

MID-TERM EXAM

Critically appraise these five quotes.

1. "In approaching the Old Testament, the writer has made two assumptions: 1) that this book is the equivalent of God's words; and 2) that its teachings are binding upon Christian faith and practice. The only exceptions to this latter assumption might relate to certain of the Old Testament ceremonies and to a few of the specific applications of its moral principles that concern ancient Near Eastern society (e.g., inheritance laws)." J. Barton Payne, The Theology of the Old Testament (1969), pp. 3f.
2. ". . . ultimately revelation is in relationship, 'confrontation,' communion, rather than by the communication of facts . . ." C. F. D. Moule, "Revelation," Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible.
3. "I confess the infallibility and inerrancy of the Scripture in accomplishing God's purpose for them--to give man the revelation of God in His redemptive love through Jesus Christ." Ray Summers, "How God Said It," Baptist Standard, Feb. 4. 1970.
4. "Yet Jesus and primitive Christianity were not without Holy Scriptures. They took over the OT as 'the scriptures' (Mk. 12:24) from Judaism and quoted from all three parts of the later OT canon. Thus from the beginning it was self-evident to the primitive church that God's revelation was set down in written form. On the other hand, it is very questionable whether before the end of the first century there already existed a closed canon of the OT and whether primitive Christianity recognized the OT as an entity with precise limits. The Pentateuch, of course, was completed in the third century before Christ, and the grandson of Jesus Sirach (preface to Sir., c. 117 B.C.) seems to know ο νομος and οι προφηται as closed collections, whereas the αλλα πατρια βιβλια were not yet delimited. So certainly as there were "Holy Scriptures" in the Judaism of the first century before Christ, so little was there already a definitely fixed "canon." This state of affairs must have existed until the end of the first century A.D. for the Judaism of Palestine as well as of the diaspora. . . . The limitation of the Holy Scriptures to the Masoretic canon of thirty-nine writings, accomplished by the rabbis at the end of the first century A.D. (first witnesses are II [IV] Ezra 14:45; the transcribed list in ZNW 44, 1952-53, 222, and an inference from the decision concerning the Song of Solomon and Ecclesiastes at Jamnia, Mishna JadaJim 3, 5), was for centuries not accepted by the Christian church." Feine-Behm-Kummel, Introduction to New Testament (1966), p. 335.

5. "The converse question about the correctness and the abiding validity of the limits of the early church's canon is certainly no merely theoretical problem. For when the limits of the early ecclesiastical canon were established, it was presupposed that the Holy Scriptures 'have God himself as their actual author and creator,' which guarantees 'unconditional infallibility in all their parts' (Bacht). But this view, which was later dogmatized in the doctrine of inspiration, is untenable, because not only the two Testaments, but also the individual writings of the New Testament, advocate very diverse and, in part, clearly contradictory views, . . . Rather, it is 'according to the course of the history of the canon, as has often been said, that the necessity of its form cannot be established abstractly. The canon in its essence is much more fact than materialization of a theological concept' (O. Weber). Hence we cannot avoid the conclusion that the early ecclesiastical limitation of the canon, which was carried out only hesitatingly in the various parts of the church, in view of all its historical fortuitousness, cannot be regarded as unconditionally binding, for 'the absolutization of the limits of the canon would be the absolutization of an element of the tradition' (O. Weber). Thus the Lutheran confessions correctly have not defined the canon." Ibid, p. 357.