

# THE TRINITY REVIEW

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare [are] not fleshly but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And they will be ready to punish all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled. (2 Corinthians 10:3-6)

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## Beegle on the Bible: A Review Article Part 1 by Gordon H. Clark

*Editor's note: This article was first published in the Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society Volume 20, September 1977, 265-286. A lecture of this same material was given the same year at Believers Chapel in Dallas, Texas. See A Contemporary Defense of the Bible mentioned at the end.*

Dewey M. Beegle's *Scripture, Tradition, and Infallibility* (second edition; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973) is an all-out, no-holds-barred, always aggressive, sometimes insidious attack on the truthfulness of Scripture. Its basic thesis, used both as an axiom and as a conclusion, is the occurrence of indubitable errors in the Bible. This thesis is a conclusion when the author cites historical, archaeological and critical inductions to support it. It also serves the author as a premise from which he deduces theological conclusions concerning inspiration, the doctrines of the Gospel, the purpose of revelation, the nature of truth and the attributes of God.

These subjects overlap and are repeated many times throughout the book. In spite of such inter-mixtures a sufficient separation can be made to give the criticism an appearance of logical form.

### I. THE PHENOMENA

Discussions on inerrancy in recent years have often distinguished between the theological teaching of the Bible and the so-called phenomena – *i.e.*, historical, chronological, geographical and statistical data. Louis Gaussen in his *Theopneustia*

conclusively and overwhelmingly demonstrated that the Bible claims inerrancy. Beegle wishes to disallow this claim on the basis of an inductive study of the phenomena. Of course, if the historical details are wrong, then the Biblical claim to inerrancy is false and is just another error. Thus the issue is joined.

#### 1. Pekah

One of these inductive arguments concerns the reign of Pekah as given in *2 Kings* 15. It occurs mainly on 180-184 and is used again on 267-268. The general idea is that "for some years now the figure 20 [in verse 27] has been *known* to be wrong," because it does not fit Assyrian records. "Thiele has given sufficient evidence to clinch the matter.... Archaeological evidence has confirmed *beyond doubt* [italics mine] that Samaria submitted to the Assyrians in 722. It is *impossible*, then, to give Pekah his twenty years after 739 BC.... II Kings 15:27 states quite unambiguously that Pekah reigned in Samaria twenty years after he became King of Israel, and this is precisely what did not happen" (180-182). Beegle explicitly rules out all attempts to support the truth of the Biblical text. He *knows* it is wrong; *2 Kings* is unambiguously *impossible*; the Bible states *precisely* what did *not* happen.

One may indeed wonder why the Assyrian records might not be in error instead of *2 Kings*. Is this impossible and beyond doubt? As a matter of fact, the Assyrian inscriptions are fragmentary and require restorations. O. T. Allis, *The Old Testament*

(422-424), says, "If the restoration is correct...[the scribe] must have been badly informed...." "The two accounts are so different that we may well hesitate to accept the restoration. As to this, Smith tells us, 'In this case it is probable that the Assyrian writer did not know that the crowns had changed hands or that Ahaz and Pekah had more than one name.'" The present writer, admittedly, is in no position to evaluate the details of Assyrian inscriptions. The point is merely that the Assyrian material may contain error, rather than the Bible. However, there is more to be said.

Harold Lindsell in his *Battle for the Bible*, though he did not want to burden his book with lengthy archaeological details, chose the case of Pekah as an example. To understand both Lindsell and Beegle, one must know that the latter largely depended on the work of Edwin R. Thiele. The following quotation from Lindsell ought to be lengthy enough for the present purpose, but the public would do well to read the whole section and the whole book.

"Thiele wrestled with this problem in his doctoral dissertation. In 1951 his book *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*...brought order out of chaos as Thiele managed to reconcile the chronologies in such a way as to enforce the claim to accuracy of the biblical texts. Unfortunately he ran into an apparently irresolvable problem in the case of Pekah." It is on this basis that Beegle claims infallible certainty that the Bible is in error. "Since that time Edwin R. Thiele has published an article entitled 'Coregencies and Overlapping Reigns Among the Hebrew Kings' in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*. In this article Dr. Thiele has given the key to the Pekah problem. And Beegle's claim that Scripture has erred falls to the ground. Where Beegle went wrong was to assume that 2 Kings 15:27 was intended to mean that Pekah reigned twenty years in Samaria. At first glance, it appears to say that. But ironically the key to the problem falls in line with one of the claims of the historical-critical school, which argues that we must ask what the writer intended to say." Here follow two paragraphs of detail which should be studied in Lindsell's book and still more in Thiele's. "Thiele concludes that there are no longer any problems connected with the chronology of Kings and that the biblical data are shown to be accurate" (172-173).

The case of Pekah will be the only archaeological difficulty examined here. Now comes an example from historical criticism, after which a conclusion will be drawn relative to these so-called phenomena of Scripture.

## 2. Jude

This historical point on which Beegle convicts the Bible of indubitable error concerns the epistle of *Jude*. This seems to be an important point for Beegle, since he mentions it in at least six different places. As a previous paragraph said, Beegle repeats, overlaps, and merges his points. On this subject two verses in particular engage his attention. Verse 9 refers to Michael's contention with Satan about the body of Moses, and verse 14 is Enoch's prophecy of our Lord's second advent. The argument is that Jude used apocryphal or pseudepigraphal books, that Jude asserts Enoch to be the seventh from Adam, that the writer Enoch lived around 200 BC, and that therefore Jude is in error. "*Without question* Jude got his quotation from a copy of the book of 1 Enoch" (177). "Tradition generally solved the problem by claiming that Jude's source was oral tradition.... This attempt... has proved to be baseless, however."

The crux of the matter is that inerrancy would have prevented Jude from placing the source of his quotation before the flood, when in fact it was only two hundred years old.

To this a twofold reply can be made. First, however plausible it seems that Jude quoted the apocryphal *1 Enoch*, it is not quite "without question" as Beegle claims. Nor has anyone disproved the possibility of oral tradition. Until such proof is produced, inerrancy is unaffected. Secondly, inerrancy is also unaffected even if Jude had read and quoted *1 Enoch*. The OT itself mentions non-canonical books of an earlier age that correctly report some events, from which books the writers of the OT may have taken some information. One example is the Book of Jashar (*Joshua* 10:13; *2 Samuel* 1:18). Hence it is possible that *1 Enoch* reports an oral tradition of what Enoch the seventh from Adam said, and that the original Enoch actually said it. There is no reason, no proof, that this is not the case. In fact, Jude's explicit designation "the seventh from Adam" can easily be understood as Jude's warning that the quotation's origin was not in 200 BC. Thus the correctness of Jude's assertion is not "untenable," as Beegle thinks. The conclusion that Jude "without doubt" made a mistake is a result of fallacious logic.

The case of Michael's disputation with Satan is similar. Beegle seems to say that since Joshua never referred to the event it could not have happened. Of course, Beegle does not say it so crudely. He states, "There is no biblical reason,

aside from Jude's allusion, for believing in the actuality of the story" (180). But the orthodox doctrine of inspiration regards Jude's allusion as a quite sufficient *Biblical* reason for believing. Even if Beegle had said there is no extra-Biblical reason, his argument would have been logically fallacious. Events which in the nineteenth century had no extra-Biblical evidence in their favor are now supported by more recent discoveries. But the account is and was true apart from such corroboration.

In the case of Michael, Beegle asks the rhetorical question, "What becomes of the doctrine of inerrancy?" The obvious answer is that it remains unaffected.

Let it not be thought that the present writer has any hopes of an historical confirmation of the affair between Michael and Satan. If someone should find such a document, the liberals would not believe the story anyway. Treating the story as an error seems *a priori* plausible in this twentieth century because of the widespread disbelief in the supernatural. Karl Barth must deny the empty tomb. Bultmann finds nothing but existentialism in the demythologized NT. Satan is a superstition; angels are fairies. But if one rejects modern scientism and believes the Bible, the book of *Jude* poses no problem for inerrancy.

Pekah and *Jude* are the only two "phenomena" necessary to discuss here. In these examples, however, deeper problems are involved. Hence some remarks on historiography and the logic of archaeological argumentation are appropriate.

### 3. *Historiographical Considerations*

Beegle was willing to assert the inerrancy of Thiele's early trouble with Pekah. Lindsell seems to think that Thiele's later investigations are correct. Now, in the nineteenth century Leopold von Ranke claimed to write history *wie es eigentlich gewesen* – "as it actually was." In those days scholars almost universally accepted von Ranke's position. But historiography has advanced in the twentieth century to the point at which most historians consider all history tentative. Objectivity is impossible, and reconstructions are always possible.<sup>1</sup> Therefore everyone must be prepared to admit that Thiele's later views may contain some errors. Beegle might take comfort in this, but his argument is nonetheless eviscerated, for he needs an infallible historian to convict the Bible of error. He permits not the slightest doubt that the Bible is mistaken. The destructive critics are inerrant; and

evangelicals, imposing their own *a priori* ideas on a Scripture passage that contradicts them, are intellectually dishonest. Beegle exhibits his sense of superiority in saying, "It is quite evident that the advocates of inerrancy and infallibility have been conveniently deaf to the truth of the matter because of the upsetting consequences inherent in the facts" (298).

Let it be noted, in case Beegle or anyone else should miss the point, that evangelicals, defined historically as those who hold to *sola scriptura* and *sola fide*, do not assert the truth of *2 Kings* on the basis of Assyrian inscriptions; nor do they assert the truth of Satan and Michael, or David and Daniel, on the basis of archaeological or historical investigations. Evangelicals assert the inerrancy of the whole Bible on the ground of its own claims. The Biblical teaching is *axiomatic*. It is not deduced from previous external axioms.

But this does not make evangelicals "conveniently blind." They are very happy to face the "facts" of Assyrian inscriptions and other archaeological debris. But what they find in them is neither proof nor disproof of Biblical infallibility. What they find in them is *ad hominem* arguments discomfiting to the liberals – no more, no less. Of course, evangelicals have *a priori* axioms. The liberals also depend on indemonstrable assertions. Every philosophic system must have a starting point, or else it does not start. But sometimes the liberals talk as if they had discovered "facts" without starting from historiographical assumptions.

## II. LOGICAL FALLACIES

In the process of attacking the truthfulness of the Bible, Beegle of necessity must go beyond the "bare facts"; he must state the doctrine he opposes, and he must construct arguments. This second section now examines some of these procedures.

### 1. *Nelson Glueck*

The case of Nelson Glueck comes first, not by virtue of any logical priority over the succeeding points but simply because it connects so directly with the preceding archaeological and historical material.

On 223-224 Beegle considers the evangelical contention that so many of the errors alleged by the liberals (such as the assertion that writing had not yet been invented when Moses was supposed to have written the Pentateuch, and the denial that there had ever been a Hittite nation) have turned out not to be errors at all – that very likely, at least very possibly, the present unsolved problems will

<sup>1</sup> G. H. Clark, *Historiography: Secular and Religious*, 126-178 (115-162 in 1994 edition – *Editor*).

not turn out to be errors either. In partial support of this view evangelicals have recently cited the Reform Jewish scholar Nelson Glueck, who said, "It is worth emphasizing that in all this work no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a single, properly understood Biblical statement."<sup>2</sup>

Beegle's reply is a study in liberal evasion. Beegle "questioned Glueck personally. The latter made it quite plain that he had no intention of supporting the doctrine of inerrancy.... He cannot be claimed as a champion of the doctrine of inerrancy" (223-224).

But no one claimed that Glueck was a champion of inerrancy. The claim is that Glueck, as a scholarly liberal Jewish professor, and other liberals too, have acknowledged that "no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a single, properly understood Biblical statement." Since this is so, since the liberal attacks have uniformly failed in the past, the evangelical can reasonably hope that the next attack will fail also. If the Bible were so inaccurate as Astruc, Wellhausen, Driver, Snaith, von Rad and Beegle have been claiming, should not a hundred, or at least a dozen, errors have been established by now – really without doubt? But Glueck acknowledges that not even a single error has been established. Therefore Beegle has no scholarly basis for his dogmatic insistence that orthodox theologians are dishonest. Nor can he exclude their expectation that future alleged errors will prove to be truths.

In the nature of the case archaeology never will be able to prove that the Bible is inerrant. Too many cultural or historical minutiae are beyond recall, not to mention the utterly foreign sphere of theological doctrine. But only an inerrant critic can expect to prove that the Bible errs.

## 2. Pindar

To discredit the doctrine of inerrancy, Beegle discovers its source in Greek poetry. "Homer... invokes the inspiration of the Muses...to carry out his poetic work.... Hesiod describes a dream in which the Muses come to him.... Pindar repeatedly credits the Muses with being the true authors of the form and content of his Odes. The philosopher Parmenides...outdoes Hesiod.... Democritus held that the poet's inspiration came from outside himself while his rational powers were suspended,

as in sleep" (127). "Although the rabbis in Palestine were not interested in philosophy as such, their interpretation hinged on the precise wording of the text, so the need for a more authoritative doctrine of inspiration led them to accept the Greek concept of inerrancy" (131). "Tradition accepted the biblical emphasis that God initiated the revelatory process, but one of the unanswered problems was that of authorship. Was God the author of Scripture as well as the originator? If so, what part did man play? Some, like Athenagoras, thought completely in terms of the Greek theory of inspiration where the deity dictates the message to his passive human instrument" (198).

Surely this is an argument of defective scholar-ship. What documents can Beegle offer to show that the Greek poets claimed inerrancy or a verbally dictated message? What evidence is there that the Jewish rabbis took their theology from Homer or Hesiod? Beegle gives no references, which he ought to have done for such an important assertion; therefore a critic can only quote a few sample paragraphs. The following come from Pindar: *Olympian Ode* I, lines 111ff. "For myself the Muse is keeping a shaft most mighty in strength"; III, lines 2ff. "While I order my song...the Muse stood beside me, when I found out a fashion...by fitting to the Dorian measure the voice of festive revelers"; X, lines 3ff. "Do thou, O muse, and also truth, the daughter of Zeus...put an end to the blame for a broken promise"; *Pythian Ode* I, line 58: "I would bid my Muse also stand beside Deinomenes, while she loudly praiseth the guerdon won by the chariot of four horses"; *Isthmian Ode* VII, lines 38ff. "The Upholder of the earth has given me fair weather after storm. I shall sing with my hair entwined with garlands. Let not the envy of the immortals disturb me."

The fallacious logic of using Homer, Hesiod and Pindar as the source of the doctrine of the verbal and plenary inspiration of Scripture can be seen not only in Gausson's careful study of the Biblical claims but also, if we wish to talk of poets, in a later poet of note: "Of man's first disobedience and the fruit / Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste / Brought death into the world and all our woe / ... Sing, heavenly Muse."

Therefore Milton claimed that God had dictated to him every word of *Paradise Lost!*

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<sup>2</sup> *Horizon* 2/2 (November 1959) 6.

### *3. Papal Infallibility*

Another of the phenomena of Beegle's text, though not of major importance, is his repeated references to papal infallibility. In about ten sections Beegle discusses Roman Catholicism. This seems a little much, but the subject is not inappropriate in a general treatment of inerrancy. The use Beegle makes of popes, as one may expect, is of no great use to Protestants; but neither is it of much help to Beegle's argument. He somewhat merges or compares the two forms of inerrancy, or at least does not keep them rigidly distinct, with the aim of condemning inerrancy in general. But from a logical point of view a successful refutation of one form of inerrancy may leave another form untouched. Romanism takes both the pope and the Bible as infallible. Orthodox Protestants insist that the pope contradicts the Bible, and on this basis one of the infallibilities must fall. But the other need not. Such an objection therefore is inapplicable to Protestants, who acknowledge only one infallibility.

### *4. False in All*

Increasing awareness of the difficulties facing the doctrine of inerrancy, says Beegle, meets with "a reluctance to make the change on account of the haunting fear implicit in the legal maxim, 'False in one, false in all'" (219). Beegle admits that perjury discredits a witness in court, but adds, "In no case is this legal rule of thumb adhered to rigidly in the courts. On what authority, then, must this be applied with absolute consistency to the Scriptures?"

Laelius Socinus is supposed to have been the first to introduce this legal maxim into theology. His nephew, Faustus Socinus, continued it. Yet Beegle admits that Socinus did not accept the maxim, "False in one, false in all," literally. Rather it was that "if a person could doubt concerning one passage, there was no reason why he could not doubt concerning all of them" (220). It is this latter principle therefore that Beegle ought to refute, if he wishes to have some faith in an erroneous Bible.

But Beegle commingles the two different statements so as to discredit the latter by destroying the former. The former means that a document with one mistake in it can contain no true statement at all. The other means that if a man is guilty of perjury, no one can accept his other statements on his sole authority but must search out independent witnesses. Beegle confuses these two and deprecates the disjunction, "Either the autographs were inerrant or else human fallibility infected all of

Scripture. Consistency would permit no mediating point of view. Even John Wesley resorted to this argument in later life [Did he earlier believe that the Bible taught falsehoods?...]and so retorted, 'Nay, if there be any mistakes in the Bible, there may well be a thousand. If there be one falsehood in that book, it did not come from God'" (220-221).

But Wesley and the disjunction are correct, and Beegle must acknowledge it. This whole liberal attack on the Bible stresses the fact that men wrote the Bible, and men can err. On the liberal's own principles, therefore, "human fallibility infected all of Scripture." To err is human; Beegle himself says so. "To conceive of an absolute inerrancy as the effect of inspiration was not really to believe that God had condescended to the human sphere."

Right here let it be interjected that there is no reason to accept Beegle's arbitrary view of condescension.

Now, to continue the quotation: "A human literature containing no error would indeed be a contradiction in terms, since nothing is more human than to err" (302). Hence Beegle must agree that on his grounds human fallibility infects the Scriptures from beginning to end. For this reason Bible believers insist not that if one statement is false all must be, but that if one statement is false the others may be.

A consequence of this is that reliance must be placed in Assyrian inscriptions and other criteria external to the Scripture. How then can Beegle show that the doctrine of the Trinity or Christ's propitiatory sacrifice is not an error?

### *5. Indefectibility*

The topic, "false in one, false in all," and the quotation adduced merge into a discussion of inerrancy, infallibility and indefectibility (302). In fact it is best to give the same quotation again in extended form.

The terms "inerrancy" and "infallibility" are absolutes that actually apply only to God. "Instead," Vawter declares, "we should think of inspiration as always a positive divine and human interaction in which the principle of condescension hail been taken at face value. To conceive of an absolute inerrancy as the effect of inspiration was not really to believe that God had condescended to the human sphere but rather that he transmuted

it into something else. A human literature containing no error would indeed be a contradiction in terms, since nothing is more human than to err. Put in more vital terms, if the Scripture is a record of revelation, the acts of a history of salvation in which God has disclosed Himself by entering into the ways of man, it must be a record of trial and error as well as of achievement, for it is in this way that man learns and comes to the truth.”

This paragraph, quoted in its entirety, is an excellent example of the methods of propaganda. In it are half truths, statements that believers believe to be false, *a priori* philosophic assumptions, and bad logic.

The first sentence, which ascribes infallibility to God alone, may or may not be true. First, one must distinguish between persons and documents. If infallibility is ascribed to persons, and if infallibility means that the person has never made and never will make an error, then infallibility belongs to God alone, unless we wish to include the righteous angels also. On the other hand, if infallibility is asserted of a document, then it means merely that that document teaches no error. Believers believe that such is the case with the Bible. Believers do not believe that Isaiah and Paul never made false assertions. Paul clearly made many before his conversion; nor do we say he never made any afterward. We do not attribute infallibility to Paul. It is the Biblical text that is infallible. Nor need one insist that the Bible is the only infallible book. A first-grade arithmetic book may be infallible or inerrant. There is no reason to insist that a few pages of elementary arithmetic must contain a mistake simply because they were written by a human being. Thus in the first sentence the quoted paragraph is deceptive, indeed false, and by implication misrepresents conservative theology. Clearly, therefore, the conclusion that is then based on it cannot command assent.

The second sentence of the quotation is vague and ambiguous. Inspiration may well be “a positive divine and human interaction”; but “positive” means little, and interactions occur in various forms. Does the author intend to say that the doctrine of inerrancy denies a positive divine interaction between Paul and God? Even the crassest form of dictation theory would not make such a denial. “Face value” also is meaningless by itself. No doubt

the third sentence is supposed to determine the meaning. It is a definition, partial or negative, of inspiration, inerrancy and condescension. The previous subhead pointed out the arbitrary non-Biblical nature of this definition. But further, inerrancy, says the author, not only denies divine condescension; it also means that God has transmuted the human sphere into something non-human. This implies that neither Paul nor an author of an arithmetic textbook could be a human being, if he wrote two pages without an error.

If the premises of Beegle’s argument are not *a priori*, alien assumptions, imposed on Scripture, he should be able to show their Scriptural justification. The present writer is convinced he cannot do this; and every reader must agree that he did not do it.

Beyond these considerations something more profound in theology is also involved. Beegle has asserted that error and human nature are inseparable. The Bible, however, says that this is not so. Before the fall Adam was human, but he did not sin and therefore, however ignorant he may have been, he did not err – he made no false assertions. Errorless speech or errorless writing and human nature do not form a contradiction in terms. If perchance God condescended to tell Adam that two plus two are four, or if he told them that eating the forbidden fruit would bring death and all our woe into the world, and if perchance Adam had written this down on a piece of birch bark, would this action of writing have made the propositions false? Furthermore, how could this have transmuted the human Adam into something non-human?

But Beegle has an easy way out of all these difficulties. Since the Bible is so erroneous, Adam never existed.

However and nonetheless, another difficulty looms. When we all get to heaven, or at least when some of us do, will we still be human beings and therefore continue to exemplify the maxim, “To err is human”?

The last sentence of the quoted paragraph contains another definitional statement which no one need accept, plus an irrelevancy that befogs the issue. “If Scripture is a record of revelation” is partly definitional and partly befogging. Conservative evangelicals – that is, those who accept the Reformation principle of *sola scriptura* instead of *scriptura et assyriana* — are glad to agree that God

revealed himself in conversation with Abraham. Moses then wrote a “record of revelation.” But the paragraph is deceptive in that it wishes to restrict the revelation not perhaps to God's *conversation* but to his *encounter* with Abraham. Evangelicals insist that the Bible is itself revelation, not just an erroneous record of a previous unwritten or unspoken revelation. Since we thus reject the if-clause, the conclusion does not convince us. In addition, a record of God's dealings with man surely would contain accounts of men's sins and errors, as the writer says. But this is utterly irrelevant. Of course Abram was less than gallant when he told Pharaoh that Sarai was his sister. And David's sin was enormous. What is relevant, however, is the truth or falsity of the so-called record. To say that all saints sin does not imply that the record is erroneous. But such is the fallacious reasoning of the writer.

The quoted paragraph therefore imposes a non-Biblical *a priori* philosophy on the Scriptures; it deals in half truths and ambiguities; it lays down arbitrary definitions no one need accept; and its logic is fallacious.

#### 6. Error

In his unceasing effort to belittle Bible-believing Christians, Beegle becomes ludicrous. After his insistence on errors in the Bible, he charges his opponents with an inability to define error.

On 148-149 he writes, “The doctrine of inerrancy is a negative statement with the specific intent of protecting God and his Written Word.” No doubt Beegle relies on the negative effect of the term “negative” to stimulate a negative reaction in his readers. Error is negative. Beegle is very positive that it is negative. But then every negative proposition can also be expressed positively – in this case, “Everything the Bible asserts is true.” However, to continue the quotation, “The early adherents had no idea how complex and multi-faceted the term ‘error’ was. They *naively* thought that the Bible had no deviation from absolute truth....” Well, it seems that they had a fairly clear notion of “error” after all. Luther and Quenstedt were hardly puzzled by the term “mistake” when they declared that the prophets and apostles made no mistake, even in historical and geo-graphical or other incidental details. At any rate, if Beegle can so easily identify errors in the Bible, why should Bible believers have such difficulties in knowing what the word “error” means?

Then Beegle adds another thought by which he hopes to reduce the inspiration of the autographs to the level of the alleged “inspiration” of the copies, with the result that erroneous documents may be regarded as “inspired”: “...no deviation from absolute truth, and *of course* by Scripture they meant the copies at hand.” Calvin certainly never meant the copies at hand. He explicitly mentioned scribal errors as opposed to the original text. But Beegle is certain that Paul attributed inspiration to the copies of the OT then in circulation, and he quotes 2 *Timothy* 3:16 to prove it (164). Again, he says, “Paul's use of *theopneustos* in 2 *Timothy* 3:16 applies to the manuscript copies of his day. In verse 15 Paul refers to ‘the sacred writings’ with which Timothy had been acquainted from his childhood. But what were these writings? The Hebrew, or the Septuagint, or both” (170). Presumably Beegle would also conclude that Jesus, when he said, “It is written,” meant to assert the infallibility of current manuscripts. But if Calvin, or any half-educated evangelical today with reasonable knowledge of textual variants, can recommend “the Word of God written” and perhaps hold up some contemporary version for the congregation to see, without burdening his sermon with discussions of variants and versions, then Paul could also refer to “the holy Scriptures” without implying the inerrancy of the extant manuscripts. Beegle's ponderous and pedantic requirements do not apply to Billy Graham, or to Calvin, or to Paul. Let the point be clear: There is no need to discuss textual criticism in every sermon that mentions the Word of God.

#### 7. *Et Alia*

In order that the number of these subheads may not rise unreasonably, but also that no one may suspect or assert the omission of anything crucial, a few other points will barely be mentioned. These with the six preceding are examples of logical deficiencies in Beegle's argument.

First, he reasons that if our defective copies are sufficient for the spread of Christianity there never was need for an inerrant autograph.

Two replies are at hand. One, any liberal argument based on textual criticism is considerably exaggerated. The great majority of variants are trivial, and someone has estimated that only one word in a thousand changes the sense. However, this does not perfectly answer the liberal position. It is better to point out that a copy of an inerrant

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original, though defective one thousandth of the time, is infinitely superior to an absolutely perfect reproduction of original falsehoods.

Two, when Beegle says that defective copies are sufficient, one must ask, "Sufficient for what?" Admittedly, the uneducated preaching of circuit riders often produced gracious results. But it would be unfortunate if Christianity itself had no better foundation than frontier preachers. Unless the foundation be truth, absolute truth as Beegle terms it on 148, there is no reason to receive the message.

Beegle next asserts that an appeal to inerrant autographs is impossible because as a general rule there never was an autograph. Not to mention that Jeremiah's prophecy was shredded and burnt, Paul regularly dictated his letters and added only a few lines in his own hand (152). On this basis we may conclude that Beegle never checked his typists' work and that the book was published without his ever having seen the galley sheets and page proofs.

*The conclusion of this article will appear in the November-December Trinity Review.*

### Update on *For the King*

*For the King: The Trinity Review, 1999-2008* should be ready in October – thanks for your patience. A new edition of *Religion, Reason and Revelation* is also due out later this fall.

### New Lectures Posted

We have added new lectures, new collections of lectures, and re-organized Collection 12 Miscellaneous Lectures (Thanks to Believers Chapel of Dallas, Texas for the new Clark lectures) – see below:

Collection 12 Miscellaneous Lectures – Gordon H. Clark (6 lectures)

1. The Clark-Hoover Debate
2. The Inerrancy of the Bible
3. A Defense of Christian Presuppositions in Light of Non-Christian Presuppositions (New)
4. A Contemporary Defense of the Bible (New)

5. Predestination in the Old Testament (New)
6. The Problem of Pietism and Non-Doctrinal Christianity (New)

Collection 14 Miscellaneous Lectures – John W. Robbins (10 lectures) (New collection)

1. The Educational Establishment versus Civilization
2. A Christian University
3. Words, Faith Theological Seminary Commencement Address 2007
4. Mysteries, Knowledge and Truth
5. The New Covenant of Grace
6. The Religious Wars of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century
7. Islam 1
8. Islam 2
9. Islam 3
10. Islam 4

Collection 15 The Church and the Doctrine on which She Stands or Falls (Justification by Faith Alone) – John W. Robbins (14 lectures) (New collection and lectures)

1. The Church Part 1 (New)
2. The Church Part 2 (New)
3. The Church Effeminate (New)
4. The Church Irrational
5. Justification by Faith Alone Part 1 (New)
6. Justification by Faith Alone Part 2 (New)
7. Justification by Faith Alone Part 3 (New)
8. Justification by Faith Alone Part 4 (New)
9. Matthew 7:21-23 (New)
10. Galatians 1:1-9 (New)
11. Galatians 1:1-8 (New)
12. Galatians 1:9-17 (New)
13. Galatians 3:1-9 (New)
14. James 2:14-22 (New)

### Correction on Sale Flyer

*The Trinity* by Gordon H. Clark is not \$6.95 but \$12.95