

False Doctrines in the Church: The Scriptures, II

By Tom Hill

Bible Text: 2 Timothy 3:14-17

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2 Timothy 3:14-17:

"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; {15} And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. {16} All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: {17} That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Cause

At first glance, you would think this condition originates from an intellectual problem. But it does not. Increased emphasis upon apologetics will not cure it. Well-defined data from archeology will not heal the evil, either. Neither will well-reasoned argumentation solve the dilemma.

None of these efforts will correct the sin of rejecting Biblical authority, because this evil does not result from an intellectual problem.

Instead, it arises from a moral problem. The natural human heart hates God. Neither will it subject itself unto God. It fights against the Holy Spirit and His workings in mankind (Romans 8.5-8). Thus, the rejection of His word develops from an unbelieving and disobedient heart.

The solution, then, requires a change of the moral condition of the heart. Nothing else will suffice.

Crossroads

The Church of Jesus Christ, perhaps even you, faces a crossroads. One option urges you to continue to follow the present path, away from God and submission to His word. The other calls you to correction from the present path, to God and submission to His word as infallible and authoritative for life and practice.

Cure

It is precisely to this issue that Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, speaks to Timothy. In fact, the context of Paul's counsel centers upon the rebellion of evil men against the truth (2 Timothy 3.1-13). Against these conditions, the Holy Spirit prompts Paul to direct Timothy to the Scriptures.

Our text provides the doctrine that when believed and obeyed will help us overcome the common rejection of Biblical authority and remedy the problem. The Bible conclusively reveals God's word to humankind, exerts authority over mankind, and, when believed and obeyed, produces divine effects in human beings.

To see these divine realities requires spiritual illumination of them by the Holy Spirit. For in this passage, the Spirit reveals through Paul's counsel to Timothy the very truths that conquer these errors. May He come in grace and open your eyes to see their truthfulness and apply them to your life.

Divine authorship of the Scriptures

Our text clearly asserts the divine author of the Scriptures, God Himself. In verse 16, Paul unmistakably named God as the author: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God..." This statement makes four declarations relative to the Scriptures.

First, it removes man as the source. Humanity did not self-generate the Biblical record. Nor did it flow from man to man. It was given to him without human invention, intervention, inclination, interpretation, imagination, or intention.

Second, the Bible was inspired or divinely breathed into the writers. Some power other than their own moved upon them. The writers recorded what this other power inspired them to write.

Third, this other power was no less than God Himself. He initiated the process. He inspired the writers and revealed to them the message that He wanted known. He elevated them above their natural ability and bore them along.

The message of the Bible, then, originated from God and came from Him to mankind. He breathed it into life by His Holy Spirit.

Fourth, it includes all Scripture, not just parts of Scripture. Today, philosophy tries to say that all Scripture that is inspired is from God. However, this conclusion leaves open the door for people to reject certain parts of Scripture as not inspired, based upon human reasoning.

However, the text clearly negates this fallacy. The phrase "all Scripture" includes each separate unit, the matter, and the words. The phrase "all Scripture," then, includes the topics, ideas, concepts, and the words that explain and reveal them. Thus, the inspiration

of the Bible by God is thorough and complete. It leaves no room for selective inspiration of Scripture.

Evidence from other Biblical references confirms these conclusions. I will mention two of them. Notice the precision of 1 Thessalonians 2:13:

"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."

Here the apostle states that it came not from men to men but from God to men: "...not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God..." He clearly verifies God as the source and author of Scripture. Of a surety, it came from God, and it is His word to humankind.

See the verification of these truths again in 2 Peter 1:21:

"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

Here Peter validates these important truths. The Bible came not by private interpretation, e. g., from the writer's own self or personal explanation. Neither did it come as the result of the writer's own will.

Instead, he explains that God moved upon the authors by His Holy Spirit, Who moved them as they wrote. The message came at the initiative of God, from His mind and origin to the authors. The Holy Spirit bore them along and elevated them above their human and natural ability to inscribe God's word to us.

I want to declare without any question the divine authorship of the Bible. God inspired it and breathed it into the minds and hearts of those who recorded it for our benefit. It includes all of it, not just selective parts.

Divine authority of the Scriptures

Because of its divine authorship, God's word demands faith and obedience to its message. That alone should make it unnecessary to defend and prove its authority. Nevertheless, the Spirit moved Paul to affirm this truth to Timothy. Paul directed him to continue in that which he had learned from the Scriptures.

The word "continue" carries a significant meaning, specifically as it relates to the Bible. It describes its application in life. For example, it entails abiding and dwelling in the Word. It includes enduring and remaining in it. Further, it requires standing in it.

These definitions confirm the counsel that Paul had given to Timothy on other occasions. In his first letter, the Apostle counseled him to continue in the doctrine that would save him and others (1 Timothy 4.16). In earlier portions of his second letter, Paul directed Timothy to hold fast the word and to commit it to others who in like manner would entrust it to others, too (2 Timothy 1.13; 2.2). Clearly, the Holy Spirit conveyed through Paul to Timothy the authority of the Scriptures in life.

Paul does not stand alone in declaring their authority. Peter charged believers with the same truth. For example, he instructed his Christian brothers and sisters "... (to) take heed..." unto the Scriptures (2 Peter 1.19). As with Paul's directive to "...continue in the word " of God, so Peter's instruction "... (to) take heed" conveys strong implications.

It, too, speaks to the issue of application in life. It means to hold the mind towards God's word. It requires one to pay attention to it and to apply oneself to it. Further, it compels believers to search, study, and subject themselves to it.

Time and space prevent the addition of the wealth of examples from the Bible that declare its authority in life. David, the prophets, and Solomon, to name just a few, emphatically proclaim the authority of the Scriptures for life and practice.

Without question, God's word to mankind, the Bible, is divinely authoritative for all of life and practice.

"The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

Isaiah 1.20

"All Scripture, being inspired of the Spirit, is spoken by the mouth of God. However this sacred Book may be treated nowadays, it was not treated contemptuously, nor negligently, nor questioningly by the Lord Jesus Christ, our Master and Lord. It is noteworthy how He revered the written Word.

"The Spirit of God rested upon Him personally, without measure, and He could speak out of His own mind the revelation of God, and yet He continually quoted the law and the prophets, and the Psalms; and always He treated the sacred writings with intense reverence, strongly in contrast with the irreverence of 'modern thought.'

"I am sure, brethren, we cannot be wrong in imitating the example of our divine Lord in our reverence for that Scripture, which cannot be broken. I say, if He, the anointed of the Spirit, and able to speak Himself as God's mouth, yet quoted the sacred writings, and used the holy Book in His teachings, how much more should we...value every single word that 'the mouth of the Lord hath spoken.'"

"The Infallibility of Scripture,"

by Charles H. Spurgeon