

IS BIBLICAL LITERALISM DEFENSIBLE?

Niebuhr -- Calvin's putting "divine law" above human reason as the ultimate authority is obscurantist: it does not sufficiently engage man's rational capacities.

It is pretentious: Calvin's ethical system obscures the endless relativities of judgment by appealing to a "absolute system or law" which contains within itself relativities also.

The belief that the Bible gives final truth transcending all human perspectives and sinful corruptions, leads only to arrogant and intolerant spiritual pride which it seeks to destroy. The "authority" of the Bible was used to break the proud authority of the Church, whereupon the Bible became merely another instrument of human pride, exemplified by intolerance of other views of truth, including the way (or, "ladder") to heaven. But all/end ^{people} in building a ladder of their own also, so the problem is not solved.

Burrows -- Biblical inerrancy is obviously an outmoded conception; wherever science advances, religion must retreat.

Differences of interpretation among equally ~~AMONG~~ competent commentators shows that even the Hebrew and Greek Bible texts cannot be used strictly literally. Verbal dictation does not guarantee the Biblical infallibility it is supposed to guarantee.

Abandoning mechanical inspiration, as we must do, we conclude that personal human judgment, experience, and insight are finally determinative of faith and life, especially when applied to the Bible.

In getting the correct meaning during exegesis of a passage when more than one meaning seems possible, we must rely on the authority of demonstrated fact.

Appeal to the letter of the Bible does not give authority, for truth from God may be found outside of the Bible.