
by E.J. Young

Session 1

Presented by Dr. Richard Spencer

Introduction

- Young states his purpose clearly:

To acquaint the intelligent layman with the Biblical doctrine of inspiration and to convince him of its importance

Thy Word is Truth, pg 7

- Remember Art 19 (From the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, 1978):

We affirm that a confession of the full authority, infallibility, and inerrancy of Scripture is vital to a sound understanding of the whole of the Christian faith. We further affirm that such confession should lead to increasing conformity to the image of Christ.

Westminster Confession of Faith

- Remember that the Westminster Confession of Faith starts with the Word of God because it is only in his word that we have objective, authoritative revelation

- Chapter I, Paragraph 4:

The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, and obeyed, depends not upon the testimony of any man, or Church; but wholly upon God (who is truth itself) the author thereof: and therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God.

Modern Theology

- Much of modern theology uses the same terminology as historical reformed theology, but endues it with new, unbiblical, meaning
- It is like having the signposts changed ...
which means that we need to look at the original map!



Our Present Situation

- Young explains the danger:

What makes the present situation difficult and fraught with such dire consequences for the well-being of the Church, is that the signposts have been tampered with, so that they intentionally lead one astray. The guide-book and map, it is true, remain the same, and to those who will read and understand, their message is clear, for they were given by the Lord of the church who is Truth itself and cannot lie.

Ibid, pg 13

The Real Issue

The real issue, as the present book will seek to make clear, is that modern man no longer is ready to listen to the voice of the one living and eternal God, but prefers rather the changing sands of human opinion for the foundation upon which to build his religious life.

Ibid, pg 15

- We want to listen to God, not men

Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men!"

Acts 5:29

Different Modern Views of the Bible

- Reformation – *Sola Scriptura*
 - The reformers believed the Bible to be the ultimate authority and that it should be its own interpreter (the analogy of faith)
 - It should be interpreted literally, seeking to know what the author intended
 - It should be interpreted according to the grammatical-historical method

Different Modern Views of the Bible

- Reformation – *Sola Scriptura*
- Modernism, or higher criticism, or scientific study of the Bible
 - Rejects the inerrancy of the Bible and places man's reason as the highest authority

Different Modern Views of the Bible

- Reformation – *Sola Scriptura*
- Modernism, or higher criticism, or scientific study of the Bible
- Newer theological views
 - Say that they want to keep the gains of the scientific study of the Bible, but recapture the deeper spiritual truths present in the text

The Issue Before the Church

- Like all doctrines, we should get our doctrine of inspiration from the Bible itself
- “Inspiration” in this context is, perhaps, a poor choice of words – it does not mean inspired in the sense we often use the word (e.g., the actor gave an inspired performance)
- The word in 2 Timothy 3:16 is θεόπνευστος, which is passive and means “breathed out by God”

The Issue Before the Church

2 Timothy 3:16

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness KJV

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness NIV

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness ESV

The Issue Before the Church

2 Timothy 3:16

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness NIV

Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness. ASV

- “Every scripture inspired of God” – is that the same as “All Scripture”? The NIV & ESV are best here

The Issue Before the Church

- The Old Testament also speaks of the word coming out from God:

As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

Isaiah 55:10-11

The Issue Before the Church

- And the Old Testament speaks of God putting his word in the mouth of the prophet:

Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "Now, I have put my words in your mouth."

Jeremiah 1:9

Stand up and say to them whatever I command you.

Jeremiah 1:17

The Issue Before the Church

- And in the New Testament we read:

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Matthew 4:4

- As Young says, “The Scriptures came into existence in an utterly unique way. They, and they alone of all writings, were breathed out of the mouth of God.” Ibid, pg. 23

The Issue Before the Church

- We are told more about God's word in 2 Peter 1:21,

For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

The Issue Before the Church

- Also, note in John 10:35-36

Is it not written in your Law, 'I have said you are gods'? If he called them 'gods,' to whom the word of God came—and the Scripture cannot be broken—what about the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world?

- Jesus refers to the “law”, but quotes from Psalm 82:6, Young notes:

It would seem that His purpose was to attribute to the Scriptures a legal or authoritative character, and thereby to establish them as writings to which appeal such as He was then making might legitimately be directed.

Ibid, pg 26

The Issue Before the Church

- We must ask ourselves, “Is the Bible true?”
 - If it is, then it should be true in what it says about itself
 - If it isn’t reliable in what it says about itself, then what about other doctrines? You can’t pick and choose!
- There are only two possible ultimate standards for truth: human reason and divine revelation
 - It seems self evident that if we have divine revelation available to us, that is the standard any reasonable person would choose

The Issue Before the Church

- In response to the frequently posited idea that we should approach the Scriptures from a neutral position, Young states his conclusion clearly:

There can be no neutral position. We believe that either God is our Creator and the One who alone gives meaning to all aspects of life, or that we are faced with the dismal gloom of relying upon the human mind as the ultimate point of reference and predication.

Ibid, pg 32

The Issue Before the Church

- At this point then, Young briefly addresses the question “Is our faith in the Bible justified?”

- He points out that

When compared with other literature from the ancient Near East, the Bible stands out like a fair flower in a dreary, barren desert. Ibid, pg 33

- But, the evidence isn't the issue – men will not believe independent of the evidence because their understanding is darkened because of their sin

The Issue Before the Church

- The only way a person will truly be convinced that the Bible is the very word of God is the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit, which requires that the person be born again
- This is NOT belief without warrant, it is belief that is entirely consistent with all evidence and logic, but it is a belief that cannot be attained without new birth – sin blinds the unbeliever

The Issue Before the Church

- Young concludes this chapter with the following statement

Having their vision obscured by the dense fog that modern theology is casting over the way, many do not realize that there is a crossroad. They are not aware that they must decide which road they will follow. Unless something is done, they will travel on, taking the wrong turning, until the road leads them at last into the valley of lost hope and eternal death.

Pray God that He will awaken His people from their slumber. Pray that He will warn them of the dangers that lie ahead in the forsaking of His Word.

Ibid, pg. 35

The Extent of Inspiration

- Having established the basic doctrine and its importance, let's look at it more deeply so that we have a firm grounding in the truth and can detect lies when we see them

The Extent of Inspiration

- Jesus told his disciples,

He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. John 14:24-26

- Jesus is, in essence, guaranteeing that what the apostles write will be infallible

The Extent of Inspiration

- The apostles were aware that what they were communicating was the word of God, look at what Paul, Silas & Timothy wrote;

And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe. 1 Thessalonians 2:13

The Extent of Inspiration

- Young notes

It should be clear that the entire argument rests upon the assumption that the written Scriptures are trustworthy and accurate witnesses.

Ibid, pg. 45

- In other words, we read what Christ, the apostles and others said in the Scriptures, but can we trust this written record?

The Extent of Inspiration

- When the New Testament speaks of the “Scriptures” (γραφῆ), it is usually speaking of the Old Testament
- In Romans 1:2, Paul says the Scriptures are holy – he says this because he knows they come from the thrice-holy God
- In Romans 3:2, Paul calls the Scriptures the “oracles of God” (ESV, KJV) or the “very words of God” (NIV)

The Extent of Inspiration

- There a number of places where the words of Scripture are equated with the words of God, for example, Paul wrote,

For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: “I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” Romans 9:17

- This quotation is from Exodus 9:16 where the words are attributed to God himself, so
“Scripture says” = “God says”

The Extent of Inspiration

- In Galatians, Paul wrote that

The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.”

Galatians 3:8

- But, in Genesis 22:18 these words are again attributed to God

The Extent of Inspiration

- In Acts 4, after Peter and John were released by the Sanhedrin, they returned to the other disciples and prayed to God, saying, in part,

You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: “Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?”

Acts 4:25

- They are saying that God the Holy Spirit spoke through David in the Scripture (Psalm 2)

The Extent of Inspiration

- In Acts 28, Paul is speaking to the church in Rome and says

The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your forefathers when he said through Isaiah the prophet: “Go to this people and say, ‘You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.’” Acts 28:25-26

- Paul says that God the Holy Spirit spoke through the prophet words that are recorded for us in Scripture (Is 6), so the Holy Spirit spoke Scripture

The Extent of Inspiration

- The apostle Peter also states that Paul's writings in the New Testament are Scripture

[Paul's] letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

2 Peter 3:16

The Extent of Inspiration

- Jesus himself consistently treated the Scriptures as the ultimate authority
 - We have already seen John 10:35, “*the Scripture cannot be broken*”
 - When Christ asked the Pharisees who Christ was the son of, he said “*How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him 'Lord'?*” (Matt 22:43, quoting Ps 110)
 - Jesus answered Satan’s temptations with Scripture; “*It is written*” – and that settled the matter

The Extent of Inspiration

- In John 5, Jesus was rebuking the Jews who persecuted him for healing on the Sabbath

You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, ... If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?

John 5:39, 46-47

- Jesus clearly had a high view of Scripture

The Extent of Inspiration

- When the Sadducees tried to trick him by asking about marriage, Jesus rebuked them saying

You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. Matthew 22:29

- We can avoid error by knowing the Scriptures and believing them, which requires knowing or trusting in the power of God

The Extent of Inspiration

- During the Last Supper our Lord declared,
The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. Mark 14:21
- And then, at the Mount of Olives he said,
You will all fall away, ... for it is written: 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' Mark 14:27
- What is written in the Scriptures will, and must, happen!

The Extent of Inspiration

- When he was arrested, Jesus said,

Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled.

Mark 14:49

- And also,

Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?

Matthew 26:53-54

- Jesus clearly considered the Bible to be unchangeably true in every detail, however painful the result was for him personally

The Extent of Inspiration

- From the examples given so far it is clear that the Bible itself claims to be the word of God and that Christ and his apostles considered it to be such and to be the final authority
- It is also clear that it wasn't just general ideas or principles that came from God, but the very words themselves; Christ said,

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Matthew 5:17-18

The Extent of Inspiration

- We conclude that the doctrine taught in the Bible itself is that of plenary and verbal inspiration; in other words, every single word came from God and is, therefore, infallible and inerrant precisely because God is!
- And yet, this doctrine is not accepted by the majority of protestant ministers today!
- In fact, this kind of unbiblical thinking among the clergy goes back a long way ...

The Auburn Affirmation

- The PCUSA controversy culminated in the *Auburn Affirmation* (1924), a document that objected to a 1910 requirement that ordained ministers affirm five essential doctrines:
 - The inerrancy of the Scriptures
 - The virgin birth and deity of Christ
 - The substitutionary atonement of Christ
 - The physical resurrection of Christ
 - The veracity of the miracles of Christ
- The Auburn Affirmation was signed by 1274 ministers of the PCUSA!

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