

I cannot think of a statement which I would consider more contrary to the teaching of the Bible than that which I have just read: that by theology we correct the Scripture. It should be the exact opposite; by Scripture we should correct our theology. What is theology? Theology is the ideas of human beings about God. Theology is the theory which men have, the attempt to explain the great mysteries of the universe: and how can man explain these matters? What good are his theories? His theories are valuable if they are a correct presentation of what he finds contained in the Scripture; and if they are not that, they are of no value at all.

About ten years ago we had two students who graduated from the seminary who decided that they would like to get a degree of Doctor of Theology, and since we do not give advanced work at Faith, going beyond the Master's degree, they decided to go to a seminary some distance from here, a seminary which many regard as quite an evangelical seminary, at which they could work for a degree of Doctor of Theology. After they had been there about two years, I happened to be in the area and they came to see me, and they said this to me. They said, "We are so thankful for the training we had at Faith. We find ourselves in a very different position from the graduates of this seminary who are with us in the same courses, working for the degree of Doctor of Theology." They said, "We find that these students have, when they take up a new subject, to immediately look at all the various authorities, and they will say that now on this subject, such a book says this is the answer, such a book says this is the answer, this book gives these arguments, this book gives these arguments, and they go through dozens of books and compare them and see the different arguments that they make, and they have done that largely through their three years of seminary; and they keep on doing it in working for their degree of Doctor of Theology. But they said when it comes to going to the Word of God for themselves, and reading the words and studying them to see exactly what they say for themselves, they are not trained to do that. And they said, they marvel at us that we are able to go to the Bible, to the Hebrew and the Greek, look at these words and make a judgment for ourselves as to what they mean.

Here is a seminary then, claiming to be an evangelical seminary, claiming to be a seminary that stands for true Christianity, but putting its emphasis on theology by which it means the theories of human beings and the interpretations of human beings, whether they be the interpretations of the Word of God or what, rather than the study of the Bible to see what the facts are that God has given us.

I was a little shocked some time ago to pick up a book by one of our fine Reformed scholars, an introduction to Theology, and to find in the introduction to it that this man said that he preferred the title instead of theology, he preferred the term dogmatics. And then he proceeded to discuss what a dogma is, and he said, no man can make a dogma. He said, you can't get a dogma out of the Bible, he said, dogmas are produced by the church; by the living church. And he said we get our dogmas from ideas which have developed in the church; and then we go to the Bible to get evidence to defend the dogmas which the church holds.

Well, that is a man who was a very sound theologian; and most of the material in his theology is very good. But right at the beginning of it I find an emphasis which I believe is an utterly false emphasis. Not only can not a man make a theology, the whole church can't make a dogma. If it is a true teaching, it must be based on the Word of God. Now these words which I read from this book which is called the Case for Orthodox Theology says; "We don't know whether the Holy Spirit corrected the documents from which the Chronicler derived his information, perhaps the Chronicler simply copied documents which were incorrect, full of mistakes and they contradict the book of Kings because they are full of mistakes. Well, perhaps the man who wrote Kings copied documents and they were wrong too, so we don't know anything about it at all." He does not in this book,