

reply that either revelation has been truly (i.e., inerrantly -- for truth, by definition, must exclude error) inscripturated, or human finiteness and fallibility have conditioned (at least to some degree) the inscripturation of revelation. If the latter is true, then either we need an absolute principle external to Scripture in order to distinguish divine truth from human error, or, lacking such a principle, we cannot know what is true and what is false, and thus cannot help being reduced to agnosticism or skepticism with regard to any absolute truth in Scripture.

If the *kerygma* (the message, or proclamation) of Christ be claimed as the absolute principle by which truth can be distinguished from error, then it should be pointed out that by definition the *kerygma* itself is conditioned as to its inscripturation by human finiteness and fallibility. Thus the *kerygma* cannot escape the possibility of error, and therefore cannot be the norm of absolute truth.

If *empirical verification* be proposed as the absolute principle of distinguishing truth from error, then what of those statements in Scripture which have not as yet been empirically verified? Must each one await the judgment of philosophy, science, or history before it can be affirmed as true? If so, what does this do to faith? You can only trust in that which you believe to be truth. You can never trust that which you believe is in error or is a lie, no matter how hard you may try! (thus faith and truth are bound together, in the sense that faith is dependent upon truth). If one must await the conclusion of critical (and for the most part, unbelieving) scholarship before he can know whether or not a particular scriptural statement is true, then he cannot believe that statement until such conclusions are reached. But if and when these expert human conclusions are made, is one then sure that he has absolute truth? And what about those spiritual realities which are not able to be verified by sense experience, at least in this present existence? Can one believe in them? As the Lord Jesus put it, "If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how shall you believe if I tell you heavenly things?" (John 3:12). Empirical verification as a method of testing and verifying truth-claims via sense experience is hopelessly inadequate as an absolute criterion of distinguishing truth from error in Scripture!

This consideration prompts a necessary review of the basic approach and method in discovering the true doctrine of inspiration. If we approach this question via the "critical data of Scripture" or via the "phenomena of Scripture." it would appear unlikely that we could ever arrive at any confidence concerning the Bible as the Word of God. If on the other hand we approach this question via the witness of Scripture to itself, we discover that with *one voice*, the prophets, Christ, and the apostles proclaim that God's revelation of truth has been truly inscripturated! The teaching of Scripture concerning its own inspiration must be permitted to speak. What God has said concerning the nature and extent of the inscripturation of revelation must be taken as normative in defining the truth doctrine of inspiration. Only when we are armed with this doctrine are we equipped to undertake the task of attempting to resolve the problems presented by "critical data of Scripture."

The third step in the transmission of God's Word is that of its