

THE INERRANCY OF SCRIPTURE

I. Definition

- A. Infallible. Unerring (Webster) thus not liable to deceive, certain. Resultant authority a facet of this word. Has long history of use in relatn to inspir. Chiefly from Ref on.
- B. Inerrant. Exempt from error. Webster says it is syn with infall. Recent history (not before 19th C) in relatn to inspir. Wholly true only idea in this word while wholly trustworthy bec true added idea in infallible. Actually little diff.

II. History

- A. Pre-Ref. Implications of doct of inspir not worked out, but evident reverence for Script. Justin Martyr uses Scrip to prove deity of X. Origen vs. Celsus. Augustine has clear statement--"For I confess to your charity that I have learned to defer this respect and honor to those Scriptural books only which are now called canonical, that I believe most firmly that no one of those authors has erred in any respect in writing" Epistolae, 82, 1, 3. *Then accepted script authority is*
- B. Ref. Had to work out implications of inspir since it was a ques of whether authority was in the Bible or in Roman Ch. Luther: "I have learned to ascribe this honor (i.e. infallibility) only to books which are termed canonical, so that I confidently believe that not one of their authors erred..." M. Reu, Luther and Scrip, 24 Wycliffe speaks of Script as "Infallible rule of truth". Calvin refers to Script as "sure and infallible record" (Job 744), "unerring standard" (Institutes, I, 149), "infallible rule of His holy truth: Heb III, 166."
- C. Post-ref. Hodge and Warfield. Liberal and now neo-orthodox attacks. Westminster Conf "the infallible truth" of Scrip.

III. Importance

1. Relation to God
2. Inspiration
3. Relation to authority
4. Authority of Scrip

Absolute authority depends on absolute truth and reliability.

Contra (1) subjectivism of liberalism. If giving Word thru men precludes infallible product then we cannot have a single Script that is inerrant, not even Jn 3:16. (2) paradoxes of neo-orthodoxy. Cannot have a true picture of the Word thru fallible words. Script only roughly correct. No authority in Bible itself and not really in X as they claim, but actually in person who reads the Bible. Subjectivism again.

IV. Basis for the doctrine

Didactic vs. inductive
It is in what the Bible claims for itself to be; viz. the self-revelation of God who is truth. It claims that its teaching is from God and He cannot lie; thus His teaching is true or inerrant. Therefore, to assert inerrancy is to confess the divine origin of the Bible and the truthfulness and trustworthiness of God.

V. Proof

D. Analogy of X - Sin not nec. to humanity. ∴ fallible not nec. to use of men in recording.

- A. Involves faith. Bec our faith in infallibility rests on no other basis than the witness the Bible bears to this fact. This gives room for unresolved difficulties.
- B. Involves witness of Script to self. God is truth, Jn 3:33; 17:3; Rom 3:4; 1Th 1:9. Mt 5:17-19; Jn 10:33-36; 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21. Vss used to prove verbal part of inspir impt here too. Matt 5:18-jot & tittle, Gal 3:16, I Cor 2:13; Argument based on a word--Matt 22:32; 22:45; Gal 3:16.
- C. Involves concept of communication. Men think in words. More definite the that the more definite the verbal expression of it. No infallibility of that communication without infallible verbal rendering. Hodge, Outlines, 67.

"The authority which cannot assure of a hard fact is soon not trusted for a hard doctrine." Warfield 181.

VI. Problems

- A. Limitations? Some limit infallibility to "faith and practice". But who decides? Exclude scientific subjects. "Bible not a textbook of science" but when gives a scientific fact it speaks with infallible authority. Infallible in all that it says or not at all. Of course there is a limitation in that inspiration concerns the record which may include error or sentiment.
- B. Apparent discrepancies. "It is indeed true that we should not close our minds and researches to the ever-progressing resolution of difficulties under the illumination of the Spirit of truth, but those whose approach to faith is that of resolution of all difficulty have deserted the very nature of faith and of its ground." Murray, 7.
- C. Parallel passages. In OT and in Gospels.
- D. Manner of quoting.
- E. Bibliolatry.
- F. We don't have original autographs.
- G. Does anyone know enough to affirm an error?
- Warfield p 440. "...no argument against their claim to write under a verbal inspiration from God can be drawn from the phenomena of their writings. No phenomena can be adduced against verbal inspiration except errors,--no error can be proved to exist within the sacred pages; that is the argument in a nut-shell."

p.442. "Revelation is but half revelation unless it be infallibly communicated; it is but half communicated unless it be infallibly recorded."

Harrison, in Henry, 250. "It does not require us to hold inerrancy, though this is a corollary of full inspiration. The phenomena which present difficulties are not to be dismissed or underrated. They have driven many sincere believers in the trustworthiness of the Bible as a spiritual guide to hold a modified position on the non-revelation material. Every man must be persuaded in his own mind. ... It is possible that if our knowledge were greater, all seeming difficulties could be swept away."

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To avoid circular reasoning -

1. Show from archaeology, prophecy, etc. that Bible is reliable.
2. ∴ it must be reliable in its major presentation i.e. X
3. X affirms inspiration.