***Faith and Inerrancy
RV17-02***

We are studying the letter to the church of Thyatira. This is segment number 4. We are in Revelation 2:18-29. In His commendation to the believers in Thyatira, the Lord Jesus Christ points out qualities which please Him about a local church. These are qualities that He likes to see and wants to see in the people that make up a local church congregation. These virtues are therefore qualities which Satan and his demons constantly seek to undermine in a local church.

**Divine Good Works**

The first one of these qualities which the Lord Jesus Christ commended in this church was their divine good production or their divine good works. The works that they produced were works of divine good. These were works which were produced by God the Holy Spirit, who indwelt these believers. Their works were produced while they were in a status of temporal fellowship, and that's why they were divine good. Temporal fellowship with God the father is essential to producing divine good works. The great threat, of course, to divine good production through the Holy Spirit is the substitution of human good works through the sinful flesh nature which indwells each of us. These human good works are often dignified by emotional words such as "compassion;" and "humanity;" and, so on. These are words that are simply cover words for human good production.

The people who conduct Satan's world society on all levels in all institutions are evil people. They are not vile people in terms of their conduct and character necessarily, but they are evil people. There are very few people who understand the principle of divine good, and they are in such a minority that they are viewed as oddballs. The overwhelming majority of leaders in governmental circles which determine destiny of nations are human good people, and thus they are evil people. They set the norm, and this seems to be the pattern. But God says that He rejects that, and He condemns it.

The great threat, therefore, to divine good production on the part of Christians is to become like the rest of the crowd. It is very difficult for Christians to stand up tall and straight and say, "This is divine good, and this is human good; and I reject human good, and I pursue divine good. But that is what the Lord Jesus Christ commended this church for. Here was a church that knew the difference. Here were people who stood for divine good works. Vast amounts of Christian works today are mere hay, wood, and stubble – human good which God rejects, and which He cannot reward. That's the first quality that he commended.

**"Agape" Love**

The second quality that he commended in the Thyatira church was their "agape" love. This is a mental attitude love rather than an emotional love. This love ("agape" love) is produced in a spiritual believer by God the Holy Spirit. It is part of what the Bible calls the fruit of the Spirit of God. "Agape" love is the hallmark of Christianity. This is what identifies Christians, above all, from all the mass of humanity. "Agape" love is simply a mind which is free of ill will in the form of hatreds; in the form of vindictiveness; in the form of antagonisms; in the form of bitterness; in the form of arrogant pride; and, in the form of envy. It is the basis for dealing with people and issues with poise, and with gracefulness. So a Christian can act always in grace, whatever confronts him. It takes an "agape" mental attitude free of ill will to do this.

The Thyatira Christians were characterized by this kind of love. This is an attitude of mind, and therefore it is something that God can command us to do. It is something that we can therefore be commanded, as we pointed out in the last session, to have, for example, toward our enemies. The other kind of love, the "phileo" love, which is an emotional love, you cannot command. You cannot tell a person that they must have an emotional attachment for a certain object; a certain institution; or, a certain individual. But you can command a person to have a right mental attitude free of bitterness, and ill will, and antagonism, and so on toward that person.

For that reason, the Lord Jesus Christ did exactly that. He recognized that as human beings, we are going to have enemies in life, but He said that you yourself must be careful to have a right mental attitude toward that enemy. That enemy has a bitterness and has an antagonism toward you, but you must not have that back toward him. You must, in fact, love your enemy. The Lord Jesus use the word "agapao", because he could not use the word "phileo" and command us to have an emotional warmth and attachment for an enemy. But we can have an attitude of mind which is free of ill will toward that enemy as an individual. In Matthew 5:43-48, you have recorded the Lord Jesus's statement: "You have heard that it has been said that you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say unto you, love your enemies, and bless them that curse you, and do (divine) good to them that hate you, and pray for them who spitefully use you and persecute you." That's how you deal with the people who abuse you.

You certainly aren't going to be able to bless someone unless you have an "agape" mental attitude love. You're certainly not going to be able to pray for someone. You're certainly not going to be able to want to do good for someone who is doing you dirt unless you have a mentality that's possessed by this kind of love. It's pretty hard to put yourself in that position. The believers in Russia know what this means. The believers in China know what this means. The believers in Cuba know what this means. The believers in every communist country know what this means: to be spitefully used; to be persecuted; to be mistreated; and, to be treated with contempt and with vileness, and yet to react with mental attitude love. That doesn't mean you're a doormat. That doesn't mean you don't resist. That doesn't mean you don't put a bullet on the field of battle right between the eyes of your enemy if you have the chance to do it. But you do it without bitterness. You do it in the process of the fact that you are executing again, a doctrinal principle relative to the doctrine of warfare. It is a mental attitude that is compatible with human relationships in all areas. God says, "I command you to have this kind of an attitude." This is what God the Holy Spirit produced in the people of Thyatira.

"Agape" love is used in Luke 7:40 in another example of how this is used. Here you have a woman who has a mental attitude love toward Jesus Christ. It's an attitude of esteem and appreciation rather than an emotional attachment toward the Lord: "And Jesus, answering, said unto him, 'Simon. I have something to say unto you.' He said, 'Master, say on.' Jesus said, 'There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. The one owed 500 denarii; the other 50. When they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most?' Simon answered and said, 'I suppose that he to whom he forgave most.' He said unto him, 'You have rightly judged.' And He turned to the woman and said unto Simon, 'Do you see this woman? I entered into your house. You gave me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head. You gave me no kiss but this woman, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet. You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with ointment. Wherefore, I say unto you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved ('agapao') much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.'"

This woman had a mental attitude of goodwill toward the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible is very careful to make clear to us through the Greek language that she wasn't attracted to Jesus Christ as a female to a male on an emotional level of that nature. It was a mental attitude attachment to Him, and a goodwill attitude that she had in her mind toward the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the early church, one of the customs that the Christians used to have as they would try to gather together in some kind of protective custody and encouragement mutually of one another was the meals that they shared together. They were described as love feasts, and they were described as "agape" feasts. They were not described as "philos" feasts. They were not feasts of emotional attachments. They were feasts of mental attitude goodwill toward one another. So Jude 5, in condemning people who are unbelievers and people who are false believers and people who are carnal believers says, "These are spots. They're dirty places in your love feasts (in your 'agape' feasts), when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear," and so on. He describes certain elements among them as contaminating the spirit of love which characterized (and should have characterized) these people when they gathered together in their feasts. So when you gather together with believers for a meal, the Bible says this is the kind of attitude of mind which should characterize you, especially when you gather as a congregation.

This quality of mental love is characterized by the fact that it's willing to sacrifice. This is evidenced for us in John 15:13 where Jesus says, "Greater 'agape' has no man than this: that a man lay down his life for his friends." That is the ultimate sacrifice. The Bible indicates that mental attitude love propels a person to the quality of sacrifice. This quality of goodwill toward another person propels you to use yourself and to sacrifice yourself in that person's behalf.

When the Lord Jesus Christ on one occasion condensed all that the Old Testament law had to say to people, it was interesting that He condensed it with the Greek verb "agapao." Jesus was asked, "What is the one word that will summarize everything that God has told us in His law?" He was also asked, "What would summarize everything that God wants a human being to have toward another human being?" In both of those occasions, it was summarized by the word "love." That's very significant. Matthew 22:37-40: "Jesus said to him, 'You shall love ('agapao') the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment." There is the great summary of everything that the Old Testament law had to say. The second most important commandment (in verse 39) is like it: "You shall 'agapao' your neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

So first of all, mental attitude goodwill free of bitterness toward God is number one in the obligation of a human being. Number two is the same quality of mental attitude goodwill toward other human beings. Both of these are summarized by the word "agapao." The same thing is true in Romans 13:6, where Paul refers to this same principle: "Owe no man anything, but to 'agapao' (love) one another." This is mental attitude love: "For he that loves another has fulfilled the law. For this, you shall not commit adultery; you shall not kill; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; and, you shall not covet. If there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely: You shall 'agapao' (mental attitude love) your neighbor as yourself. Love works no ill to its neighbor. Therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law."

That is the whole point there. If you would run your eye over those little summary statements and out of the law that the apostle Paul has listed there, and you just look at them one at a time, and you match up this concept of mental attitude love (mental attitude goodwill), you will see that that would prevent a person from violating that particular law. There is not one of those that you would be free to do, except that you had mental attitude ill will toward the person. That's what would be required before you could be guilty of violating any of these commandments. So indeed, mental attitude love is at the core of human relationships, both toward God and toward other people.

It is, of course, no surprise, therefore, that John 15:12 tells us that when it comes to those of us who are Christians within a local congregation, this is the basic attitude which God commands. This is the basic attitude that we are to have toward one another as members of the royal family of God: "This is My commandment: that you love one another as I have loved you." And the Greek there uses this word "agapao," and it is a commandment. Again, God the Holy Spirit simply could not have used that word "commandment" had he used that other word for love. You cannot command people to have an emotional attachment. Within a local congregation, you're going to have some very warm feelings toward certain members. You will not have such warm attachments to other members. But no matter who the person is, even if it's somebody who, to your temperament, is kind of offensive, there will not be an attitude of mental bitterness and ill will toward that person. You will recognize that some people you hit it off with better in the congregation than you do with others. But to all of them, there is this quality of mental attitude goodwill (mental attitude love).

The apostle Paul points out that this is, in fact, the motivation for our serving one another as believers, and there is an awful lot of serving one another that is called upon for Christians to do within a local congregation. In Galatians 5:13, Paul says, "For brethren, you have been called unto liberty. Only don't use liberty for an occasion to the flesh." And you know what that is now – the propensity to evil. "But by love, use your liberty to serve one another." But by love, serve one another. And the word there is "agape" again. "Agape" (mental attitude love) is what propels you to serve other Christians. You're not going to be interested in doing anything for another believer if you do not have mental attitude love for him. When you see that he is in trouble, you're not going to be interested in helping him if mental attitude love is not your attitude toward him. If he has a need, you're not going to be interested in helping him meet his need. You're not going to be concerned for him, except that mental attitude love possesses your mentality.

This is an important thing. You can see why the Lord Jesus looked at the Thyatira Christians and said, "That's great. I love you for it. That's an esteem that you have that I put in the highest category. For this reason, I must commend you. And for this reason, I will bless you. This mental attitude love (without our going into details – we've done that elsewhere in other studies that you can find on tapes, of course) is expressed in various ways toward God; toward the person you're married to; and, toward your friends. There are whole areas of studies (on our tapes) that are considerable applications of this concept of mental attitude love.

**Spiritual Maturity**

In applying this concept to spirituality, which might help us again to relate exactly what the Lord Jesus was talking about in terms of mental attitude love, mental attitude love can be described as a relaxed mental attitude in the spiritual maturity structure of the soul. Within the soul of the believer, the Bible points out to us that a structure of spiritual maturity is to be built. That's what the local church is all about. That's what the pastor-teacher ministry is all about – giving people a chance to have enough information from the Scriptures and from the doctrinal principles to be able to build a relaxed mental attitude, and to be able to build a spiritual maturity structure in their souls. There are five basic qualities that the Bible indicates are at the core of spiritual maturity. One of the facets is a relaxed mental attitude.

**A Relaxed Mental Attitude**

Well, a relaxed mental attitude in the spiritual maturity structure of your soul is simply "agape" mental attitude love. This is a mind, therefore, which is practicing instant forgiveness toward the offender so that there is no mental ill will and tension. That's a problem in maintaining a relaxed mental attitude. When somebody offends you, you do not respond with mental ill will toward that person, and you don't get all uptight about it. A relaxed mental attitude is one that is free from the quality of belligerency which seeks to do injury. You have ill will toward a person (you are belligerent toward them), and you look out for ways to injure him. A relaxed mental attitude is a mind that does not view yourself as being threatened so that you have to get antagonistic, and so that you have to belittle other people.

**Belittling**

One of the sure signs of having a breakdown in a relaxed mental attitude is when you start belittling people. This is a favorite technique of the flesh combat, whether you're fighting your friends or whether you're fighting your husband or your wife or your children. You fall back upon the flesh technique of belittling. That expresses an antagonism that you have, and it's a sure sign that you have broken down in a relaxed mental attitude.

**Arrogance**

A relaxed mental attitude is a mind without the arrogance which demands your rights. Maybe something is fair and right; you should have it; and, you're deserving of it. A relaxed mental attitude is free of the demand to have those rights fulfilled. That is arrogance to demand it. A relaxed mental attitude is a mind which does not seek to exercise vengeance so that people get what they deserve. That is another sure sign of a breakdown in a relaxed mental attitude. There are always people who are running around trying to see that people get what they deserve, instead of following the scriptural principle of "live and let live." God is fully capable of exercising vengeance, and the Bible has made it very clear that God says that vengeance is a prerogative for Him to exercise, and for Him to exercise alone. So when you run around seeking to get people straightened out to have them get what they deserve, you can just mark down to yourself that your relaxed mental attitude has been fractured.

A relaxed mental attitude is a mind which is free from a negative outlook which seeks to discourage others from trying and succeeding. If you have a relaxed mental attitude, you're not always going to be negative. You're not always going to be trying to discourage somebody. That's fantastic how many times Christians, who are really nice, stable people, have this negative quality. Something comes up, and they say, "Oh, I can't do that."

I used to have an electrician around here. Every time I asked him to do something, the first thing he would say was, "Oh, I can't do it that way." Right away I knew that's how we could do it. At first I used to believe him. Then I realized that this guy had a negative attitude, and therefore everything was: "No. Can't do it. I'm discouraged."

A relaxed mental attitude is a love which is not normal human response. It is not something that is drawn out because the object is attractive. It's just there. The object may be very unattractive, but the relaxed mental attitude is still there toward that object. It is produced by something supernatural. That, of course, is the indwelling Holy Spirit, which is what the Bible refers to as the filling of the Holy Spirit. In Romans 5:5, we read, "And hope does not make us ashamed, because the love of God (the 'agape' of God) is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given unto us." That's where you get "agape" love. It is shed abroad in our hearts by God the Holy Spirit who is given to us. It's not a normal reaction, and it's not drawn out of us because the object is necessarily an attractive one. It is produced because of our positive volition to doctrine, and because of the fact that we are building a spiritual maturity structure in our souls.

In 1 John 2:5, we have this pointed out to us: "But whosoever keeps his word, in him, verily, is the love of God perfected. By this we know that we are in Him." So the "agape" love that is exercised toward God's people is the product of our keeping the commandments of God. We love God, and so we keep His commandments.

The relaxed mental attitude is one which is dominated, therefore, by the divine viewpoint of doctrine. So if you're going to have a relaxed mental attitude, you must know the Word of God, and you must have a positive response to that word. Then you'll be free of these qualities of belligerency and seeking to do injury. You'll be free of tensions and ill will. You'll be free from demanding arrogantly certain rights. You'll be free from seeking to exercise vengeance so people get what they deserve. You'll be free from a quality that seeks to discourage people from trying and succeeding. You'll just have an attitude that God honors, and which is one that is "live and let live," and is characterized by the freedom of grace.

The Christians in Thyatira were exemplary in mental attitude love, and the Lord Jesus was highly pleased because of this. After all, this is the love that cemented the local believers together in their ministry. Most talk about love in local churches today is merely a flesh-dominated emotional quality which is overridden by a lot of mental bitterness. There are a lot of Christians in local churches who go around smiling at each other, and saying certain sweet words, but they have (down deep within them) a mental attitude bitterness. And what appears to be a quality of love is nothing but a fake pseudo love produced by the flesh. "Agape" love is not first overt or verbal. It is, first of all, a state of mind. When you learn it, then you're ready to start going on with God. Love with God, and love in the Bible that God commends, is not first what you do. It is not what you say. When you look at the Word of God, the first quality of God love is a relaxed mental attitude. It is not something you do and say. It is something in the mind.

Satan, of course, glamorizes the other – the flesh which produces emotional love as the real thing. That comes out as pseudo love; do-goodism; or, illicit sex. So building and maintaining a relaxed mental attitude of "agape" love is an absolute prerequisite for the Christian if you're going to enjoy victories in the angelic conflict. Mental attitude love is the key to all personal morality, as we pointed out. The commandments that are broken are only broken by people who lack mental attitude love. Mental attitude love provides the believer with mental orientation to reality; it provides you with emotional stability; and, it provides you with great effectiveness, consequently, in your Christian service.

**Faith**

So coming back to Revelation 2:19, the Lord Jesus Christ says, "I know from my omniscience your works." They are divine good works: "And I know your love" (your mental attitude love). Then, if you have a King James translation, the next word is "service," but the Greek Bible has the quality of "faith" next. So we'll follow the Greek Bible, and then we'll get back to service later. The next word in the Greek Bible is "and," which is the conjunction "kai," and this is indicating that another quality is being added. The quality He adds is "faith," which is the Greek word "pistis." This is a noun, which means trust, reliance, or confidence. And the Greek language has the definite article before it, so it's "the faith," which indicates that He's speaking especially about the faith of the Thyatira Christians. Another word for "faith," as you know, is "believe." You also know that the value of faith is not simply because you believe, but it is what you believe. It is the object that gives your faith its value. Unless you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and as the sinless one sent as the God-man from God to die on the cross, your salvation is based in the wrong thing. If you do not believe in Him as such, that's what gives value to your faith and produces salvation. If you have faith in your good works, that will not merit anything with God. That kind of faith doesn't count for anything. Faith is being sure of what we hope for, and certain of what we do not see.

**Denying Reality**

There are certain counterfeits of faith that you should be aware of. They will lead you astray. One is a denial of reality. Some people think that they're exercising faith if they deny reality – believing what isn't, as if it were, even if it is contradicted by the facts. Christian Scientism, which is neither Christian nor science, is founded upon this kind of faith. This is the kind of faith that says here's a person that's just covered with red spots. The doctor says, "You've got measles," but the guy who is a Christian Scientist says, "No, I don't." And his bleared fevered eyes try to deny the fact that he's got measles, because he's got faith that there is no such thing as sickness, and therefore he cannot be sick. That's what a Christian Scientist does. If he's a true Christian Scientist, he can be sick as a dog and say, "I'm not sick. I've got faith in God. I believe in God. I'm not sick." And of course, that's what eventually happens. That sin has these terrible consequences, and you say, "No, I don't believe them." So that is not faith. That's ignorance – to deny what is reality.

**Presumption**

Another thing is not faith is when it is presumption. Here, reason decides what must be true, even if it's contradicted by the Bible. That's presumption. For you to say, "I just believe that this is true," and the Bible does not confirm that it's true, that's presumption. That's not faith. That's why you always want to be careful when you listen to preachers, and they like to slip in the word "I really believe..." Boy, when I hear that out of a preacher, red flags fly up in my mind, and I start watching him very carefully, and I watch him very closely. I don't really care what the preacher believes. I'm only interested in what God believes. All I want him to do is to convey to me what God says, and what God has conveyed. I'm not interested in his opinions in the process. Very often, those opinions are presumptions.

I listened to a charismatic preacher out in California a couple of summers ago, and he just awed his audience when he revealed to them that he sincerely believed that the antichrist was going to be Judas. When he got up and said, "I sincerely believe," boy, they should have spotted that right off the bat, and they should have been on their guard. So presumption is not what we mean by faith.

**Credulity**

A third factor is credulity. That's a big word that says, "You're dumb, and you believe everything you're told." It's a blind trust in some unconfirmed authority, even if your experience contradicts that. This is the hallmark of the charismatic movement. They are another group who are insisting that people are being healed, even though their actual experience shows they're not being healed. But they're going to believe it. They have a credulity because their leader has gotten up and they said, "God will heal, and God will do that." He has gotten them swayed emotionally so that they're willing to believe what he says. These are counterfeits of genuine faith, and they are not the things for which the Lord Jesus commended the Thyatira Christians.

**The Inerrancy of Scripture**

There are, however, three basic expressions of faith that can guide us into a general summary of what the Bible esteems in terms of faith and trusting. One is the inerrancy of Scripture. Faith is expressed as a firm conviction in the inerrancy of Scripture as the communication from God to man. In 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12, we read, "And for this cause, God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie" (for the cause of their negative volition). Verse 12: "That they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. So faith, first of all, has to deal with believing the inerrancy of Scripture. Such a faith indicates positive volition toward Bible doctrine as being God's truth. If our bible is contaminated by some error, we cannot create trust in what doctrines are true, because we don't know if some of it is contaminated by error. Faith in the trustworthiness of the Bible establishes the Bible as the final authority in spiritual matters. And that is why today we have such antagonism toward the idea of the inerrancy of Scripture.

You understand that inerrancy means that when the Bible was written, in its original Hebrew and Greek manuscripts, there was not one single solitary mistake in the whole Scriptures – not one. And the manuscripts that have been preserved and that have come down to us have conveyed to us this inerrant Scripture. Any doubt about words that were exactly in the original texts are very minor doubts and very minor factors. The total overwhelming record that we have of Scripture was preserved by God down through the years, so that the Bible we have (in the original languages) is inerrant. I'm not talking about the King James translation. The Bible in the original languages is an inerrant Scripture. It is without error. That makes the Bible the final authority in spiritual matters. That's why the liberals don't want a Bible that has no mistakes. That kills them. That's why the neo-evangelicals (in the fundamentalists' camp) don't want a Bible without mistakes, because that doesn't enable them to play footsie with the liberals. They want to have the respect. They want to have the esteem. They want to be able to fellowship with the liberals, and the National Council of Churches that send money to terrorist groups under the guise of Christian ministry to bring about freedom and liberation. These madmen in religious matters must deny the inerrancy of Scripture. So when you talk about faith, the first thing the Bible means by faith is that you believe that the Word of God is just what it claims to be – the accurate presentation of the mind of God without error.

Human reason, therefore, cannot rationalize away what is offensive to it in the Bible, because the sin nature objects to it. If the Bible says it, it is true. Arrogant intellectualism presumes to be able to determine what is true and what is error in the Bible. That's not faith. That's man's reason. Faith says, "I accept what God has recorded."

How should you deal with those when you come upon them, for example, who have denied inerrancy? In previous studies, we have called your attention to the book which Dr. Harold Lindsell has written called The Battle for the Bible. In this book, he, who is on the faculty of Fuller Seminary, outlined step-by-step what happened to Fuller Seminary, a great fundamentalist school out on the west coast, begun by Charlie Fuller of The Old Fashioned Revival Hour. He was a great fundamentalist preacher, and his purpose was the educating of men for a biblical ministry. The time came when, step-by-step, in very subtle ways, Fuller Seminary finally changed its doctrinal statement so that it no longer contain the statement, "We believe in an inerrant Bible." They said, "We believe in a Bible that is inspired, but not inerrant." It's kind of hard to see how a Bible that is inspired by God the Holy Spirit (meaning that He produced it) has mistakes in it. That always embarrasses me. I just hope the Holy Spirit hasn't heard him say that, because it is downright insulting blasphemy as well as dumb, stupid, blind, and ignorant. There's no use in playing around with this thing, and pretending that this is not important. When we talk about faith, it starts with believing that God is capable of communicating to us what He thinks without mistakes in that communication.

So what are you going to do with institutions like Fuller Seminary or people who reject inerrancy" That's not just inspiration. Don't be tricked by that. I was going to say, "I'll turn over my grave," but since I'm going up in the rapture, I won't say that. I'll spin in the rapture if I discover that some of you have been confused between inspiration and inerrancy. Everybody in that fundamentalist camp all hold to that: "Yes, God the Holy Spirit breathed the Scriptures through the writers." But inerrancy is when God the Holy Spirit breathed them, He didn't make any mistakes.

The argument is that human beings are fallible. People make mistakes. Therefore, they could not have written the Scriptures, even though God the Holy Spirit inspired them in what to write. They could not have written the Scriptures without mistakes because people make mistakes. Of course, you can see the fallacy of that argument. If God is involved in guiding and superintending what is done, then God's going to have it done right. You people who are employers, who have employees working for you, you supervise those employees, and what you give them to do, you see to it that they do it right. If they don't, you correct it. So the end product is right. And God the Holy Spirit is fully capable of doing that. And that's exactly what He did when the Scriptures were written. So we have not only an inspired Scripture, but we have an inerrant Scripture.

Well, what do we do with these institutions and people? For one thing, we should remove people like that from teaching positions in local church organizations. This is one area that we're going to find where the church at Thyatira was weak in its faith. Undoubtedly, when Jesus commended them for their faith, they did believe the Scriptures as being the Word of God, but they did not believe it to the extent that they did take hold of a feisty, arrogant female who was in the congregation that we'll be studying about a little later, and deal with her accordingly, according to these inerrant Scriptures. So the first thing you do is get rid of these people from positions of teaching authority.

You also refuse to provide financial support for such teaching against inerrancy. People who know that Fuller Seminary does not sustain the principle of inerrancy should withdraw their financial support from Fuller Seminary, and cut it down: short; flat; period. And that's exactly what's happened, incidentally.

You do not study the materials of these rejections of inerrancy unless you're very capable of being able to distinguish error from truth. So be careful about studying their writings.

You do not associate with institutions and groups which lack faith in biblical inerrancy. If they reject biblical inerrancy, that is it. That is the core of our faith. From then on, it's downhill all the way. If you haven't understood that clearly, and if you have some doubts about it, then get Dr. Lindsell's book on The Battle for the Bible, and read it through, and you'll see exactly how that happens. And precisely, once they deny inerrancy (maybe not you, but the people who follow you in the next generation), they'll go right out to where they have a Bible and they reject its authority completely. This is at the heart of the authority of Scripture. This is at the heart of our faith.

Furthermore, don't be awed by the education and the academic degrees of these rejectors of full faith in the Bible's inerrancy. I hope you are well-acquainted with the term "ignorant intellectuals" now. Ignorant intellectuals dominate our society. They have high IQs, but they have human viewpoint IQs, which therefore makes them ignorant people relative to the realities of life. So don't be awed because somebody comes along with a great theological degree and a great theological reputation, and he doesn't believe that the Bible is without error.

Also, do not be conned by a call to Christian unity. When these people can no longer defend inerrancy on the basis of Scripture, they fall back on trying to con us by a call to Christian unity. In the last issue of Christianity Today, which is a publication designed by Billy Graham and the neo-evangelicals as an expression of that particular viewpoint, but which does have some very good articles in it, had an article by Carl Henry, who is a theologian of considerable repute and who stands for inerrancy in Scripture. So here's a letter to the editor from a former Fuller Seminary graduate in response to Dr. Henry's article which championed the cause of biblical inerrancy. The letter to the editor says, "As a recent graduate of Fuller Theological Seminary, I was surprised to discover in Carl Henry's article that my alma mater is not only part of the destructive trends of the 1980s, but guilty of theological dilution. The Fuller of my experience has been, and continues to be, a place where the body of Christ joins together to learn in an atmosphere that is both open and submitted to Scripture. People there are more interested in learning to live in obedience to God and properly understanding His Word than defining other people out of the kingdom." Did you get that? "Defining other people out of the kingdom." This is unity.

Now, what have we done here today? We have just now told you that somebody who doesn't stand for inerrancy is violating the basic principle of faith that the Bible speaks about. Faith has to be, first of all, in the written Word of God. Otherwise, we have nothing to believe in. It is an accurate inerrant Bible. Therefore, these people are dangerous, and we should back off from them. This man writing this letter says that his school, his old alma mater, was not interested in defining people out of the kingdom. Well, it just so happens that it is God who has defined them out of fellowship (perhaps not out of the kingdom). God has defined them out because it is the Lord Jesus Christ that said, "If you're not with us, you're against us." And if you are not on the principle that the Bible has very clearly stated, of inerrancy, then you certainly are not with God. You're against Him.

The letter goes on and says (now get this), "Perhaps those who are so concerned about inerrancy ought to become equally concerned about taking the apostle Paul seriously when he speaks of those who would divide the church. 1 Corinthians 3:16-17. Jeff Baker, Santa Barbara, California." I want to put his name on tape so he gets a little reputation here.

Now, what have we got here? Unity. That's what it is. We don't care that it's falsehood. We don't care that it's not true. Unity is what we want to have, even though the doctrine is false. Yet, God the Holy Spirit, in guiding the apostle John in writing his little letters of 2 John and 3 John, points out that if somebody comes in and does not hold the truth of the gospel, you do not even say, "God bless you" as you leave. You do not even bid him Godspeed. You do not even invite him in to have a meal with you, because if you do, you condone his error.

Error in what? Error in Scripture. They say, "How do I know it's an error in Scripture? The Bible is not inerrant. Maybe he's right. Maybe the Bible is wrong at that point." And that's exactly the line of argument that's followed once faith in an inerrant Scripture is denied. So when we talk about faith, and when we wonder if what the Lord meant by commending the Thyatira of Christians for faith, one of the first things you can be sure of is that they had a faith in the revealed Scriptures. They believed that God had spoken to them; that God was out there; that He was not silent; and, that He had communicated to them in terms they could understand, and he had communicated to them in complete accuracy.

There are two other very important expressions of faith, and we'll take those up next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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