

239 “What Scripture says”

Last week we considered the phenomenon of “emerging theology”, the assumption that in each generation the Holy Spirit may well reveal “new theological truths” to God’s people. From recent experience it seems that these new truths tend to be more in tune with the prevailing mood of the times than with the Word of God in which the Christian Faith and Gospel have always been rooted.

Arguments over the actual nature of the Holy Bible and how it should be used are fierce but nothing new. At the heart of these arguments lies one old, simple, crucial question: What is the origin of the Holy Bible?

For instance we can ask, “When all is said and done, is the Bible of merely human origin?” – as many seem to assume these days. If so, its contents are basically a collection of human thoughts, experiences, hopes and fears from long ago. This collection may be interesting, even helpful at times, but in reality it possesses little authority or relevance in today’s world. For example, by following such a human-origin approach, the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20.1-17 and Deuteronomy 5.6-21) become simply a home-made list of “dooz and don’ts” cobbled together by an obscure tribe in times past; we might just as well put together our own list suitable for today.

Alternatively, there may be, for all we know, nuggets of “divine input” within the Bible, but how can we distinguish those nuggets from the human dross around them? – quite apart from the assumption involved in this that there is a “divine Being” in the first place, who has played a bit-part in producing the biblical text!

It is obvious that when it comes to the origin of the Bible, neither the human-only approach nor the human-plus-divine-nuggets approach get us very far! In each case the Bible is just a distraction - far better therefore, so the thinking goes, to set it aside and get on with coping with the issues before us today as we think best.

Before we move on, it is worth mentioning again, as is often done in these Reflections because it is such a critical issue, that these liberal approaches regarding the Bible took root in no small part because of the rejection of a plain reading of early Genesis. This rejection enabled “the Church” to fall into step with the wholly-false notion of Darwinian evolution – as classic an example of “emerging theology” as ever we could find. This setting-aside of the foundational chapters of the Bible has had devastating consequences, and is all the more foolish as being wholly unnecessary on both scientific and scriptural grounds. The more that Christ’s faithful sheep can stand FOR early Genesis and AGAINST Darwin on those solid grounds of evidence (the crucial factor being the Flood), the better for all concerned, for it is right here, in early Genesis, that the battle is hottest. See www.creation.com for further information).

And now thankfully we come on to the third approach concerning the origin of the Bible: is the Bible truly of divine origin as it clearly claims to be? The answer for now must be confined to a resounding YES, and we aim to look at further examples of the

overwhelming evidence in support of this confidence in future Weekly Reflections. This divine-origin approach means we can accept those Ten Commandments in the way we are obviously meant to accept them - as God-given, authoritative, permanent commands to all of humanity via God's covenant people the Jews, given for our guidance and blessing; and such acceptance of course applies to the rest of Scripture too. Suddenly everything changes – clarity, light, truth, hope, purpose, understanding, and praise.

Here are various bottles of “Encouragement Medicine” (there are many more on the shelf) – take a swig as often as you like! Psalm 119 / Matthew 5.17-18 and 7.24-29 / John 6.66-69 / Acts 1.1-11 and 2.22-36 and 4.19-20 / Romans Chapters 5-8 / II Timothy 3.12-17 / Hebrews 4.12-16 / II Peter 3.14-18 / Revelation 22).

We can be fully assured, with all the boldness and confidence that flow from that assurance, that every jot, tittle, letter, word, phrase and passage from Genesis 1.1 to Revelation 22.21 in the original texts is divinely authored and divinely inspired. (Because of some textual variations that have come in over time, (very few in comparison to the whole, mostly very trivial but some are more serious), it is best to use a Bible version today in which the translators followed a “complete equivalence approach” when translating the Masoretic Text and the Textus Receptus; the KJV or NKJV are good examples of such versions).

This all means that that fine old cry from Reformation times, “What Scripture says, God says”, still stands as strong as ever! – as do the solid and unassailable reasons underlying that cry.

Philippians 4.19-20. Alleluia!

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